

Textual evidence for Aegean Late Bronze Age ritual processions

Abstract*

In the Aegean Late Bronze Age there exists rich iconographic evidence for the ritual practice of processions, demonstrating the practice's importance within Mycenaean official cult. In contrast, due to the nature of the Linear B documents which are the records of the palace administration referring to particular aspects of the palace economy, hardly any explicit textual information about processions in Mycenaean times is available. Among the rare exceptions is the outstanding tablet Tn 316 from Pylos whose lexical items seem to point to a ritual of this kind. Moreover, the term *te-o-po-ri-ja/*θεοφόρια* ("the carrying of the gods") is generally understood as the name of a religious festival in which a (terracotta) cult figurine representing a deity was carried in a procession. Some additional textual evidence on processions may be provided by terms ending in *-po-ro/-φόρος*. Along these lines, this paper argues that the term *to-pa-po-ro* may denote men whose description reflects activities they have performed in connection with processions. Similarly, it is suggested that the individuals who are described as *ka-ra-wi-po-ro* ("female key-bearer") and *di-pte-ra-po-ro* (whose traditional interpretation as "wearer of hide" is disputed) may act as carriers in the course of a procession. The textual and linguistic analysis of these words is combined with iconographic evidence of the Aegean Bronze Age.

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Introductory notes

Next to libations and communal feasting (including animal sacrifice) ritual processions are regarded as belonging to the most important cult practices of the official level of Mycenaean cult.¹ This assumption is based on a fairly substantial amount of iconographic documentation for this practice. The procession of female and male figures carrying cult equipment and objects of various kinds intended as gifts for a deity is one of the most widely attested themes in Aegean wall painting.² Moreover additional evidence is provided by related representations in other media such as on painted sarcophagi, vessels of stone and clay as well as on gold signet rings, sealstones and their clay sealings.³ In contrast, there is hardly any explicit textual information about processions in Mycenaean times. This is due to the nature of the Linear B documents which are our only contemporary written texts. These tablets are the records of the palace administration referring to particular economic operations of the Mycenaean palatial centres. Accordingly, they contain no information relating directly to cult practices or the belief system of Mycenaean religion. However, despite the limitations of the inscriptional data some information

¹ Hägg 2001. On actual Mycenaean cult practices from the point of view of the Linear B documents see Weihartner 2012 with further literature. On the official and the popular level of Mycenaean cult (and the several levels in between) see Hägg 1995. On the debate and the problematic nature of definitions of the terms "religion", "cult" and "ritual" when used in connection to the archaeological record see Renfrew 2007, 8–10.

² Peterson 1981; Immerwahr 1990, 114–118; Kontorli-Papadopoulou 1996, 134–137.

³ Warren 2006; Blakolmer 2008, 257 and n. 1 with further literature. In these papers, both authors rightly remind us that not every depiction of a procession has to be of a religious character. A corpus of procession scenes in Minoan and Mycenaean glyptic imagery is given by Wedde 2004.

on processions is provided by individual documents. Among them is the much discussed tablet Tn 316 from Pylos.

PY Tn 316: *i-je-to*

PY Tn 316

.1	po-ro-wi-to-jo ,
.2	{ i-je-to-qe , pa-ki-ja-si , do-ra-qe , pe-re , po-re-na-qe
.3	pu-ro { a-ke , po-ti-ni-ja AUR *215 ^{VAS} 1 MUL 1
.4	ma-na-sa , AUR *213 ^{VAS} 1 MUL 1 po-si-da-e-ja *141 ^{bis} *213 ^{VAS} 1 MUL 1
.5	ti-ri-se-ro-e , AUR *216 ^{VAS} 1 do-po-ta *141 ^{bis} *215 ^{VAS} 1
.6	angustum
.7	{ vacat
.8	{ vacat
.9	{ vacat
.10	pu-ro { vacat
<i>verso</i>	
.1	{ i-je-to-qe , po-si-da-i-jo , a-ke-qe , wa-tu
.2	{ do-ra-qe , pe-re , po-re-na-qe , a-ke
.3a	{
.3b	pu-ro { AUR *215 ^{VAS} 1 MUL 2 qo-wi-ja , ṅa-[] , ko-ma-we-te-
.4	{ i-je-to-qe , pe-re *82-jo , i-pe-me-de-ja-qe di-u-ja-jo-qe
.5	{ do-ra-qe , pe-re-po-re-na-qe , a , pe-re *82 AUR *213 ^{VAS} 1 MUL 1
.6	{ i-pe-me-de-ja *141 ^{bis} *213 ^{VAS} 1 di-u-ja AUR *213 ^{VAS} 1 MUL 1
.7	pu-ro { e-ma-a ₂ , a-re-ja AUR *216 ^{VAS} 1 VIR 1
.8	{ i-je-to-qe , di-u-jo , do-ra-qe , pe-re , po- re-na-qe a-ke
.9	{ di-we *141 ^{bis} *213 ^{VAS} 1 VIR 1 e-ra *141 ^{bis} *213 ^{VAS} 1 MUL 1
.10	{ di-ri-mi-jo di-wo , i-je-we , *141 ^{bis} *213 ^{VAS} 1 [] vacat
.11	pu-ro { vacat
.12	angustum
.13	{ vacat
.14	{ vacat
.15	{ vacat
.16	pu-ro { vacat

This tablet⁴ lists vessels made of gold (and maybe also of silver⁵) as well as women and men. Both objects and humans are dedicated to a number of deities (e.g. *po-ti-ni-ja* “to Potnia” and *di-we* “to Zeus”) located at various shrines (e.g. *pa-ki-ja-si* “at [the sanctuary of] the place Sphagianes (?)” and *di-u-jo* “at the sanctuary of Zeus”). Women appear next to female deities whereas men turn up next to male deities. Amongst the 13 vessels which are recorded by means of the word *do-ra/δῶρα* (“gifts”) and three different logograms, the following shapes can be distinguished: a simple bowl without handles (*213^{VAS}) which is recorded eight times, a cup with small handles identified as a *kylix* (*215^{VAS}) which is listed three times and a plain conical bowl on a high cylindrical stem resembling a chalice (*216^{VAS}) recorded twice. Both the *kylix* and the chalice are mentioned only here within the Linear B documents. Although these vessels have been interpreted as ceremonial “heirlooms”, a LH IIIB date of production seems to be more likely (see Appendix).

As regards the human beings, who are recorded by means of the logograms for women (MUL) and men (VIR) as well as by the term *po-re-na*, an interpretation as ἀπαρχαὶ ἀνθρώπων/“human gifts” dedicated to their respective deities for a life of service is to me the best explanation.⁶ In several studies from the time of the decipherment until the 1990s it was suggested that the recording of humans being offered to deities in this tablet alludes to human sacrifice.⁷ This was taken to reflect an extreme crisis in the face of a general state of emergency at Pylos. However, the term *po-re-na* which occurs again within the Of series of Thebes (TH Of 26, in dat. pl.: *po-re-si*) in the context of ordinary deliveries of wool for textile production does arguably not refer to human sacrificial victims. Quite on the contrary, the occurrence of this term within this series demonstrates its use as a regular designation for some kind of institutional group.⁸ Moreover, despite the peculiar manner of the execution of tablet Tn 316, the study of the internal chronology of the Archives Complex at Pylos

⁴ There is a vast amount of literature on this tablet. A detailed study of the text including the history of its interpretation is provided by Palaima 1999.

⁵ In a recent study Louis Godart (2009) argues that the variant forms of logogram *141 which were up to now identified unanimously as AUR/gold represent in fact two different metals, AUR/gold and ARG/silver. However, more logographic evidence would be needed to prove this differentiation (and identification of *141^{bis} as silver) beyond all doubt. In the meantime, a transcription of this/these logogram(s) in the form AUR (i.e. *141) and *141^{bis} is recommended. Cf. Olivier 2012, 582.

⁶ Arist. ap. Plut. *Thees.* 16.2. Cf. Guthrie 1959, 43f.; Lejeune 1964, 92f., 106. Four deities receive a vessel without any associated human being. This argues against the assumption that the women and men were acolytes simply marked to carry the vessels.

⁷ L.R. Palmer 1955, 10; Pugliese Carratelli 1957, 354; Chadwick 1976, 89–92; Baumbach 1983, 33f.; Buck 1989.

⁸ On the TH Of series see Weilhartner 2005, 201–204.

by Tom Palaima showed that this tablet was likely not written in haste within the final days of the palace.⁹ On the whole, an interpretation of the women and men recorded on this tablet as human sacrificial victims should be abandoned.

Though discussion on the exact syntax and meaning of the introductory formula to each section is still ongoing, there is general agreement that this tablet records some kind of religious activity at shrines of several deities in the kingdom of Pylos. As to the nature of the religious ritual recorded on this document, the lexical items *i-je-to*, *pe-re* and *a-ke* seem to point to a procession taking place at the address specified.¹⁰ The introductory verb *i-je-to* has been connected with the root *Hish₂- which underlies the adjective *ἱερός* (“holy, sacred”; original meaning: “strong, swift”).¹¹ If correct, this form represents a verb which has not survived into later Greek. Ivo Hajnal speaks in favour of a basic meaning of the root *Hish₂- as “(sich) in Bewegung setzen” and argues convincingly for a translation of *i-je-to* in this context as “man hält (im Heiligtum X) eine Prozession ab”.¹² A similar translation of this verb was proposed by several other mycenologists.¹³ However, they take *i-je-to* as related to the verb *ἵημι* with the sense “send to”. If this were true one would expect an allative form of the following place designations as the scribe used on the only other tablet (PY Fr 1223: *ti-no-de*) that is assigned to him.¹⁴ However, on Tn 316 one reads either *pa-ki-ja-si* or the name of a sanctuary ending in *-jo*, which are to be taken as a dative-locative (pl. in *-σι* or sg. in *-οι* respectively).

