

COMMUNICATIONS

Papers to be presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Philological Association, New York, 28-30 December, 1976, include: Jon-Christian Billigmeier, "Origin of the Greek word phoinix." Apostolos Athanassakis, "Heroic song: The epic and Kleftic ballad."

The Annual Meeting of the "Classici Lovanienses" of the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven took place Saturday, 23 October 1976. The theme of the meeting was "Crete," and was reflected in the two lectures: Y. Duhoux, "La Crète minoenne: civilisation et écritures," and H. Verbruggen, "Kreta zonder zuilen." As a postscript, M. Duhoux asks that Nestor 1065, line 16, be corrected to read "daté de 1808," one century nearer the Mycenaeans.

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor: - Dans le débat sur les rations alimentaires mycéniennes, L. R. Palmer (Nestor, 1082-1083) a raison de demander que l'on revienne aux sources. Encore faut-il qu'elles soient correctement interprétées.

L'un des textes cruciaux en discussion est KN Am 819, où HORD 9 T 7 V 3 (= T 97 1/2 = Z 2340) est la ration mensuelle de 18 hommes et 8 enfants. Devant ce texte, Palmer raisonne comme suit (Interpretation, 96-97, 119; Nestor, 1004): à Pylos, la ration alimentaire des hommes est de GRA T 5; celle des enfants est de GRA T 1. Si les chiffres sont les mêmes à Cnossos qu'à Pylos, 18 hommes doivent recevoir 18 x T 5 = T 90, et les 8 enfants recevront 8 x T 1 = T 8. Total: T 98. Le total réel d'Am 819 est de T 97 1/2, ce qui est "correct within half a unit." La demi unité manquante s'explique alors, selon Palmer, par le fait que l'un des 8 enfants devait être tout petit, et ne recevoir qu'une demi ration.

Je trouve toujours gênant que, dans une démonstration chiffrée, le chiffre qui devrait prouver la validité d'une hypothèse soit différent de celui que l'on attend, car quelle valeur a, alors, la démonstration? Mais il y a autre chose. En KN Am 819, il est question d'orge, tandis que les rations alimentaires de Pylos sont comptées en blé. Or, on sait que les rations d'orge sont le double de celles de blé (Interpretation, 97). Il s'en suit que si les rations de Pylos valent pour Cnossos, les 18 hommes et les 8 enfants d'Am 819 doivent recevoir non pas HORD 9 T 7 V 3, mais deux fois plus: HORD 19 T 5, puisque chaque homme recevrait GRA T 5 = HORD T 10, et chaque enfant GRA T 1 = HORD T 2. Ce calcul semble avoir échappé à Palmer, qui a apparemment confondu, dans cette discussion, HORD (orge) et GRA (blé). Il s'en suit, malheureusement, que son interprétation ne peut être adoptée.

Il reste, alors, à comprendre le texte autrement. La seule voie possible (celle de D. A. Was, Nestor, 1031-1032 étant exclue, voir Nestor 1065) reste celle de Ventris et Chadwick, Documents, 59, qui ont montré que le total d'Am 819, HORD 9 T 7 V 3 = T 97 1/2 = Z 2340 est exactement divisible par

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le total des hommes (18) et des enfants (8): HORD Z 2340 : 26 = HORD Z 90 =
HORD T 3 V 4 Z 2 = HORD T 3 3/4.

Je reconnais que ce résultat est décevant si l'on attend que Cnossos ait les
mêmes chiffres que Pylos--et que tous deux, de plus, s'alignent sur les usages
mésopotamiens. Mais un fait vaut plus qu'un lord-maire.

Louvain

18 novembre 1976

Yours, &c.

Yves Duhoux

To the Editor: - Professor Palmer challenges me to answer his "key question"
about Mycenaean rations; but I fear it would take more space than the editor of
Nestor will allow me to go once more over the whole of this complicated argu-
ment. There are still many things I do not know about the subject; but I do not
wish my present silence to be interpreted as meaning that I accept all Professor
Palmer's arguments. I hope to return to it later when I can write at greater
length.

Cambridge

24 November 1976

Yours, &c.

John Chadwick

An editor who receives letters may have occasion to report that "the cor-
respondence is closed." I have generally preferred to moderate the corre-
spondence which provokes that sort of action by not rushing letters into print,
and, without thinking of it as a matter of policy, by not giving the target of
correspondence the advantage of receiving his copy of that correspondence
before the regular delivery of his copy of Nestor. It was recently suggested to
me that he ought to have that advantage, and I was persuaded to do so hereafter.
Therefore I did recently send proof sheets of the pages which provoked these
replies by air, before the issue was printed, with the caution that I was not
anxious to have immediate replies. Immediate replies came, nevertheless. I
print them now, not to accelerate the correspondence, but to fit these pages to
the calendar.

This section of Nestor was begun as a supplement to the section of communi-
cations, in the hope that items of news, discoveries, suggestions, and inquiries
for information might have a (relatively) prompt and informal publication. I
have not hesitated to accept letters that might seem to start or continue con-
troversy, since I preferred that such appear in these pages of limited, almost
familial, circulation of a few hundreds rather than in papers or journals of a
few thousands or millions. So I suppose that I shall continue to receive them,
if they are offered. But I suspect that the still hypothetical successors to this
office may refuse them, or even throw the baby out with the bathwater and
receive no letters.

ATS T T c [] ' D. ⊕ | a M H " E. P D ' 1

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. . . qu'il permis de rire entre mycéologues

To sandy Pylos there came one day,
 The Dorians, with their burning way,
 To divest her of Nestor¹
 And sequester and pester,
 Leaving ashes colored Dorian Gray.

— L. C.

1. Sorry, but despite the loss of accuracy, somehow E-ke-ra₂-wo doesn't quite fit there!