

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MYCENAEAN WORDS RELATING TO MEALS, MEAL RITUALS, AND FOOD*

The importance of feasts and other forms of social rituals surrounding meals is well known to participants in the *DAIS* conference. Given the attention that the Linear B tablets give to the production, management, distribution, offering and consumption of foodstuffs, and the documentation of agents for the procurement and preparation of food, it may seem surprising that the vocabulary for meals per se is so meager in comparison with later Greek vocabulary: *ariston*, *deipnon*, *dorpon*, *eranos* (ἀριστον, δεῖπνον, δόρπον, ἐβανος).

Even *dais* (δαίς a 'repas, banquet où chacun a sa part') is missing from the banqueting and other food distribution texts, despite the importance and prevalence of the root from which it derives¹ in other Mycenaean Greek vocabulary connected with the social distribution of resources, e.g., *da-mo* (*damos*) and verbal forms *e-pi-de-da-to*, *e-pi-da-to*, *o-da-sa-to*. In the context of our discussion of feasting, we should note that the root φαγ- (which forms part of the historical suppletive verbal system for the action 'to eat') in Indo-European has the meaning 'partager, recevoir une part', (*i.e.*, it is in the same semantic field as δαίωμα). φαγ- eventually is semantically specialized in historical Greek in its use in the aorist system as 'eat'.

Here we discuss the Linear B and historical Greek terminology for 'meals' in order to arrive at a clearer view of what the *data* for banqueting actually are and what factors, historical, cultural and social, might explain why the Linear B tablets offer their peculiar documentation. Feasting, after all, has economic, social, ritual, political and pragmatic functions and different kinds of meals/feasts, as events, organize and mobilize communities, social groups and individuals in fundamental ways. The activities and rituals connected with social eating help societies to form their world views and even, as with us, to organize their days and mark their monthly and seasonal annual calendars. The Mycenaeans certainly had a collective body of traditional agricultural knowledge, of the kind eventually textually fixed in Hesiod's *Works and Days*, that preserved and spread know-how about growing the crops they depended on for food and managing the livestock that provided meat and dairy products.

First, however, a few comments on the importance of food and the customs and rituals surrounding food.

Susan Sherratt² gives a fine account of how feasting appears in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* of Homer. She notes, correctly, that "[f]easting appears as arguably the single most frequent activity in the *Odyssey* and, apart from fighting, also in the *Iliad*" (p.181); and that "[f]easting is ubiquitous and constant—it is what Homeric heroes do in company at every opportunity" (p. 182). The question, however, becomes whether this is poetic exaggeration, or a reasonable reflection of how a specific class of people lived.

Sherratt believes that the frequency with which feasting is represented in certain passages (e.g., Odysseus' feasting with Agamemnon and then with Achilles in *Iliad* 9.89-92 and 9.199-222; and later still with Diomedes after their night mission in 10.576-579; and Telemachus' feasting with his companions upon their arrival in Ithaca in *Odyssey* 15.500-502 and then later when he visits Eumaeus in 16.46-55; and lastly the suitors holding two feasts, one in Odysseus'

* I thank Robert Laffineur for his skilful patience as an organizer and editor. I use the following abbreviations:

DELG: P. CHANTRAINE, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque: histoire des mots*, supplemented by A. BLANC, C. DE LAMBERTERIE and J.-L. PERPILLOU (1999).

Dmic: F. AURA JORRO, *Diccionario Griego-Español*, vols. 1-2 (1985 and 1993).

LFE: B. SNELL (ed.), *Lexikon des frühgriechischen Epos* (1955).

1 *DELG*, s. δαίωμα.

2 S. SHERRATT, "Feasting in Homeric Epic," in *The Mycenaean Feast*, 181-217.

palace 20.248-256 and the other in the grove of Apollo 20.276-280) makes it likely that “much sense of realism is sometimes lost.”

While there may be in the Homeric texts some of what American author Tim O’Brien calls ‘heating up of the story’ to get at what German filmmaker Werner Herzog calls ‘ecstatic truth’, it is important not to downplay too much how important eating (and drinking) and feasting were as a religious ritual, a social ceremony, and a form of entertainment and pleasure throughout the long period of gestation of the epics, extending from the palatial period of the Bronze Age through the so-called Dark Ages and into the archaic period. In a society without many material comforts, without the ability easily to access distractions like printed matter, electronic sound and visual media, without modern technologies for heat and light, and without modern methods of food preservation, food transport and marketing, the production, preservation, preparation and consumption of food would have been major social preoccupations.