The interpretation of *i-je-to* proposed by Hajnal receives some support by the appearance of two verb forms derived from *φέρειν* “to bring” and *ἄγειν* “to lead”. These words and their derivations are regularly used in descriptions of religious processions in Classical times.¹⁵ On Tn 316 *pe-re/φέρει* is considered to be the verb used to denote the carrying of the vessels which are referred to as *do-ra/δῶρα*. This verb contrasts with

a-ke/ἄγει which can easily be understood to mean “to lead” the women and men (referred to as *po-re-na*).¹⁶ The same distinction is to be observed in later Greek where *φέρειν* is used in the sense of bearing inanimate objects and *ἄγειν* in the sense of conducting persons or animals.¹⁷ The interpretation of *po-re-na*, however, remains problematical and the term may be of unknown etymology.¹⁸ On the whole, there are some reasons to believe that this tablet records several processions taking place at various shrines. In the course of this activity vessels are carried as gifts to the deities and humans are dedicated for a life of ritual service.

A pictorial representation of a procedure similar to the one just described is to be seen in a fragmentary relief scene on a steatite vase from Knossos dated to MM III–LM I.¹⁹ This fragment depicts two young men taking part in a procession alongside a wall of what has been interpreted as a sanctuary due to the horns of consecration on it. They carry two shallow bowls resembling logogram *215^{VAS} in outstretched arms. Their uncomfortable pose adds to the aura of a religious ritual. A similar scene appears to be depicted on a clay sealing from Mycenae which is to be assigned to a later date.²⁰

⁹ Palaima 1995, 628–632; 1999, 439, 443f.

¹⁰ Sacconi 1987; Palaima 1999, 451.

¹¹ This assumption goes back to L.R. Palmer 1955, 4–9. Cf. Hajnal 1996, 274–277.

¹² Hajnal 1996, 271, 281–283. On the other hand, Palaima 1999, 446 translates *i-je-to* as “to perform a sanctification ceremony” albeit he concurs with Hajnal as regards the derivation from a verb related to *ἱερός*. Cf. García Ramón 1996, 268: “*i-je-to* ‘se pone en procesión en (Loc.)’ o ‘se oficia una ceremonia en (Loc.)’ recubre una forma verbal de la misma raíz que *ἱερός* (con cuyos dos significados, el heredado de ‘con impulso’ y el especializado de ‘sagrado’ es compatible).”

¹³ Cf. e.g. Ruijgh 1981, 60 (“il marche, à titre d’envoyé, à la tête d’une procession”); Nagy 1994–1995 (1997), 175 (“a procession takes place”); Maurice 1988, 126 (“Pylos met en mouvement une procession votive [...]”).

¹⁴ L.R. Palmer 1955, 2f.; Hajnal 1996, 272–274; Palaima 1999, 445.

¹⁵ Eitrem 1920, 73–108. Cf. e.g. Athen. 13.565f–566a: *ἐπιτρέπουσιν, ἐν Ἡλίδι δὲ καὶ κρίσις γίνεται κάλλους, καὶ τῷ πρώτῳ τὰ τῆς θεοῦ φέρειν τεύχη δίδονται, τῷ δὲ δευτέρῳ τὸν βούην ἄγειν, ὁ δὲ τρίτος τὰς θυηλάς ἐπιτίθεισιν.*

¹⁶ Lejeune 1964, 92f.; Spyropoulos & Chadwick 1975, 94.

¹⁷ Hiller 1999, 295. The scattered attestations of *δῶρα ἄγειν* mentioned by Willi 1994–1995 (1997), 180 with n. 23 are no conclusive argument against the rich textual material provided by Hiller, op. cit. which testifies that the complementary use of the animate object with *ἄγειν* and the inanimate object with *φέρειν* is the standard pattern of verbal expression and represents a fixed formula. On this dichotomy in the context of sacrificial offerings see also Nilsson 1906, 465: “[...] denn da es *δαράτες* [i.e. kind of bread] *φέρειν*, aber *ἀπελλαῖα ἄγειν* heißt, hat man mit Recht geschlossen, daß die *ἀπελλαῖα* Opfertiere waren.” Cf. *SIG*², 438.

¹⁸ Palaima 1999, 454f. with n. 57. Various interpretations are listed in Willi 1994–1995 (1997), 178 n. 5. Maurice 1988, 135f. argues for a derivation of this term from the verbal root *bher- “to carry” and takes *po-re-na* as “desservants” of a divinity (“les individus [...] spécialement préposés à tel dieu ou déesse”). It seems quite clear that the term *po-re-na* is related to *po-re-no-* which occurs as the first element of the compound *po-re-no-zo-te-ri-ja*. Cf. Palaima 1996–1997 (1999), 305–308. This term has been interpreted *inter alia* as a festival designation “the girding of the *po-re-no-*”. In view of the numerous later Greek festival names ending in *-τήρια po-re-no-tu-τε[]* which is usually restored as *po-re-no-tu-τε[]-ri-ja* may be another festival designation. Cf. Maurice 1988, 127–129. In any event, both terms seem to have a parallel morphology. Cf. Maurice 1988, 132. However, several other interpretations have been proposed. Cf. e.g. R. Palmer 1994, 107–109.

¹⁹ Evans 1928, 752 fig. 486; Warren 1969, 85, 175 (P 474).

²⁰ *CMS* I, no. 170. As regards additional evidence for the use of gold and silver vessels within processions one may refer to procession frescoes from Knossos, Hagia Triada and Tiryns: among the objects being carried, some vessels appear to be made of gold and silver as their yellow and blue colour suggests. Cf. Mantzourani 1995, 134–137; Blakolmer 2007, 43.

PY Va 15: (*a-mo-*)*i-je-to* (?)

Another procession may be recorded on tablet Va 15 from Pylos.²¹

PY Va 15

- .1 pu-ro, a[]-a₂, o-[]ke, e-*83 o-u-qe, e-to *35-ka-te-re
2[
.2a *35-ra-ka-te-ra
.2b pe-]re-ku, wa-na-ka[]-e-te, pu-ro, e-ke-qe, a-po-te-
ro-te 1[
verso
.a a-mo-i-je-to
pe-re-ku wa-na-ka, pu-ro e-ti-wa-jo *35-ka-te-re [

This tablet has no logograms and on the verso not even a numeral is present. Therefore, it seems unlikely that the entries of this text reflect routine transactions. As on Tn 316, *i-je-to* (albeit in the form *a-mo-i-je-to*) appears along with *pu-ro*. For that reason, Cornelius Ruijgh regards a religious interpretation of this text as the best possibility.²² He takes *a-mo-i-je-to* as *ἄμο/ἄμα ἴετοι* in the sense of “to walk in a procession with (somebody)” and tentatively suggests a translation of the words on the verso as follows: “Presguwanax (i.e. anthroponym) marche dans une procession à Pylos avec Etiwaios (i.e. anthroponym) comme porteur de lumière.”²³ However, due to uncertain readings on the recto, the unknown value of syllable *34/*35 and the occurrence of words which do not appear elsewhere it is not possible to determine the subject of this tablet for sure. Therefore, the proposed translation of the text remains highly speculative.²⁴

²¹ The version of this text is based on revisions made by J.L. Melena. Cf. Killen 2000, 145f.

²² Ruijgh 1981. A possible translation of the whole text is given on p. 61.

²³ The interpretation of *35-ka-te-re as “porteur de lumière” (from *ἄμο/ἄμα ἴετοι*). Cf. gr. *δραχμή* / “torch-bearer”) is based on the assumption that the syllabogram *34/*35 has the value *ru*₂. However, there is no general agreement on the value of that sign. On a more recent examination of all the evidence for the value of *34/*35 see Melena, forthcoming, § 11.4.2.1 who argues for a transcription as *ai*₂.

²⁴ See e.g. Chadwick 1992 who speaks up against Ruijgh’s interpretation. See also Killen 2000, 144–148. Both compare the phrase *o-u-qe e-to* of the recto with descriptions of chariots on the Sd tablets from Knossos (such as *o-u-qe pte-no* / “and there are no foot-boards” or *o-u-qe a-ni-ja po-si* / “and there are no reins attached”). As a consequence, they wonder if the vocabulary of tablet PY Va 15 points to a description of artefacts of some kind. However, the lack of logograms and numerals on the verso of this tablet may hint to a particular (religious?) interpretation of the text.

TH Fq 254 [+] 255: *a-pi-e-qe* (?)

Another term which is linked by Ruijgh with the act of a procession is *a-pi-e-qe*.²⁵ This word appears within a temporal clause introduced by the conjunction *o-te/ὅτε* (“when”) on a tablet of the Fq series from Thebes. This temporal clause acts as a header for this tablet and specifies the occasion on which *HORD* / (probably) barley was issued to the various recipients listed afterwards.

TH Fq 254 [+] 255

- .1 de-qa-no *HORD* T 1 V 2 Z 3 o-te, a-pi-e-qe, ke-ro-ta
.2 pa-ta, ma-ka *HORD* T 1 V 2 Z 2 a-ko-da-mo V 2
.3 o-po-re-i[] ma-di-je V 1 [] ka-ne-jo V 3
.4 ko-wa Z 2 a-pu-wa Z 2 ko-ru Z 2
etc.

Ruijgh who agrees along general lines with the interpretation of this series as proposed by the editors of the new Thebes tablets²⁶ takes *a-pi-e-qe* as an active causative aorist from the same root as Greek *ἔπομαι* / “to follow”. As a consequence, he suggests a translation of this word as “he made someone follow on both sides” with the practical sense of “he led a procession.”²⁷ On the other hand John Chadwick associates this word with *ἀμφιέπω* and speaks tentatively in favour of a translation as “he assembled around.”²⁸ The examples listed by Chadwick in order to determine the original meaning of both (*ἀμφι-έπω* and *ἔπομαι*) do not point to a religious context of these terms. Nevertheless, since the Fq tablets are likely to refer to rations given at a religious feast²⁹ the interpretation suggested by Ruijgh is certainly within the realms of possibility. For the

²⁵ Ruijgh 2006, 165–169.

