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STUDIES IN CRETAN RELIGION OF THE MYCENAEAN TIMES

(summary)

The purpose of the monograph is to examine three controversial questions connected with the Mycenaean religion and the location of some cult centres of Bronze Age Crete. Basic sources, i.e. the Linear B tablets from Knossos recording religious offerings are carefully discussed and explained.

Chapter I deals with the character of Mycenaean Zeus. According to Bogdan Rutkowski 1975: 151), "Zeus was a Greek god, who played an insignificant role in the Mycenaean pantheon, and, what is more, he was not testified in the Linear B tablets from Knossos". This opinion is both exaggerated and false. Firstly, the name of Zeus is a regular Greek development of the Indo-European theonym which we can restore as *Dyéus* or *Dyéus patér*. This Indo-European god of the clear sky and weather was almost invariably a supreme god and the father of both gods and men among most Indo-European peoples. The principal and patriarchal character was retained by Zeus not only in the Homeric poems but throughout the pagan history of Greece. Thus it is necessary to consider Zeus a supreme god in the Mycenaean times, too. Secondly, Zeus is perfectly attested in both Peloponnese (twice in PY Tn 316) and Crete (three times in Knossos, KN E 842, Fp 1, F 51, and once in Kydonia, KH Gq 5). Thirdly, Zeus belonged to the most popular gods of the Mycenaean Greeks (see table 2); he possessed his own sanctuaries in Pylos, Kydonia and Dicte (*di-wi-jo*, PY Tn 316, KH Gq 5; cf. *di-ka-tajo di-we* KN Fp 1) and his isophonic female partner (*di-u-ja*, *di-wi-ja*) in the Mycenaean pantheon; and he had a month devoted to him (*di-wi-jo-jo me-no*, KN Fp 5).

In chapter II the cult centres found on records of religious offerings at Knossos are examined. The most popular cult places, i.e. (1) *a-mi-ni-so* = Amnisos, (2) **47-so* = Asos, (3) *di-ka-ta* = Dicte and (4) *ma-sa* = Malla, were situated in Central Crete, especially in the close vicinity of Knossos itself (see Killen 1987). However, some religious offerings were sent, or intended to be sent, to more distant sanctuaries located in West Crete (see KN Fp 13) and in the south part of the Messara plain (see KN Fh 365). It is possible to suggest that the Knossian tablet F 866, which is a record of religious offering in the sanctuaries of Dicte and Malla (both situated on the slopes of the Lasithi massif), registers the cult of Mycenaean Zeus (called Dictaeon and Monnitios, respectively).

Chapter III is devoted to the problem of locating the Mycenaean cult site at Asos. In fact, the place name Asos (Mycenaean **47-so*, i.e. *a₄-so*, Classical Ἰἄσος), found 6 or even 7 times on records of religious offerings at Knossos (KN Fh 351; Fh 357; Fh 393; Fh 462; Fh 5430; Fh 5479; perhaps Fh 5501), was one of the most popular cult centres of Bronze Age Crete. After discussing the Mycenaean and Classical evidence for its location, the authors assume that Asos can be identified with the mediaeval village Nassos (desolate now) placed about 6 kilometres north of Gortyn. It is not impossible to connect a very ancient Zeus' sanctuary at Asos (quoted by Stephen of Byzantium) with a particular peak temenos of Zeus "Alysios" (recte: Zeus Asios) on Mt. Dikton near Ida (recorded both by Aratus and his scholiast).