Animal and plant products, especially if we include wood from trees, are the fundamental resources of the Mycenaean kingdoms and even of the later Greek *poleis*. Citizenship in the early *polis* depend on owning farmland, and the Solonian citizen classification scheme apportions privileges and responsibilities according to levels of agricultural, *i.e.*, food, production.

There is an old adage, that an army marches on its stomach. It is also true that in the period that concerns us here, from the Linear B texts in the late Bronze Age down to the writing down of the poems of Homer in the Greek alphabet in the archaic period, human lives are lived on their stomachs. Human beings in these times would have been preoccupied with their stomachs morning, noon and night.

It is no accident that the Muses, creatures of mind and memory, in the proem to Hesiod’s *Theogony*, line 26, address the human shepherds they meet as γάστρες σῶν, *i.e.*, ‘only stomachs’. Stock epithets for human beings in epic verse are σιτο-φάγος and ἀψιθηστής, *i.e.*, ‘grain(wheat?)-eating’ and ‘barley(-meal? or -porridge?)-eater’ (cf. Hesiod, *Theogony* 512, *Works and Days* 82, Homer, *Odyssey* 9.191).³ Notice here the concentration on grain diet as the norm.

Let me start with one modern anecdote that captures what I think must have been the centrality of food and eating (and drinking) across the long span of time from the Mycenaean palaces to the early *polis* period, and how descriptions of feasts, such as Sherratt cites, would have affected many grain-eaters in the audiences when episodes from epic song were performed.

In Studs Terkel’s Pulitzer-Prize winning oral history about World War II, he writes⁴ this about how important food—even descriptions of food—was to soldiers: “[W]hat was most on the soldier’s mind was not women nor politics nor family nor, for that matter, God. It was food. ‘In camp,’ a prisoner of the Japanese recalls, ‘first thing you talked about is what you wanted in your stomach. Guys would tell about how their mother made this. Many men would sit and listen very attentively. This was the big topic of all time. I remember vividly this old Polack. One guy always wanted him to talk about how his mother made the cabbage rolls, the *golabki*. He had a knack of telling so you could almost smell ‘em. You’d see some of the fellas just lickin’ their lips. Tasting it. You know?’”

In writing elsewhere about Mycenaean feasting,⁵ I cite Jennifer Neils’ estimate that fully a third of the days in the Athenian year were devoted to festivals involving communal sacrifices and feasting. Hundreds of oxen were sacrificed at the Panathenaic festival. And it is meat consumption, not surprisingly, that calls into being ritual practices like those associated with the *bouphonia* in Athens. Meat is also part of the central explanation of human misery and suffering: besides stealing fire, which itself has a role in animal sacrifice and meat consumption at feasts, Prometheus tricked Zeus into accepting the waste parts of sacrificial animals and into ceding to human beings the meat and edible innards.

3 DELG, s. ἀψιθηστής explains the word as a compound of ἀψι and the root *ed- ‘manger’ and therefore an exact parallel, except for, perhaps, the kind of grain, with σιτο-φάγος, the second element of which, as is well known, fills out the verbal system for ‘eat’ in Greek. Both elements of ἀψιθηστής are Indo-European. The first element of σιτο-φάγος is a loan word.

4 S. TERKEL, “The Good War”: *An Oral History of World War Two* (1984) 6.

5 T.G. PALAIMA, “Sacrificial Feasting in the Linear B Documents,” in *The Mycenaean Feast*, 217-246, p. 221, n. 37. J. NEILS (ed.), *Goddess and Polis: the Panathenaic Festival in Ancient Athens* (1992) 13.

As M.L. West points out in his commentary on Hesiod's *Works and Days*, line 559, where Hesiod is describing the difficulties winter brings to hard-working small farmers:⁶ "among the hardships of livestock and men at this season, having less to eat comes readily to mind." And, he continues, 'Hippocrates' teaches that men need more food in winter, because the cold requires more calory consumption in the human body. Yet Hesiod and later Cato advise that rations be cut in the winter, according to the logic that there are fewer daylight hours during which to expend energy upon work.