²⁶ Aravantinos, Godart & Sacconi 2001, especially 363–369. On a more balanced view of the Fq series see Killen 2006, 81–103. The words *de-qa-no*, *pa-ta*, *ke-ro-ta* and especially *ma-ka* are much disputed. Compare for example the translation of the respective words given by Aravantinos, Godart & Sacconi 2001, 224 (“Pour le ‘banquetier’ ORGE 14 l.; lorsque Kerota? [i.e. anthroponym] a dressé la purée d’orge, pour Mère Terre ORGE 13,6 l.”) with the translation of the same words given by Palaima 2006, 145 (“for the dinner BARLEY 14 liters; when were brought into attendance all the elders for kneading BARLEY 13.6 liters”). No general consensus is likely to be achieved in the near future. However, it has to be stated that some of the interpretations proposed by Aravantinos, Godart & Sacconi 2001 are very problematic on linguistic and methodological grounds. On behalf of *de-qa-no* see e.g. Meier-Brügger 2006, 114.

²⁷ Ruijgh 2006, 165f. Cf. Duhoux 2008, 386f.

²⁸ Chadwick 1996–1997 (1999), 296–301.

²⁹ Killen 2006, 81–103; Hiller 2011, 180, 190–195. On a different view of the interpretation of this series see e.g. James 2002–2003 (2006).

time being, the exact interpretation of the term *a-pi-e-qe* must remain open.³⁰

KN Ga 1058, Od(1) 696: *te-o-po-ri-ja*

Next to tablet Tn 316, the best evidence within the Linear B documents for a religious procession is provided by the term *te-o-po-ri-ja*/*θεοφόρια, literally “the carrying of the god(s)”. This word, which appears twice on tablets from Knossos, is generally understood as the name of a religious festival in which a (terracotta) cult figurine representing a deity was carried in a procession.³¹

KN Ga 1058

te-o-po-ri-ja / *ma-sa PYC T 1*

KN Od(1) 696

- .1]e-pi-ro-pa-ja, / o-du-we ‘te-o-po-ri-ja’ M 2[
 .2] LANA 2 M 1

Some support for this interpretation of *te-o-po-ri-ja* is found in a Greek Bacchic inscription of Roman imperial date.³² It consists of a dedication by a large number of members of the sacred association devoted to the Bacchic mysteries. Among the list appear three female *κισταφόροι* (“chest-carriers”) and three *λικναφόροι* (“cradle-carriers”), one female *φαλλοφόρος* (“phallus-carrier”) as well as one male *πυρφόρος* (“carrier of the sacrificial fire”) and two male *θεοφόροι* (“god-carriers”). Al-

though the word *θεόφορος*/“possessed by a god” (with accent over second element of first part of compound) is far more frequent there can be no doubt that by analogy to the other titles composed in *-φόρος* the capital letters ΘΕΟΦΟΡΟΙ of this inscription have to be transcribed as *θεοφόροι* (with accent over first syllable of the second element). Obviously, this term refers to “god-carriers” bearing the statue of Dionysos in a cult procession.³³ A similar task is performed by a group at Syracuse called *Διονυσοφόροι*.³⁴ Furthermore, a title of a play by Sophocles called *ξοανηφόροι* (“image-carriers”) documents another expression of the same cult practice.³⁵

In Classical times, festival names ending in *-φόρια* like *Anthesphoria* or *Oschophoria* are widely attested. The focus of these festivals is the act of carrying cult equipment and offerings in a procession. At times the statue of a deity is carried along in the procession. The *Plynteria* at Athens and the *Tonaia* at Samos are well known examples.³⁶

Iconographic evidence for the carrying of a small figurine of a deity may be seen in the grave stele of Polyxena in Berlin which dates about 400 BC (*Fig. 1*). Usually Polyxena is taken as a priestess who holds a statuette of a goddess in her left hand.³⁷ A fresco fragment found in the area of the “Cult Centre” of Mycenae seems to represent a similar depiction of Late Bronze Age date (*Fig. 2*). This fragment is generally interpreted as representing two life-size hands holding a small female figurine in profile (albeit rendered more naturalistically than actual figurines) in the context of a procession.³⁸ Comparable figurines *in corpore* were found in the same area of the “Cult Centre”. According to the excavator these statu-

³⁰ On this term see also Meier-Brügger 2006, 111f. who argues for a translation as “ausführlich besprechen”.

³¹ Hiller 1984, 147–150; Hägg 2001, 145f.; Andrikou 2009, 33–35. According to the Linear B texts, different kinds of offerings (aromatic cyperus [PYC], textiles [*e-pi-ro-pa-ja*/cf. *λώπη*] and wool [LANA]) are used in the course of these festivals. Cf. Weilhartner 2005, 55f., 64f.

³² Cumont 1933. Here, as elsewhere, textual evidence from Classical and later periods is used to support interpretations made on the basis of the Linear B documents. By this, however, it is not meant to argue for a direct and unbroken continuation of cult and ritual practices over long periods of time. Nevertheless, in spite of the many differences between the Mycenaean world and the later Greek, there is some probability of a certain degree of ritual tradition in the religious sphere (i.e. transmission of inherited cult knowledge and instructions for associated practices). Cf. e.g. Guthrie 1959, 36; Dietrich 1994. Thus, it seems justified to use ancient Greek and Roman sources on processions for comparison reasons, especially insofar as more general aspects are concerned. However, this practice is not free of methodological difficulties. See e.g. Pakkanen 2000–2001, 81f. who provides a methodological approach for studying the relationship between continuity and change in early Greek religion. Cf. C. Morgan 1996, 41–46; Whitley 2009. On the use of written evidence from later Greek (and Roman) history to improve the understanding of the (limited) textual data of the Linear B documents within the field of religion see e.g. Palaima 2004, 221f., 225f.

³³ Cumont 1933, especially 244–254. On this meaning of *θεοφόρος* see Aischyl. fr. 225 (N.). Inscriptions from Sparta which refer to a feast of Poseidon called *Tainaria* bear the term *σιοφόρος* which has an identical meaning since *σιός* is lacon. for *θεός*. Cf. Nilsson 1906, 68: “Das größte Interesse erweckt der *σιοφόρος*, denn er setzt eine Prozession voraus, in der das Bild des Poseidon getragen wurde.”

³⁴ Hesych. s.v. Cf. Nilsson 1906, 311; Bömer 1952, 1942.

³⁵ Nilsson 1916, 316; Mantes 1990, 66f. On the carrying of *xoana* see e.g. Paus. 3.16.10 (ἡ δὲ ἱέρεια τὸ ξόανον ἐχουσα σφίσιν ἐφέστηκε) and *SIG*², 553 l. 41–42 (ὁ δὲ στεφανηφόρος ἄγων τὴν πομπὴν φερέτω ξόανα πάντων τῶν δώδεκα θεῶν ἐν ἐσθήσιν ὡς καλλίσταις).

³⁶ Nilsson 1906, 46–49; Parke 1987, 234–237. Cf. Heberdey 1904; Nilsson 1916, 314–317.

³⁷ Blümel 1966, 17f. (no. 6), fig. 12; Schild-Xenidou 1972, 30–32, 142; Mantes 1990, 66–69 with further literature. However, Schwarzmaier 2006, 175–211 interprets this stele as a depiction of a bride who dedicates a votive figurine. Therefore, as is discussed below, one can observe the same ambiguity in interpretation that is inherent in comparable depictions of the Late Bronze Age.

³⁸ E.g. Peterson 1981, 67 and ill. 65 who suggests a scene of a standing female figure handing the figurine to the hands of a facing seated figure. Immerwahr 1990, 119 takes the diminutive figurine not as a terracotta figurine but as “the facsimile of an actual female, perhaps conveying the idea of dedicating a child.” However, the woman’s fingers seem to hold a hollow, wheel-made statuette.



Fig. 1. Detail of the grave stele of Polyxena in Berlin (Schwarzmaier 2006, 178 fig. 2).

Fig. 2 (below, left). Fresco fragment from the "Cult Centre" of Mycenae (Immerwahr 1990, 120, fig. 33a).

Fig. 3 (below). Fresco fragment from the west slope rubbish deposit from Tiryns as reconstructed by C. Boulotis (Immerwahr 1990, 120, fig. 33b).

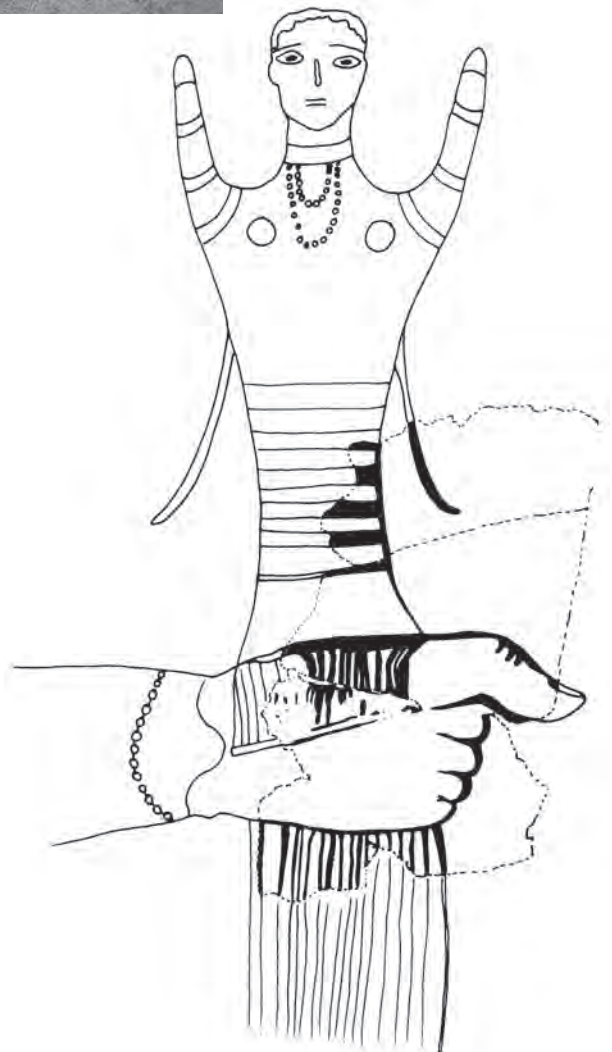
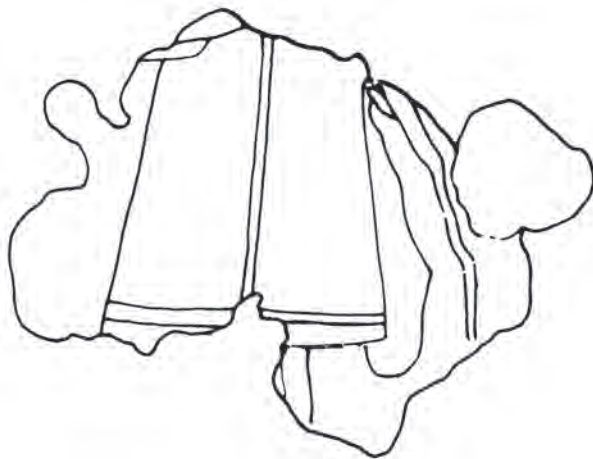
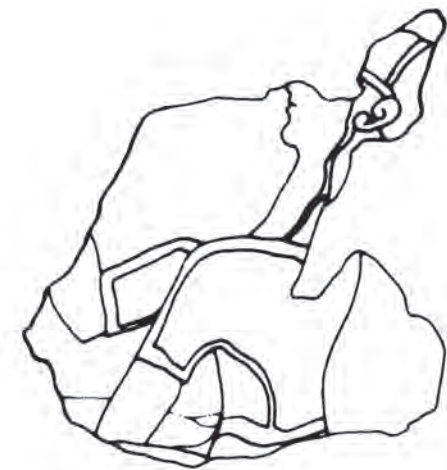


Fig. 4. *Larnax* from Tanagra (Spyropoulos 1974, pl. 10α).



ettes served as representations of deities and may have been cult images.³⁹ A similar scene seems to be depicted on a fresco fragment from a large rubbish deposit on the west slope of the citadel of Tiryns, if the restoration of a hand clasped around a wheel-made female figurine as proposed by Christos Boulotis is correct (Fig. 3).⁴⁰

On the basis of both the fresco fragments and the festival designation *te-o-po-ri-ja*, Stefan Hiller has imagined a religious ritual where idols are being carried in a procession on the “Processional Way” leading from the palace area on the top of the acropolis of Mycenae to the “Cult Centre” close to the fortification wall (or the other way round).⁴¹ A LH III *larnax* from Tanagra, where female mourners in procession are depicted next to a figure, presumably a priestess or a priest, holding what appears to be a large figurine, may be taken as another piece of evidence for this cult practice (Fig.

4).⁴² Finally, one more fresco fragment is to be mentioned in this context. It also was found in the area of the “Cult Centre” of Mycenae. This fragment seems to represent a white figurine (made of ivory?)—wearing a boar’s tusk helmet and carrying a winged griffin—which may be interpreted as being carried by a large scale participant of a procession (Fig. 5).⁴³ In any case, if these figurines depicted on the three fresco fragments and the *larnax* have divine status and are to be interpreted as cult images of a sort is far from certain.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, the term *te-o-po-ri-ja* strongly indicates that some kind of cult images have been actually carried in processions in the Late Bronze Age.

Terms in *-po-ro/-φόρος*

As has been stated in the introductory notes, there is a lot of iconographic evidence for carriers of gifts and cult equipment

³⁹ Taylour 1970, 277f. Cf. Moore & Taylour 1999, 89–93. Whereas Moore concurs with Taylour’s interpretation of the type A anthropomorphic figures as representations of deities (Moore & Taylour 1999, 89–93, pl. 12), he takes the monochrome Type B anthropomorphic figures as representations of cult celebrants (Moore & Taylour 1999, 93–101, 115, pls. 13–22). Mylonas 1983, 145, 210 interprets these figurines as *ἀποτρόπαια*. However, he too suggests a divine status for the figurine cupping her breasts (type A anthropomorphic figure, no. 68-1577).

⁴⁰ Boulotis 1979, especially 60, fig. 1. However, doubts have been raised about this assumption by Peterson 1981, 74f. and Wilson 2008, 25f.

⁴¹ Hiller 1984, 147–150. Cf. Mylonas 1983, 138f., fig. 107. On the route for ceremonial processions within the citadel and the close connection between the “Cult Centre” and the palace on the acropolis of Mycenae see Kilian 1992, 15–20; Hägg 1995, 389; Albers 2004, 125–130. On similar ritual processions in Tiryns see Kilian 1981, 56.

⁴² Spyropoulos 1974, pl. 10α; Immerwahr 1995, 116, fig. 7.5b. A possible three-dimensional Minoan example for a female holding up before her an idol meant to represent a deity may be seen in the so-called Mavrospelio “Kourotrophos” figural group as has been suggested by Stephanie Budin (2007–2008) following Bogdan Rutkowski (1981, 121).

⁴³ Immerwahr 1990, 121, 192; Blakolmer 2008, 264, pl. 54.7–8. Both authors argue for a large-scale female figure carrying an ivory “warrior statuette” as an offering in a procession. This interpretation depends on whether the white area at the top of the fragment separated by a horizontal black outline belongs to the finger of a processional figure.

⁴⁴ On the problems of interpreting clay and bronze figurines as images of deities see e.g. Blakolmer 2010, especially 31–35, 45–50 and Ruppenstein 2011 with further literature. A more optimistic view is held e.g. by Taylour 1970, 277f. and Kilian 1992, 21. See also Renfrew 1985, 22–24.



Fig. 5. Fresco fragment from the “Cult Centre” of Mycenae as reconstructed by F. Blakolmer (Blakolmer 2008, pl. 54.8).

in linear movement within Aegean art of the Late Bronze Age. Among the objects being carried are paraphernalia like double axes, offerings such as cloth or flowers and, above all, various forms of containers.⁴⁵ In written sources from Classical times which refer to later Greek cult practice these participants of a procession are regularly named after the object they carry. This is documented both by literary and epigraphical evidence.⁴⁶ These compounds of the very productive *-φόρος* type are not marked for feminine or masculine and can, therefore, be used for both women and men. Besides the examples already mentioned, among these compounds are female *Kanephoroi* (“basket-carriers”), *Hydriaphoroi* (“jug-carriers”), *Diphrophoroi* (“stool-carriers”) and *Skiadephoroi* (“sunshade-carriers”) as well as male *Skaphephoroi* (“tray-carriers”), *Thallophoroi* (“young olive branch-carriers”) and probably male *Hydriaphoroi* as well. All these terms designate female and male participants of a procession who carry equipment needed in the course of the Panathenaia festival at Athens.⁴⁷ And this list could be extended much further by examples from other festivals.

Within the Mycenaean corpus there are four occupational designations ending in *-po-ro* which are regularly taken as

compounds in *-φόρος*.⁴⁸ These terms may provide some additional textual evidence for ritual processions.⁴⁹

to-pa-po-ro

Among these terms with the second element in *-po-ro* is the word *to-pa-po-ro*. This designation appears on three tablets from Thebes (TH Av 101, Fq 341, Gp 184) and has received various interpretations. Among them are **στορπαφόροι* (“les porteurs de lumière” (literally “lightning carriers” and taken as “torch bearers”)⁵⁰ and **στορφαφόροι* (“rope-bearers”).⁵¹ However, the first element of the compound is likely to appear in PY Ub 1318 where *to-pa* is mentioned in the context of leather products. Along the lines of Chadwick’s proposal to link this term to later Greek *τάρπη* (“a large basket [with leather fastenings attached]”) an interpretation as **τορπαφόροι* (“basket-carriers”) seems preferable to other interpretations.⁵²

On Av 101—the lower part of a large page-shaped tablet—*to-pa-po-ro-i* appears next to *si-to/σίτος* (“grain, food”) and *ku-su-to-ro-qa* which seems to be related to *συστροφή* with the meaning “cumulative total”.⁵³ The text of this tablet reads as follows:

TH Av 101

	sup. mut.
.1	] vest. [
.2	] ḏa-ṛō VIR 1 vest.[
.3	] pō-me-ne VIR 2 ḏa[
.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[
.6a	] ku-su-to-ro-qa
.6b	] ṛe / ṣi-ṛō] to-pa-po-ṛō-ṛi[

to-pa-po-ro-i is clearly a recipient in the dative plural. Due to its appearance next to *ku-su-to-ro-qa* it may be taken as a kind of summarizing entry referring to the various recipients in the dative singular recorded by their name or trade in the

⁴⁵ Warren 2006, 260.

⁴⁶ See the list in Weilhartner 2013, 205f.

⁴⁷ Parke 1987, 58–63.

⁴⁸ Next to these occupational designations one finds both anthroponyms (e.g. *e-u-po-ro*) and toponyms (e.g. *e-na-po-ro*) in *-po-ro* as well.

⁴⁹ On these terms see also Weilhartner 2013, 192–202.

⁵⁰ Aravantinos, Godart & Sacconi 2001, 172. It should be noted, however, that this interpretation has received, correctly in my opinion, severe criticism. See e.g. Palaima 2003a, 115.

⁵¹ Bernabé 2012, especially 172.