If food allotment, in terms of grain rationing, is used as a measure of the severity of winter in the Iron Age, it is also used to define the opposite, the golden age of the first human beings. In the tradition that Hesiod reflects, during this period the first human beings 'enjoyed themselves in abundant feasts' (*WD* 115: τέρποντ' εἰ θάλησι) and the 'wheat-giving arable field by itself bore much unstinting produce' (*WD* 117-118: καρποῦ δ' εἴθερε ζείδωρος ἀβουρα / αὐτομάτη πολλόν τε καὶ ἀφθονόν). The Golden Age humans are also ἀρνειοὶ μῆλοισι 'rich in small cattle' (*i.e.*, sheep and/or goats).

Within the Mycenaean texts, we can get a sense of the preoccupation of human beings with food and their stomachs, by looking at the symbolic vocabulary of officials within the palatial system. The PY Ta series with its detailed list of spectacularly crafted tables, sitting stools and thrones, sacrificial implements, portable hearths and fire equipment, and banqueting vessels, was written on the occasion when the *wanaks* either appointed or—and I still think there is a possibility of this alternative—buried the individual named *au-ke-wa* who served or was beginning to serve as *da-mo-ko-ro*. As J.-L. García Ramón and A. Heubeck before him have pointed out *da-mo-ko-ro* means 'que hace crecer, que alimenta el *dāmos*'. The root here has the fundamental meaning of 'feed', 'nourish', 'sate' (*i.e.*, 'stuff with food'), 'cause to grow', and is found in such important food-related vocabulary as the name of the Latin goddess of grains Ceres and the historical Greek verb κορέννυμι.⁷

The title of the officials whom, in my view, the palace appoints to oversee its interests in the principal districts into which the two provinces of the palatial territory of Messenia are divided, namely the *ko-re-te* and the *po-ro-ko-re-te*, likewise are literally 'agents of feeding and nourishment'. This is a quite spectacular metaphor for the role the palatial center wants to represent itself as performing, and in reality does perform, as I discussed in my paper in the *EPOS* volume,⁸ by constructing and running the economic engine that raised the standard of living for so many inhabitants of its palatial kingdom.

Judging by these important titles, it is safe to say that food and eating were major preoccupations within the Mycenaean world. If we turn to the Mycenaean texts with this perspective, namely that 'grain-eating' human beings are the norm and that the slaying, cooking and consumption of animals are exceptional, we may also note the quite understandable preponderance of grain in ration distributions and daily work-compensation supplemental payouts to individuals and groups from the centers of power, in regions and districts. Typical of the lowest level in the social hierarchy are the well-known texts of the Pylos Aa, Ab and Ad series with their monthly allocations of barley and figs to low-level, probably mostly captive, women work groups.⁹

We can observe a point a bit higher on the social ladder because of the join made by José Melena to the tablet now known as Pylos Fn 7.¹⁰ On this specific occasion, specialist workers—wall builders (most likely workers in stone or mud-brick), sawyers (whether of wood or stone, or both), and an individual known as the *pan-tektōn* (an all-carpenter or all-'builder', probably

6 M.L. WEST (ed.), *Hesiod Works and Days* (1978) 297.

7 *DMic* vol. 1, s. *da-mo-ko-ro*, n. 6.

8 T.G. PALAIMA, "Mycenaean Society and Kingship: Cui Bono? A Counter-Speculative View," in S.P. MORRIS and R. LAFFINEUR (eds), *EPOS. Reconsidering Greek Epic and Aegean Bronze Age Archaeology. Proceedings of the 11th International Aegean Conference, Los Angeles, UCLA - The J. Paul Getty Villa, 20-23 April 2006, Aegaeum 28* (2007) 129-140.

9 R. PALMER, "Subsistence Rations at Pylos and Knossos," *Minos* 24 (1989) 89-124.

10 J.L. MELENA, "13 Joins and Quasi-Joins of Fragments in the Linear B Tablets from Pylos," *Minos* 31-32 (1996-97) 171-178, p. 171.

something like a construction site foreman with technical woodworking and stone laying skills and what we would call architectural talents—in American parlance a ‘contractor’—received daily allotments that were pre-calculated as monthly quantities. This is clearly a measure to assure that necessary quantities of grain are available to fill these needs. Each of 20 *to-ko-do-mo* (‘wall-builders’) receives HORD z 3 (about 1.2 liters) per day.¹¹ Each of 5 *pi-ri-e-te-re* (‘sawyers’) likewise receives z 3 per day (about 1.2 liters). And the higher status *pa-te-ko-to* (‘all-builder’) receives v 2 (*i.e.*, z 8 = about 3.2 liters) per day, almost triple what the group workers receive.

On KN Am(2) 819, 26 men (18) and boys (8) receive a HORD average allotment of z 90 monthly (and here the ‘monthly’ is specifically noted by the ideogram LUNA). z 90 monthly works out to z 3 (1.2 liters) per day. On Thebes tablet Ft[1] 218 such a quantity is allocated per day as *si-to* ‘food’ (with the word *sitos* here semantically specialized because ‘grain’, as we noted above, was the primary food). These men are designated collectively as a *we-ke-i-ja* = **ῥεργεῖα* = ‘un cierto tipo de asociación profesional’ (cf. *ῥεργος* ‘trabajo’ *εργασία*).¹²

Also tablet MY Au 658 from West House lists *to-so* VIR 20 (so many men 20) GRA 4. GRA 4 = z 960. This works out to τ 2 (*i.e.*, z 48) per man, or z 1.6 (0.64 liters) per day, if, as is likely, this, too, is a monthly calculation for a 30-day month. This allocation is in line with what the women in the Pylos work teams received: τ 2 per month of HORD and NI. They thus receive z 1.6 (.64 liters) daily for a 30-day month. Supervisors among them are allocated more.

We can get some sense of comparison from the testimony of Cato¹³ that in the summer his slaves get 4.5 *modii* of wheat and in the winter 4 *modii*. A *modius* equals ca. 8.5 to 8.6 liters of wheat. So in the summer Cato’s slaves receive 38.25-38.7 liters per month, or ca. 1.275-1.29 liters per day. In the winter the figures are 34.0-34.4 liters, or 1.13-1.147 liters per day. This is in line with the daily allocations to the wall builders and sawyers on PY Fn 7 and the *wergehia* men on KN Am(2) 819.

We can get some sense of what kinds of grain rations other individuals and designated specialists receive from a palatial center by interpreting the Thebes Fq tablets in their appropriate context. Since Fq 254 gives us, when correctly interpreted, our sole instance of a simple form of one of the standard historical Greek words for meal (*i.e.*, *deipnon*), we use it here as our prime example of texts within this series. We note, however, that it is one of three texts in this group that has a temporal clause heading, and it is the only text with the word *deipnon* and a grain allocation prefixed at the start.

As I have demonstrated elsewhere,¹⁴ supported now, too, by Sarah James,¹⁵ the fifteen to eighteen Fq texts seem to be day-by-day records of actual daily distributions of HORD (barley or wheat) to individuals over a half month period. There are variations in amounts given to different parties, but these, as in the examples we have already discussed, would be predicated upon the importance of the services or work these individuals regularly provide to the authority that controls these allocations. This would also explain the variation in order of the recipients, depending on when they showed up for their allocations on any given day. Likewise, whether individuals appear or don’t appear on any particular tablet depends on whether or not they appeared on a particular day.

There is no indication that the individuals and occupational groups (and animals) on tablets of the Fq set (in contrast to the clearly dependent women workers on the Pylos Aa, Ab, Ad) rely on these allocations as their main source of nourishment. In fact, the Fq tablets are totally focused on HORD. The ‘scribes’ are not concerned with figs or wine or olives or other supplementary diet items.

11 It is still under debate whether HORD means ‘barley’ or ‘wheat’. See R. PALMER, “Wheat and Barley in Mycenaean Society 15 Years Later,” in A. SACCONI, M. DEL FREO, L. GODART and M. NEGRI (eds), *Colloquium Romanum* (2008) vol. 2, 621-639.

12 *DMic*, vol. 2, s. *we-ke-i-ja*.

13 WEST (*supra* n. 6) 298 on *Works and Days*, line 559.

14 T.G. PALAIMA, “FAR? or ju? and other interpretative conundra in the new Thebes Tablets,” in S. DEGER-JALKOTZY and O. PANAGL (eds), *Die neuen Linear B-Texte aus Theben* (2006) 139-148; and “Reviewing the New Linear B tablets from Thebes,” *Kadmos* 42 (2003) 31-38, with further references.