⁵² Ventris & Chadwick 1973, 491. An interpretation of *to-pa-po-ro* along these lines was firstly proposed by Aravantinos 1999, 62 who takes them as “those who carry holy vessels”. The more balanced view of “basket-carriers” is found e.g. in Killen 2006, 99.

⁵³ On these terms see Aura Jorro 1985–1993, s.vv.

upper half of the tablet (e.g. *po-me-ne, ma-di-je, ko-ru-we*).⁵⁴ If the interpretation of the Av series as records of allocations of foodstuffs to participants in a religious festival as suggested by John Killen⁵⁵ is correct, *to-pa-po-ro* may denote a group of people with a certain function during this festival. This means that irrespective of their regular tasks on the occasion of that feast this group acts as *to-pa-po-ro*. An interpretation of this term as “basket-carriers” would clearly fit into the context of a religious feast and one could easily imagine a group performing a role in a procession which reminds one of the *κανηφόροι* of Classical Greek cult already referred to above. Additional support for this interpretation may be drawn from the iconographic evidence of Aegean art which shows that next to flowers, the objects carried by processional figures are generally vessels.⁵⁶

[?ka-]ra-to-po-ro (?)

A similar designation may occur on a tablet from Tiryns. Its text runs as follows:

TI AI 7

	sup. mut.		
.1		]	VIR 30[
.2		]	VIR 80 ka[
.3	]qe	VIR[
.4	]we	VIR 40 [
.5	]me-qe	VIR 20 a[
.6	]ja-ta[	] VIR 18	[
.7	[●]ra-to-po-ro	VIR 7[
.8		vacat	
.9	]ro-qe	VIR 128[
.10		vacat	
.11	vest.[
.12	e-wo-ro-qe	VIR[

The fragmentary state of the tablet rules out an interpretation of most of the words and the explanatory heading, if it ever existed, has been lost. Therefore, the precise nature of the text remains obscure, though it clearly constitutes a list of male groups as the logogram for man (VIR) indicates. Next to *e-wo-ro-qe*, which lacks a secure interpretation, the only word of any length appears in line .7. This term seems to be another

compound in *-po-ro*. According to the text-critical apparatus there is room for only one sign before]*ra-to-po-ro*. On the basis of *ka-ra-to/κάλαθος* (“wicker-basket”) which is found on two tablets from Mycenae (MY Ge 603.1a, Ge 605.1) in the context of collecting aromatic spices the editors of the tablet from Tiryns tentatively suggest a restoration *ka-ra-to-po-ro* (“basket-carriers”).⁵⁷ On the tablets from Mycenae the word *ka-ra-to* stands before the logogram *155^{VAS} which represents some sort of a container resembling a basket.⁵⁸ If the restoration *ka-ra-to-po-ro* is correct this term, theoretically at least, could be another reference to a group of males who are temporarily engaged in ritual activity where they carry some kind of containers in connection with a procession.⁵⁹ However, due to features of this tablet which recur in the Pylian An “coast-guard” tablets a military context for this list and, therefore, for the term *ka-ra-to-po-ro* is equally possible.⁶⁰ The fact that this text lists men in relatively large groups seems in any event to speak against the interpretation of [ka-]*ra-to-po-ro* as participants of a procession, based on our current textual (and iconographic) evidence.

di-pte-ra-po-ro

The third term which ends in *-po-ro* is *di-pte-ra-po-ro*. This term is frequently transcribed as *διφθεραφόρος and interpreted as a title of a cult functionary in the sense of “wearer of animal hide”.⁶¹ The well-known representation of women and men dressed in hide skirts on the LM IIIA limestone sarcophagus of Hagia Triada⁶² is generally taken as a pictographic translation of the term. Human figures wearing dresses of the same or similar kind appear also on wall paintings from Keos

⁵⁴ Bernabé 2012, 167–169. An interpretation of *po-me-ne* which is followed by VIR 2 as nominative plural or dual is equally possible. However, since the parallel entry *a-ko-da-mo* (followed by VIR 2) is most likely a personal name I prefer to take all entries on tablet Av 101.1–5 as dative singulars. On *a-ko-da-mo/a-ko-ro-da-mo* see García-Ramón 2006, 45–50.

⁵⁵ Killen 2006, 98–102.

⁵⁶ Peterson 1981, 111–119.

⁵⁷ Godart, Killen & Olivier 1983, 417 n. 3. However, as the editors note, “there is nothing before]*ra-to-po-ro* on the present record to suggest that a *ka* might have preceded it.” This term may also occur on KN X 5513:]*ra-to-po-ro*[. Due to its fragmentary condition this tablet again provides no clue to the interpretation of the word. In any event, the word may be complete. If it is, this term may be another occupational designation in *-po-ro*. However, no interpretation for **ra-to* suggests itself. Alternatively, it may also be a personal name (cf. *e-u-po-ro*). On the other hand, a pointer to its interpretation as occupational designation may be seen in *ra-to-po-ro* which may be read on PY Ad 686. Unfortunately, since various other readings are also possible (*ta-ra-to-po-ro, ka-wo-ta-ra-to-po-ro* and *ka-wo-ta-ra-u-po-ro*) any conjecture about this entry must remain speculative.

⁵⁸ On the variant forms of this logogram presenting no handles as well as two handles see Vandenabeele & Olivier 1979, 273–275, pl. 137.

⁵⁹ As it is well known, in Classical times *κάλαθος* is used to denote a basket carried in a procession in honour of Demeter. Cf. Nilsson 1906, 350–352.

⁶⁰ Godart, Killen & Olivier 1983, 417f.

⁶¹ Olivier 1959; 1960, 122–125 (122: “[L]’acolyte revêtu, dans l’exercice de ses fonctions, d’une peau d’animal”); Lindgren 1973, 34f. Both authors discuss also other interpretations of this term.

⁶² Long 1974.

as well as on seal images.⁶³ According to the iconographic evidence the hide skirt is taken to be a garment commonly worn by cult personnel of both sexes during processions as a badge of their cultic position.⁶⁴ Another kind of animal garment may be worn by a red figure in a seemingly religious context on a fresco fragment from Tiryns. This figure is also at times identified as *di-pte-ra-po-ro*.⁶⁵ However, it should be noted that people wearing animal hides (of various types) are by no means restricted to depictions of ceremonial scenes.⁶⁶

In Classical Greek διφθέρα properly refers to prepared animal hides or skins, that is to say to a piece of leather or anything made of leather.⁶⁷ Consequently, in the Onomastikon of Julius Pollux (7,70) διφθέρα shows up as a designation of leather garment (σκύτιναι ἐσθήτες). As regards Mycenaean *di-pte-ra*, there is some reason to believe that a meaning “worked animal hide” i.e. leather does apply as well. For instance, Ub 1318 from Pylos records allocations of both *di-pte-ra* of various animals (deer [*<di-pte-ra> e-ra-pe-ja/ἐλάφεια*], lamb [*<di-pte-ra> we-re-ne-ja/*φρηνεία*], goat [*<di-pte-ra> a₃-za/cf. αἴγεις*], pig [*<di-pte-ra> we-e-wi-ja/cf. ὕεις*], and probably oxen [when not specified: *di-pte-ra/διφθέρα*]) and ox-hides not yet tanned (*wi-ri-no/ρίνός*) to five individuals who seem to be responsible for leather-processing operations.⁶⁸ In many cases the items which were to be manufactured are explicitly stated, among them “saddlebags” (*ka-tu-re-wi-ja/cf. καθύλη*) and “sandals/shoes” (*pe-di-ra/πέδιλα*). At times the *di-pte-ra* are described as “red-coloured” (*e-ru-ta-ra/ἐρυθραί*). This speaks in favour of taking *di-pte-ra* as a term denoting hides

which were already tanned and dyed lacking only some final working.⁶⁹ On the inventory record PY Ub 1315 *di-pte-ra₃*, which appear exclusively amongst finished leather items, are again described as *e-ru-ta-ra*. This again is a pointer to take *di-pte-ra* as a designation for worked leather. The animal hide not yet tanned (i.e. the hide with hair on it) is called either *ρίνός* (“ox-hide” cf. *wi-ri-no*) or *κώας* (“fleece” cf. *ko-wo*) depending on the animal from which the hides are taken.⁷⁰ It is particularly telling that the appropriate logograms of the Mycenaean script show drawings of hides, *152/𐀀 and *153/𐀁. To allow differentiation they are surcharged with syllabic abbreviations, *152 with 𐀀/wi (representing *wi-ri-no*), *153 with 𐀁/ko (representing *ko-wo*).⁷¹ On the whole, *di-pte-ra/διφθέρα* cannot refer to the hide skirts with the hair still attached as depicted by means of an s-pattern on the Hagia Triada sarcophagus. Consequently, the designation *di-pte-ra-po-ro* does not seem to be the appropriate term for cult officials wearing this kind of clothing.

As regards the second element of the term, there is no clear evidence for *-po-ro* to denote a *wearer* in Mycenaean texts. On the basis of the verb form *pe-re/φέρει* which—as has been shown above—is clearly used with the meaning of “to bring, to carry”⁷² and on analogy with the other terms ending in *-po-ro*, one may wonder if *di-pte-ra-po-ro* refers to a person who is *carrying di-pte-ra* rather than *wearing* them.⁷³ Along the lines of the interpretation of *di-pte-ra* proposed above *di-pte-ra-po-ro* may be seen as a designation for a cult functionary who

⁶³ L. Morgan 1988, 98, fig. 61d. Some figures of the Procession Fresco from Knossos may also wear hide skirts. Cf. Reusch 1956, 57; Peterson 1981, 33. On depictions of figures wearing animal skirts on seal images see e.g. *CMS* II.7, nos. 11–14 and next note.

⁶⁴ N. Marinatos 1993, 135–137; Wedde 2004, 164; Blakolmer 2008, 266, pl. 54.9. The rigorous distinction between hide skirt and fleece skirt made by Wedde (2004, 170 n. 115) seems to go beyond the iconographic evidence. As N. Marinatos 1993, 135 states, the small size of an intaglio is likely to preclude the rendition of the shaggy texture of an animal hide. The examples given by Wedde 2004, 170 n. 115 to refute Marinatos’s claim (*CMS* I, no. 226; VIII, no. 146) represent a different kind of garment which shows neither the rounded lower edge nor the pointed appendage at the back (indicating the tail).

⁶⁵ Vermeule 1974, 50f., fig. 13a; Kilian 1981, 50. On the possible interpretation of this figure as a priest *vel sim.* disguised as an animal in a ritual setting see Weilhartner 2007, 345f.

⁶⁶ See e.g. the fresco fragment from Pylos (22 H 64) showing a combat between armoured “Mycenaean elite warriors” (with boar’s tusk helmets and greaves) and “country folk” clad in sheepskin (Lang 1969, 71f., pl. M). Male figures wearing animal skins appear on another fresco fragment from Pylos (31 H nws). Since one of these figures seems to hold some kind of animal (a hare?) this scene is probably concerned with hunting (Lang 1969, 74f., pl. N).

⁶⁷ Liddell, Scott & Jones 1996, s.v.

⁶⁸ Ventris & Chadwick 1973, 489–493. See especially p. 492: “Etymology and classical usage both suggest that διφθέρα (cf. δέψω) refers to the tanned hide, *ρίνός* to the raw hide.” Cf. Flouda 2000, 227–229.

⁶⁹ Naturally, dyeing is done after the tanning process. Cf. Forbes 1966, 1–9. Remains of red-dyed leather were found in a tholos tomb near Kazarma in the Peloponnese. Cf. Protonotariou-Deilaki 1969, 6. KN U 8210 may record one piece of white (*re-u-ka/λευκά*) *di-pte-ra* (by means of the logogram *DI+PTE*). *ro-u-si-je-wi-ja* is another adjective qualifying *di-pte-ra*. On the basis of Greek *ρόυς* “sumach” (*Rhus coriaria*) Melena 1987, 215f. has explained this term as “sumach-dyed (leather)”.

⁷⁰ Liddell, Scott & Jones 1996, s.vv.

⁷¹ Sacconi 1967, 98–102.

⁷² Next to PY Tn 316 *pe-re* occurs on the following documents: KN Od 562, PY Cc 1284 and Vn 1314.

⁷³ A similar proposal has recently been made by Nikoloudis 2012, 292 n. 34 who tentatively argues for a “figure responsible for transporting (‘carrying’) and ensuring the safe arrival of the processed hides (*di-pte-ra* properly refers to *treated* hides) from the leather-processing area(s) to the palace, or elsewhere, for distribution or further working.” Although we cannot rule out the possibility that this title is to be regarded as having had a more or less profane occupation I would slightly prefer a religious interpretation of *di-pte-ra-po-ro* (see below). I am very grateful to Stephanie Nikoloudis for sharing her paper with me before publication. In the Classical Greek corpus compounds in *-φόρος* denote persons who *carry* something (e.g. *λασανοφόρος*/“night-stool carrier”) as well as persons who *wear* something (e.g. *κωδιοφόρος*/“clad in sheepskin”). However, the compounds denoting a *carrier* do not only exceed the number of compounds denoting a *wearer* by far, but also “to carry” is the original sense of the word. A more detailed discussion on this topic is found in Weilhartner 2013, 191–209.

carries finished leather goods (garments?) manufactured from hides of animals sacrificed on a previous occasion.⁷⁴

Some support for this suggestion seems to be provided by tablet C 954 from Knossos if the term actually occurs on it.

KN C 954

- .1]OVIS^f 1 mo-ro-qa OVIS^f 1 ke-to-ro OVIS^f 1 we-wo-
ni-jo ÇAP^f[
.2]kū-no-o CAP^f 1 pe-ri-te-u OVIS^f 1 me-tu-ro CAP^f 1 si-[
.3]CAP^f 1 di[]po-ro-i ÇAP^f* 1[
verso
.1]-ne-wa CAP^f 1

This tablet lists persons recorded by their personal name (e.g. *ke-to-ro*) or title (e.g. *mo-ro-qa*) next to female single sheep (OVIS^f) or goats (CAP^f). Among them is the dative plural *di* []*po-ro-i* which is usually restored as *di-pte-ra-po-ro-i*. Like similar texts from the same find-spot the animals of this tablet were presumably destined for consumption at a state-organized sacrificial feast.⁷⁵ Within this context the occurrence of cult functionaries bearing finished leather goods in a procession would come as no surprise.

On the tablets from Pylos there is one *di-pte-ra-po-ro* known by name, *o-ke-u*, who holds a lease of a certain parcel of land (PY Ea 814).⁷⁶ Since this designation is attested on two further tablets in the dative singular (PY Fn 50, Un 219) all instances may refer to one and the same person. On Un 219 *di-pte-ra-po-ro* occurs along with theonyms (e.g. *a-ti-mi-te*/Artemis, *e-ma-a*./Hermes) and occupational terms which are generally considered to refer to cult personnel (e.g. *da-ko-ro*/ζακόρος, “temple attendant”).⁷⁷ This context gave rise to the religious classification of the term *di-pte-ra-po-ro*. However, due to the appearance of titles (*ra-wa-ke-tal*/*λαφαγέτας, “leader of the people”) and occupational terms (*a-ke-ti-ri-ja*/ἀσκήτρια, “female workers in the textile industry”)⁷⁸ of the profane sphere a religious interpretation of *di-pte-ra-po-ro* is by no means certain. In a similar way, the context of Fn 50 allows for both a profane and a religious interpretation. Occupational designations like *mi-ka-tal*/*μίκτης (“mixer”) or *a-to-po-qo*/*ἄρτοποιός (“baker”) which occur along with *di-pte-ra-po-ro* on this tablet are frequently taken as titles of

“desservants de sanctuaire”.⁷⁹ However, due to the lack of a directly occupational context it is difficult to establish if their activity belongs primarily to the religious or to the secular sector.⁸⁰ The landholders and the sub-lesers of the Ea series belong generally to the profane sector (among them an unguent boiler [*a-re-po-zo-o*/*ἀλειφάζος], various herdsmen [*po-me/πομήν*, **qo-qo-ta*/cf. βουβότας, *su-qo-ta*/συβώτης]) and three leather(?)-sewers [*ra-pte*/*ράπτήρ]).⁸¹ This may imply that *di-pte-ra-po-ro* should be counted as a secular functionary. On the other hand, among the landholders of this series occur also a priest (*i-je-re-u*/ιερέυς) named *sa-ke-re-u* (Ea 756) as well as the sacrificial hearth (*e-ka-ra*/ἑσχάρα) of Dionysos (Ea 102).⁸² Therefore, some of the landholders of the Ea series clearly belong to the religious sphere. If the assumption is correct that *di-pte-ra-po-ro* functions as a designation for a person who *carries* finished leather products, an interpretation of this title within a religious realm is perhaps more likely than within the process of leather manufacture. While it is difficult to imagine that there would be a peculiar designation for this activity in the profane sphere,⁸³ the many compounds in -φόρος of later Greek denoting cult officials as well as participants of ritual processions serve as a firm background for a possible religious interpretation of the Mycenaean term.⁸⁴

ka-ra-wi-po-ro

The last compound to be discussed is *ka-ra-wi-po-ro*. It appears exclusively in the tablets from Pylos and all instances seem to concern one and the same person.⁸⁵ This term is generally interpreted as *κλαφιφόρος/“key-bearer” which corresponds to Doric κλακοφόρος and Attic κλειδοῦχος.⁸⁶ As the personal name *ka-pa-ti-ja*/*Καρπαθία shows (PY Eb 338, Ep 704) this title was held by a female functionary. Due to its regular appearance next to a/the *i-je-re-ja*/ἱέρεια (“priestess”: PY Un 6, Ed 317, Ep 704. Cf. Ep 539) this title clearly belongs to the religious sphere. According to the function of a κλειδοῦχος in historical times⁸⁷ the *ka-ra-wi-po-ro* is usually seen as a priestess *vel sim.* who is in charge of the keys of a sanctuary, like Theano, the priestess of Athene in Troy (Hom. *Il.* 6.297–300).

⁷⁴ On the suggestion that the field of activity of a *di-pte-ra-po-ro* is related to sacrificial animals see Sacconi 1967, 133f.

⁷⁵ Weilhartner 2005, 80f.

⁷⁶ Lindgren 1973, 34f. The actual text has *di-ra-po-ro*. However, since the scribe of this tablet also wrote *o-to* instead of *o-na-to* the emendation *di-<pte>-ra-po-ro* seems virtually certain.

⁷⁷ Olivier 1960, 100–105. However, as Lindgren 1973, 31 rightly remarks “there need not be any original or primary cult connection for the designation as such.”

⁷⁸ On these terms see Aura Jorro 1985–1993, s.vv.

⁷⁹ Olivier 1960, 47–56, 68–74, 141f. The *mi-ka-ta* are taken as “mélanges d’offrandes liquides”, the *a-to-po-qo* as “cuisers de gâteaux d’offrandes.” Cf. Lupack 2008, 78f.

⁸⁰ Lindgren 1973, 27f., 98.

⁸¹ Nikoloudis 2012, 290–294. On these terms see Aura Jorro 1985–1993, s.vv.

⁸² On tablet PY Ea 102 see Weilhartner 2004, 25–28.

⁸³ Olivier 1959, 171 n. 38.

⁸⁴ On a list of appropriate compounds in -φόρος see Weilhartner 2013, 205f.

⁸⁵ Lindgren 1973, 72f.

⁸⁶ Aura Jorro 1985, s.v.

⁸⁷ Kohl 1922.