15 S. JAMES, “The Thebes tablets and the Fq series: A Contextual Analysis,” *Minos* 37-38 (2002-2003) 397-417.

The daily distributions here range from at the highest v 3 (4.8 liters) to **mo-ne-u* (line .14) and *ka-ne-jo* (line .3) (50% greater than the *pa-te-ko-to* on PY Fn 7) to z 1 (0.4 liters) and z 2 (0.8 liters) for many individuals in the middle section and final section of the tablet. These amounts are slightly below and slightly above what the dependent working women at Pylos receive (0.64 liters). The one allocation to a collective group v 2 (3.2 liters) to the *a-ke-ne-u-si* ('winnowers') may well indicate that there are five of them (3.2 liters = 5 x 0.64 liters) in this group (using the quantities distributed to similar laborers, *to-ko-do-mo* and *pi-ri-e-te-re*, on PY Fn 7).

In my opinion, after the exceptional listing of a *deipnon* distribution in line .1, *ma-ka* comes first as an entry on Fq 254 because it is a standard daily allocation used to make grain cakes (μάζα cf. later Greek μάζα). After that, people appear as they can and will on given days.

Another telling aspect of these allocations is that if we look at tablet Fq 254 and consider the special *deipnon* allocation and the regular *ma-ka* allocation, we see that their quantities are virtually identical HORD T 1 v 2 z 2 vs. HORD T 1 v 2 z 3. These figures equal z 35 and z 34 respectively. If we restore 3 entries on each of lines .8 and .9, we would have 35 entry-recipients. Thus it may be that the barley set aside for barley cakes and the barley allocated to the exceptional first entry *deipnon* somehow were distributed to the recipients entered on the tablet. As we shall see right now, *deipnon* generally refers to a main meal after breakfast (αβιστον).

In my view, then, what is happening in Fq 254 is that individuals are coming as usual to the central grain distribution point to receive their 'pay-outs' of grain for services rendered or practical purposes like managing and feeding certain domesticated animals. On this particular day, grain is set aside, viz 'given out', for an afternoon meal that may involve the very recipients on the tablet. In addition, another occasion calls into play grain being set aside for the occasion *o-te, a-pi-e-ge ke-ro-ta pa-ta* meaning 'when all the old men ('elders') are assembled' (through the agency of the understood subject of the verbal form *a-pi-e-ge*).

In the context of this Mycenaean mention of *deipnon*, let us turn to the meal vocabulary. As we have mentioned, there is a full later Greek vocabulary for meals: αβιστον, δειπνον, δόρπον, εβανος, and δαίς.

αβιστον is quite literally *das Essen in der Frühe*.¹⁶ It has a good Indo-European etymology from αβι < αεβι (ηβι) 'early' and εβ- 'eat' OE *etan*, and compare in zero-grade Latin *prandium*, likewise meaning 'first meal' (< **pram-d-ium*). It is generally a simple meal, but can, as in *Iliad* 24.123-125 involve the sacrifice of an animal:

τοιβι δ' οβς λάσιος μέγας εβ κλισίη/ιβρευτο. (*Il.* 24.125).

Notice here, too, the verb ιβρευτο, quite literally '*sacri-ficio*'. We shall return to it in the Linear B evidence.

αβιστον does not occur in the Linear B texts, but the simplicity and relative privacy of the morning meal, even in traditional modern Greek practice—at least when I was a hungry student in the mid-70's—operates against its appearing in the Linear B texts.

δειπνον is the meal that is situated between the morning meal (αβιστον) and the evening meal (δόρπον). Cf. their appearance in a time-sequence order in Aeschylus fr. 304: αβιστα δειπνα δόρπα τε. Chantraine, *DELG*, s.v., gives many compounds, including εβιδειπνον, the 'after-meal'. The standard etymology posits that the word is a substrate loan word. We have just seen its appearance in the Linear B tablets from Thebes.

δόρπον is the standard word for evening meal: *Abendessen, Abendmahlzeit* (nach der Tagesarbeit und vor dem Schlafengehen).¹⁷ The etymology is unknown, but some evidence from Albanian may suggest an Indo-European etymology. The Mycenaean lexeme *do-ge-ja*, most likely a feminine theonym, may come from the same root as δόρπον. *do-ge-ja* occurs only on Pylos An 607 (a text involving the change of status of small groups of women identified by

16 *LFE*, s.v.