In Greek inscriptions of historical times there are several instances which imply that the “carrying of the keys” in a procession is an important ritual activity.⁸⁸ This is particularly evident in the case of the priestess of Hekate at Lagina in Caria named κλειδοφόρος, who carries the key in an annual procession called κλειδὸς πομπή or κλειδὸς ἀγωγή (“key-procession”).⁸⁹ Another procession of this kind, equally referred to as κλειδὸς ἀγωγή, is held in honour of Zeus Panamaros again in Caria.⁹⁰ In a similar way, the Mycenaean *ka-ra-wi-po-ro* may also be involved in carrying the keys in a procession.

Another interpretation of the Mycenaean term *ka-ra-wi-po-ro* is proposed by Herbert Bannert.⁹¹ On the basis of the use of κλείς/“key” in Classical Greek which points—in his opinion—to an original meaning of “knotted loop”⁹² he takes **ka-ra-wi* as the Mycenaean term for the “sacral knot”. Accordingly he identifies *ka-ra-wi-po-ro* as a designation for the “wearer of the sacral knot” and refers to female figures in Aegean iconography wearing this kind of garment (e.g. “La Parisienne”).⁹³ However, as has been shown above there is no clear evidence for *-po-ro* to denote “wearer” in Mycenaean texts. Moreover, the term κλειδοῦχος suggests by itself that the keeping of keys involves an intrinsic function of priestesses and priests.⁹⁴ Therefore, a similar interpretation seems preferable for the Mycenaean equivalent as well. As a consequence, I take the traditional interpretation of *ka-ra-wi-po-ro* as “key-bearer” to be correct—whatever nature, form or function these keys may have had.

Conclusions

Due to the nature of the Linear B tablets these written documents do not provide us with detailed insight into the course of ritual processions in the Aegean Late Bronze Age. Nevertheless, some lexical evidence related to this actual Mycenaean cult practice is likely to exist. For instance, both the general context of PY Tn 316 and the lexical items *i-je-to*, *pe-re* and *a-ke* point to religious processions taking place at various sanctuaries. In the course of these activities vessels—which I view as permanent donations manufactured more or less contemporary with the last phase of the palace administration (see Appendix)—are carried in a procession as gifts to the deities. More clear textual evidence for a religious ceremony of this kind is provided by the term *te-o-po-ri-ja*. This word is generally understood as the name of a religious festival in which a (terracotta) cult figurine representing a deity was carried in a procession. Possible iconographic evidence for this cult practice may be seen in various fresco fragments. If the proposed interpretations of the four compounds in *-po-ro* would prove to be correct there would be even more lexical evidence for this important ritual. Although it is not possible to gain certainty in this matter the textual and linguistic analysis of these words as well as the iconographic evidence of the Aegean Bronze Age makes it worth considering that at least some of the compounds in *-po-ro* denote women and men whose description reflects activities they have performed in connection with ritual processions. In any event, next to the fairly substantial amount of iconographic documentation for the carriers of gifts for the deities within Aegean art of the Late Bronze Age some additional information about processions can be gained from the Linear B tablets.

⁸⁸ Nilsson 1906, 400f., 428; Bömer 1952, 1919–1920 (nos. 26, 31), 1922 (no. 40) (?), 1943 (no. 146), 1961 (no. 240). This epigraphical evidence of sacred keys carried in procession is also mentioned by Liddell, Scott & Jones, s.v. κλείς I.3.

⁸⁹ Nilsson 1906, 400f.

⁹⁰ Bömer 1952, 1961 (no. 240).

⁹¹ Bannert 2000.

⁹² Frisk 1973, 868 takes a different view on the original meaning of κλείς: “Die ursprüngliche Bedeutung des Wortes war wohl ‘Nagel, Pflock, Haken’ o.ä., Geräte, die seit alters zum Verschluss der Türe verwandt worden sind.”

⁹³ On this fresco fragment see Immerwahr 1990, 176, pl. 44 with further literature.

⁹⁴ Mantes 1990, 28–65.

Appendix: The chronological classification of the vessels on PY Tn 316

Among the vessels recorded on Tn 316 are the logograms for the *kylix* (*215^{VAS}; Fig. 6) and for the chalice (*216^{VAS}; Fig. 7). At first sight, the best correlates in stone and in metal for the chalice as well as for the *kylix* known from the archaeologi-



Fig. 6. Linear B logogram *215^{VAS} (detail from Godart 2009, 100).



Fig. 7. Linear B logogram *216^{VAS} (detail from Godart 2009, 100).

cal record date to a period that lies long before the LH IIIB destruction horizon in which most of the Linear B tablets from Pylos, including Tn 316, were found. For example, Frieda Vandenabeele and Jean-Pierre Olivier point to Cretan stone vessels, mainly from Kato Zakros, resembling logogram *216^{VAS}.⁹⁵ All of them belong to the period MM III/LM I. Likewise vessels came to light at Akrotiri, Thera and at Mycenae.⁹⁶ A somewhat later example made of silver showed up in Dendra (LH IIIA).⁹⁷

As regards the archaeological correlates in metal for the *kylix* one may immediately think of the famous set of four similar two-handled golden cups—with dog's heads on the tops of the handles—found in the 19th century in the area south of Grave Circle A at Mycenae.⁹⁸ These cups form part of the so-called Acropolis Treasure, the chronological context of which is not clear. However, due to their shape these cups are best

assigned to LH IIIA1.⁹⁹ Another metal example of similar shape, made of bronze, comes from the Zapher Papoura cemetery near Knossos (probably LM IIIA).¹⁰⁰

Due to these early correlates Tom Palaima made the suggestion to view the precious vessels recorded on tablet Tn 316 as sacred “heirlooms” associated with elite drinking ceremonies repeatedly used at an annual ritual transference from the palatial stores to the various deities listed.¹⁰¹ As a further argument for this assumption he refers to the depiction of the upper body of a two-handled *kylix* rendered in blue (indicating silver) and of a tall, slender stem with parts of the base painted yellow (indicating gold) restored by Evans as a chalice on fragments belonging to the Campstool Fresco from Knossos.¹⁰²

Irrespective of the exact chronological classification of the fresco¹⁰³ there are other iconographic parallels for the chalice and the *kylix* which date considerably later than the early archaeological correlates in stone and metal. Among them are (a) a fragmentary LH IIIA *krater* from Enkomi known as the “Sunshade Krater” which has a chalice floating in the air next to four other vessels for drinking and pouring liquids (Fig. 8), (b) a fragment of a LH IIIC collar-necked amphora from Tiryns which shows a seated, presumably female figure on a high-backed throne holding up a high-stemmed, probably metallic *kylix* (while chariots race around the vessel) (Fig. 9) and (c) a fragment of a LH IIIC *krater* from Lefkandi with a high-stemmed *kylix* placed inside a *krater* both with two handles (Fig. 10).¹⁰⁴ Moreover, although most of the metal vessels which have survived belong to the early period of the Mycenaean age several fragments of a silver cup with numer-

⁹⁹ Hood 1978, 153–170, especially 167, fig. 148; Matthäus 1980, 259, pl. 76.6.

¹⁰⁰ Matthäus 1980, 259f.

¹⁰¹ Palaima 1999, 440, 450f., 456. Cf. Sacconi 1987. It should be noted that in this article Palaima views the golden cups with dog's heads on the handles referred to above as finds from Grave Circle A. Therefore, he wrongly assigns them to LH I.

¹⁰² Evans 1935, 388–390, figs. 323–325. Cf. Immerwahr 1990, 176.

¹⁰³ The early dating (LM I) mentioned by Palaima 1999, 440 goes back to Evans 1935, 396 and is reiterated by Vandenabeele & Olivier 1979, 212, 215. However, the Campstool Fresco is no longer assigned to LM I: Immerwahr 1990, 176 suggests a LM II/III date, Hood 2005, 62 tentatively proposes a date “as late as early LM IIIB.” In a similar way, Palaima's date for the Tiryns ring (LH I) will not find unanimous agreement. Cf. Hiller 1978, 94 with n. 7.

¹⁰⁴ Fig. 8: Vermeule & Karageorghis 1982, 21f., pl. 3.21. Fig. 9: Kilian 1980, especially 26–28. Fig. 10: Crouwel 2006, 240f., pl. 71. Other examples of stemmed *kylikes* (with and without handles) raised by female and male individuals are depicted on a LH III terracotta *larnax* from Tanagra (Fig. 11) and on a LM IIIB *larnax* from Episkopi, Crete. Cf. Spyropoulos 1973, 21, pl. 10β; Kilian 1980, 29; Watrous 1991, 301, pl. 93a. Within this context I would also like to refer to a fragment of a well modelled hand from a LH IIIB terracotta figurine of about half life-size found at Amyklai which grasps the foot of what seems to be a *kylix*. Cf. Buchholz & Karageorghis 1971, 103, 378 (no. 1247); Kilian 1980, 28f.

⁹⁵ Vandenabeele & Olivier 1979, 214. Cf. Warren 1969, 36f.; Hiller 1978, 91–94.

⁹⁶ S. Marinatos 1972, pl. 67; Vandenabeele & Olivier 1979, 214, fig. 142.

⁹⁷ Persson 1931, 51f., fig. 30, pl. 17.

⁹⁸ Thomas 1938–1939 (1942). Cf. Vandenabeele & Olivier 1979, 211, fig. 139.



Fig. 8. Fragmentary crater from Enkomi (Vermeule & Karageorghis 1982, pl. 3.21).

Fig. 9 (below). Fragment of a collar-necked amphora from Tiryns (Kilian 1980, pl. 10.2).

ous pieces of gold and niello inlays of bearded human heads found in the surface soil above the destruction horizon in the area of the propylon of the Palace of Pylos suggest that vessels of silver were produced throughout the Palatial period.¹⁰⁵ Further evidence for this assumption is provided by a recent find of a remarkable golden *kylix* (Fig. 12) in a richly furnished cist tomb at Kouvaras in Akarnania of the final phase of the Mycenaean period.¹⁰⁶ Although the date of this burial is rather late (it may be Submycenaean, or even Early Protogeometric) the excavator proposes a LH IIIB or IIIC date of production for the *kylix* by referring to clay specimens of comparable shape which date to this period.¹⁰⁷ Like the golden *kylix* from Kouvaras the clay specimens referred to are comparable to the shape of the vessels depicted on tablet Tn 316. As is well known, a great number of these examples in clay were found at the Palace of Pylos.¹⁰⁸

Therefore, there is ample evidence for the existence of vessels resembling logogram *215^{VAS} contemporary with the date of the Linear B documents from Pylos. The same holds true for logogram *216^{VAS}, although on a far more restricted basis. In any event, some clay specimens of a vessel shape resembling



this logogram assignable to LH IIIB have been found. The following three examples of this rare mainland form may be mentioned:

(a) One example was found in Pylos Tholos III which lies about one kilometre south of the palace.¹⁰⁹ The ceramic evidence indicates that this tholos served for burials from LH II until the end of the 13th century BC. Therefore, the chronological context of the chalice is not clear. However, it has on its badly worn surface a framed vertical net panel. As Penelope Mountjoy points out this motif appears again on a

¹⁰⁵ Blegen & Rawson 1966, 57f., figs. 261–263.

¹⁰⁶ Stavropoulou-Gatsi 2009, 417, figs. 732–733. I owe this reference to the kindness of Florian Ruppenstein.

¹⁰⁷ Stavropoulou-Gatsi, Jung & Mehofer 2012, 250f. I thank the authors for allowing me to see their paper before publication.

¹⁰⁸ Blegen & Rawson 1966, especially 119–128, figs. 325, 328. Cf. Säflund 1980. See also the list of various shapes of kylikes from different regions provided by Mountjoy 1999, 1228f. with cross references to figures and descriptions.

¹⁰⁹ Blegen *et al.* 1973, 73–95, especially 93f., fig. 174.1.

deep bowl from the North-East-Building from the Palace of Pylos as well as on a piriform jar from Laconia.¹¹⁰ Since she assigns both these vessels to Transitional LH IIIB2–LH IIIC Early the chalice seems to belong to the final use of Tholos III. It is interesting to note that among the material from this tomb unpainted clay *kylikes* have been found which also belong to this late period.¹¹¹

(b) A second example is the lower half of a chalice that comes from a large tholos-shaped tomb at Pellana in Laconia. This example is assigned by Mountjoy to LH IIIB.¹¹²

(c) The third example known to me comes from Boeotia, from a small cemetery near the village Kallithea, southeast of Thebes. Only the upper half is preserved. Although the excavator proposes a LH IIIA2 date for this fragment, Stefan Hiller regards a LH IIIB date as equally possible. In any event, he refers to vessels of similar shape and decoration from Ugarit that showed up within a LH IIIB context.¹¹³

Thus, on archaeological grounds there would appear to be no need of an interpretation of the vessels recorded on tablet Tn 316 as ceremonial “heirlooms”. In view of the occupational designation *ku-ru-su-wo-ko*/*χρυσοφοργός (“goldsmith”) which is attested within the tablets from Pylos, a production of the 13 gold (and maybe silver) vessels listed on Tn 316 contemporary with the date of the tablet lies certainly within the realms of possibility. By



Fig. 10. Fragment of a crater from Lefkandi (Crouwel 2006, pl. 71).

all means, the existence of four goldsmiths at the place *a-nu-wa* (PY An 207) points to sufficient resources in gold to provide such specialists with work.¹¹⁴

In addition, there is another point which actually contradicts the assumption that the vessels recorded on Tn 316

¹¹⁰ Chalice: Mountjoy 1999, 310f., 352, 350 fig. 119 (no. 107). Bowl: Mountjoy 1999, 351 fig. 120 (no. 111). Jar: Mountjoy 1999, 280 fig. 94 (no. 157).

¹¹¹ Blegen *et al.* 1973, 92f., figs. 173.4–7.

¹¹² Mountjoy 1999, 278. Cf. Spyropoulos 1982 (1989), pl. 61γ.

¹¹³ Spyropoulos 1970, 328f., fig. 4; Hiller 1978, 95f. with n. 1.

¹¹⁴ Bendall 2007, 242.



Fig. 11. Larnax from Tanagra (Spyropoulos 1973, pl. 10β).



Fig. 12. Golden kylix from Kouvaras in Akarnania (Stavropoulou-Gatsi 2009, 417, fig. 733).

were in the possession of the palace and repeatedly transferred from the palatial stores to the particular sanctuaries as sacred paraphernalia to be exhibited at ceremonial processions. The culmination of a *religious* procession is not the display of certain items but the transfer of objects to a divinity by the way of an offering.¹¹⁵ Accordingly, the metal vessels recorded on the text were explicitly termed as “gifts” (*do-ra*/δῶρα) for the gods indicating that the concept of offering was the main feature. Within the Linear B corpus *do-ra* appears only in this context. However, this word is related to the Mycenaean nouns *do-so-mo*/*δοσμός and *a-pu-do-si*/*ἀπύδοσις. Both these terms denote specific obligations to deliver goods.¹¹⁶ As *do-ra* itself these terms

are derived from the verb *δίδομι* (cf. *di-do-si*). This verb has the basic meaning of “to give something” and makes explicit that particular goods become the property of another owner.¹¹⁷ As the textual evidence shows, both the noun and the verbal forms derived from *δίδομι* make clear that the goods recorded change ownership. This is documented in profane contexts like taxation payments (e.g. PY Ma series) as well as in religious offering contexts (e.g. PY Un 718).¹¹⁸ Along these lines, it seems clear that the metal vessels which are described as *do-ra* would become the property of the respective deities. Further evidence for this interpretation is provided by the use of the word *δῶρα* within the same context in the Homeric epics: gifts offered to gods are commonly called *δῶρα* and the very ritual act is often phrased with a verbal form of *φέρω*.¹¹⁹ On the whole, it seems extremely

¹¹⁵ Boulotis 1987, 150–153, especially 151: “Mögen auch solche Schau-prozessionen veranstaltet worden sein, als Kultakt bleibt jedoch das Moment des Gabenbringens das entscheidendere und damit auch für die bildliche Wiedergabe—wie das ägäische Themenrepertoire zeigt—bei weitem sinnvollere.” Cf. Immerwahr 1990, 119; Peterson 1981, 39: “The iconography of the processional theme as displayed in wall painting and other media [...] invests this mural [*i.e.* the Procession Fresco from Knossos] with a religious meaning, namely a ceremony related to bringing offerings to the goddess.”

¹¹⁶ Aura-Jorro 1985, s.vv.

¹¹⁷ Liddell, Scott & Jones 1996, s.v.

¹¹⁸ Palaima 1999, 451.

¹¹⁹ Cf. e.g. Hom. *Il.* 6.293–294: τῶν ἐν’ ἀειραμένη Ἐκάβη φέρε δῶρον Ἀθήνη, | ὅς κάλλιστος ἔην ποικίλασιν ἠδὲ μέγιστος. *Od.* 16.184–185: ἀλλ’ ἰληθ’ ἵνα τοι κεχαρισμένα δώομεν ἱρὰ | ἠδὲ χρύσεια δῶρα, τετυγμένα.

unlikely that vessels termed as “gifts” were taken from the divine recipients to be returned to the palatial stores after the ceremony. Next to the iconographic evidence on the frescoes, the offering of vessels is seemingly also implied by depictions on sealings which show women and men presenting a vessel to a seated female figure who holds out her hand to receive the vessel.¹²⁰ In general the seated female figure is understood to represent a goddess.¹²¹

The interpretation favoured by Palaima (and Anna Sacconi) has its origin in the description of the Procession Fresco from Knossos by Arthur Evans who interpreted this fresco as a scene of ceremonial display of sacred vessels.¹²² However, as

Suzanne Peterson notes, “the appearance of the vessels with other offerings (such as flowers) [*sc.* in other frescoes from the mainland] seems to argue against such an interpretation [...] they were meant as offerings rather than cult equipment being transported to a ceremony.”¹²³ Along these lines, I would prefer to consider these vessels recorded on Tn 316 as manufactured more or less contemporary with the tablet intended as permanent donations to the particular deities, either as regular offerings or in the context of an exceptional ceremony. Since we have no parallel records either from Pylos or any other site for such precious offerings linked with the dedications of human beings the latter seems to be slightly more likely.¹²⁴

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¹²⁰ E.g. *CMS* II.8, no. 268; II.7, no. 8. Cf. *CMS* II.8, no. 240 (?); II.6, no. 8 (?).

¹²¹ Evans 1928, 767–769, figs. 498–500; 1935, 387, fig. 322; Younger 1995, 172f, pls. 62.g–h, 63a. Cf. Niemeier 1986, 81f.; 1989, 173f. (all references with old drawing of *CMS* II.8, no. 240).

¹²² Evans 1928, 710–712. Cf. Sacconi 1987, 555; Palaima 1999, 456.

¹²³ Peterson 1981, 117. Cf. *ibid.* 39.

¹²⁴ However, the assumption that the Palace of Pylos was capable of providing these precious offerings on a regular basis is certainly within the realms of possibility. Cf. Palaima 1995, 628. In this article Palaima does not view the vessels recorded on Tn 316 to be “heirlooms”. I strongly endorse this view. Positive evidence for “heirlooms” within the Linear B tablets is provided by the Ta series from Pylos. Among the items recorded are tripods which are obviously made of bronze. Some of them, at least, are of some antiquity because one tripod is described as “burnt away at the legs” and another misses two legs implying use over time. Cf. Palaima 2003b, 198. However, on the basis of the tablets it is, in my view, not possible to narrow down their date of production. Other possible examples of “heirlooms” are the vessels recorded on KN K(1) 872. The logograms of this document represent a *rhyton* in the shape of a bull’s head and a so-called Vapheio cup.

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