17 *LFE*, s.v.

the ‘professional’ status of their mothers and fathers). The fact that it designates the evening meal before bedtime may have something to do with its absence from the Linear B records.

εβανος is a word of obscure etymology and may even be a late addition to the Greek lexicon (attested in Homer’s *Odyssey*). Its specific meaning later is a meal to which every participant brings his own portion. The word is specifically contrasted in *Odyssey* 1.224 ff. with a δαίς (‘feast’ where the host ‘distributes’ food to the invited participants δαιτυμόνες) and an εἰλαπίνη ἡγάμος (wedding feast). Since εβανος is effectively a bring-your-own-food-and-drink meal, not necessarily even a potluck, there would be little motive for the items brought to such a social eating occasion to be recorded on the Linear B tablets. Our texts monitor contributions into and distributions from the authority requiring the textual records. The independent action (of giving and consuming) in an *eranos* would not involve that authority enough to bring written record-keeping into play. Essentially the authority has insufficient interests at stake.

Despite the fact that the word εβανος does not occur in the passage, *Odyssey* Book 4.620-625 is cited as an example of the kind of occasion an εβανος would be. In this passage, in the palace of Menelaus, δαιτυμόνες arrive leading (ἡγον) μῆλα (sheep and/or goats) and bringing (φέρων) wine; and their wives send σίτον (taken here usually to mean prepared and baked grain, *i.e.*, ‘bread’, although that is not, as we have seen, necessary). What they are doing is specifically termed περιδεῖν...πένοντο ‘working at—or busying themselves with (the related noun is πόνος = the ‘pain associated with hard toil’)—the *deipnon*’. The proper actions of Menelaus’ invited guests stand in direct contrast to what the suitors are doing in Ithaca, displaying *hybris*, contributing nothing, and consuming the food resources of their absent ‘host’ well beyond their welcome.

The δαιτυμόνες in Menelaus’ palace give us a good example of how to participate in a properly run social feast. To my way of thinking, this comes close, *mutatis mutandis*, to the reality of the feasting occasions that lie behind the related Linear B tablets. Those occasions give rise to the inscribed sealings from Thebes with their designation of single animals and even personal responsibility for donating the animals. They also necessitated the Un series tablets that record various foodstuffs contributed by different elements of the community, all under the aegis of the palatial center and the *wanaks* who added his own larger share (as on Un 718, conspicuously the single bull, as opposed to the μῆλα given by others in Messenian—and, as in the *Odyssey* passage, Spartan—society). Thus important figures like the *ra-wa-ke-ta* and the *da-mo* also made large contributions to what the many participants served by such banquets would view, I am sure, as a distributive *deipnon*, *i.e.*, something like a δαίς, rather than an εβανος.

The δαίς, as we noted at the start of this paper, is a distributive meal occasion. In epic, it is often associated with sacrificial feasting, wedding feasting and funeral feasting.¹⁸

Finally, the later historical Greek use of the verb θύειν to mean ‘sacrifice’, in the sense of slaughter an animal, creates some confusion in the Linear B tablets, so I will close with a brief discussion of the vocabulary for animal sacrifice in the Linear B tablets.

In Homeric Greek, the ritual slaying of animals is expressed with the verbs ἱερεύειν, ρίξειν ‘faire célébrer un sacrifice’,¹⁹ and σφάζειν ‘égorger’ of animals, notably victims of sacrifice, and even of human victims,²⁰ while θύειν means ‘to burn cakes or incense offerings’, the original sense of the root (seen in Latin *fumus*) being, according to Chantraine,²¹ “fumer, faire fumer.” We see this clearly in the noun forms in Mycenaean *tu-wo*, pl. *tu-we-a*, virtually universally interpreted as θύ(ῆ)ος, pl. *θύ(ῆ)εῖα ‘substancia aromática.’²² This is clear from context on PY Un 219 and Un 267 (the famous transfer of aromatic substances ‘to be boiled’).

ἱερεύω, as we have mentioned, literally means ‘sacrificio’, *i.e.*, ‘make holy’. Its use with animals leads to the act of ritual slaughter, which is how the transfer of meaning took place. It seems persuasive to me then that in the Thebes sealings the designations *i-je-ro* (Wu 66)

18 LFE, s.v..

19 DELG, s.v.

20 Cf. WEST (*supra* n. 6) 241, note on line 338, with discussion of Aristarchus on Homeric usage.

21 DELG, s. θύω.

22 DMic, vol. 2, s. *tu-wo*.

and *i-je-ra* (Wu 44) designate the animals as sacrificial. The fact that Wu 44 registers one he-goat, while *i-je-ra* would seem to be neuter plural (it can also be feminine singular), is not problematical in a context where scribes are clearly putting together animals for a feasting ceremony. The neuter plural form *sa-pa-ka-te-ri-ja*, = *σφακτήρια, although not without small problems of interpretation, seems from context on KN C 941 to refer to animals destined for ritual ‘throat-slitting’ (‘égorger’; and cf. the related word in historical Greek σφάξ used of a fissure, cleft, chink, slit). On the Knossos tablet it identifies 10 ewes and 8 rams.

ρῖζειν, of course, has as its root **werg-*, which is extremely productive in many different spheres. In this form it highlights ‘doing an action that is important or productive’ and then is delimited by the addition of an object like ἄρα or ἐκατόμβην to the sphere of ‘doing’ in an animal in ritual sacrifice. Interesting in this context is the Mycenaean compound professional designation/title *i-je-ro-wo-ko* *ἵπο-ῖοργός, which appears in the religious landholding series at Pylos in tablets Eb 159.A and Ep 613.7. It clearly means specifically ‘the person who *does*, *i.e.*, ritually slays, the sacrificial animals’. It is difficult to know whether or, if so, how the *i-je-ro-wo-ko* is distinct from the *i-je-re-u* / *i-e-re-u* in their particular functions. There are seven or eight *i-je-re-u* / *i-e-re-u* at Pylos and one, who is possibly also a *po-me* or shepherd, at Knossos.²³ The numbers do not exclude the idea that these priests have the role of ‘sacrificers (in the modern sense of the term) of animals’.

The basic meaning of the root of σφάζειν, **sphag-*, seems to be ‘to slit’ or ‘to cleave’. Its etymology is unclear. A relation has been sought with *pa-ka-na*, which describes swords or daggers in the KN Ra series, and is a fossilized Homeric word for ‘swords’. But here a non-Indo-European root is a distinct possibility.

The use of *tu-wo*, *tu-we-a* and even of *tu-we-ta* (an agent-noun formation = θυ(ῖ)έστᾱς = ‘the man who acts with the substance that smokes’ *i.e.*, an agent of incense-burning) in the Linear B texts makes it clear that this root refers to the act of incensing.

It is interesting to note that in the animal-sacrificing and feasting sphere, two important main terms of most probably non-Indo-European origin (*deipnon* and *sphaktēria*) are attested in the Knossos texts.²⁴ The odd spelling *sa-pa-ka-te-ri-ja* I think is a matter of Minoan spelling applied to a Greek word based upon a Minoan, or at least a substrate, root. Put another way, if the open-syllabic Minoan speakers spoke about *sa-pa-ka* and the Greeks applied that term to sacrificial animals using a productive suffix, the end result when spelled on a Linear B tablet on Crete stood a good chance of unnaturally preserving its initial /s/ and of using the unexpected ‘dummy vowel’ /a/. These textual occurrences at least suggest that we ought to look for the origins of both *deipnon* and *sphaktēria* in Minoan ritual and social practice.

The strict dichotomization in the Linear B texts between animal sacrifice and the burning of aromatics is also a further reason to put to rest any thoughts that the temporal clause *o-te*, *tu-wo-te-to* at the beginning of Thebes tablet Fq(1) 126 could refer to ritual sacrifice. Instead it is likely a reference to the use of incense in *Brandopfer*, which stands, even in Homer, in contrast to *Trankopfer* and *Schlachtopfer*.

Again, we may note, that a ceremonial use of incense, *i.e.*, a non-blood offering, in one Fq tablet is consistent with the general contents of other tablets of the Fq series which record the distribution of grain to human beings to whom the terms σιτο-φάγος and ἀφρηστής may well be applied.

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23 M. LINDGREN, *The People of Pylos* (1973) Part II, 53-54.

24 A compound of *de-qa-no* appears on Knossos tablet F 51. See PALAIMA (*supra* n. 14, 2006) 143-148.