

# A Reaction upon "The Minoan Genius in Mycenaean Greece: a review"

In order not to trespass on the space so generously put at my disposal by the editors of *Talanta*, I shall limit my reply to Mr. Crouwel's above comments (whether they are corrections is a matter of opinion) to a few points directly relevant to the function and the name of the genius in Mycenaean Greece.

1. *Function.* Too much importance is attached to "the role played by the genii in the promotion of vegetation" as a separate phenomenon. It is a logical consequence of their being servants to all sorts of deities, including the deities or divine powers which controlled vegetation. In the same way the protection of a hunter by a genius (Gill No. 50) is a logical consequence of their function as servants of the Potnia Theron. The basic function of the genii as servants to some deity or other is modified according to the function of the deity they are (or one of them is) serving at a given moment. (Incidentally, one should guard against taking every branch or tree represented in a ritual context as a fool-proof indication that vegetation is being promoted. At least in later Greek ritual, branches were far more widely used, e.g. an offering to Athena Promachos on an Attic band cup, E. Simon, *Die Götter der Griechen*, 1969, 193 Fig. 176).

My conclusion that the genii in Cretan and in Mycenaean representations don't show any significant (and I would like to stress the word *significant*) differences either in outward appearance or in function, is not invalidated by Mr. Crouwel's remarks. The excrescence which appears on the head of some Mainland genii I did not mention, because it was (and still is) of no significance to my investigations into the genius' function and name. As Mr. Crouwel himself says: "Nothing much can be made of this feature".

That "there seems to be evidence for a limited iconographical transformation of the genius on the Mainland", I do not deny. In fact I hinted at it myself (p. 121) with regard to the Tiryns ring. However, the basic *function* of the genii in these iconographically transformed representations is still the same. (The fresco fragment from Mycenae, Gill No. 25, and many other representations of genii appearing in an incomprehensible context, or in no context at all, I passed over in silence, since they are of no help in establishing the genius' function).

2. *Name.* Mr. Crouwel's objections against my identification of the genii with the *amphiq<sup>u</sup>oloi* PY Fr 1205 are not very conclusive. His interpretation of these *amphiq<sup>u</sup>oloi* seems to be as follows:

a. They are divine servants (less likely mortal).

b. They might well be female. In my paper (p. 121) I held that the genii "don't seem to be female, though one cannot be sure that they are male either". But, as Miss Gill reminds me (letter Febr. 1970), on the fresco fragments from Mycenae and Pylos they are a female white, so after all they may be female, if anything. Therefore even if the word *amphiq<sup>u</sup>oloi* could only denote female servants (which is very doubtful), this is no objection to the identification.

c. They are anthropomorphic. Now this is an absolutely arbitrary assumption. The word *amphiq<sup>u</sup>oloi* is used for human servants too, but certainly that is no reason why divine *amphiq<sup>u</sup>oloi* should necessarily be of human form.

d. Furthermore Mr. Crouwel wonders whether the palace scribes at Pylos could refer to the genius in the plural and under such a general term as "the servants". As to the plural, it does not refer to the genius but to the genii, which in the archaeological evidence may appear single, in pairs or in larger groups. They evidently constitute an undifferentiated collectivity (my paper p. 119), so the plural is quite appropriate. Nor is it probable that this general term would baffle the original users of the palace archives. The context certainly would help them out. Much as in votive inscriptions and *leges sacrae* of classical Greece, specific deities or heroes are often referred to by the general terms θεός, ἦρωσ etc. The context, the sanctuary where the inscription was set up, the whole amount of background information contemporary readers were acquainted with, would make it clear enough which deity was intended. (A few examples chosen from many: De Prott, *LGS* 1, No. 18, 1; Sokolowski, *LSCG* Suppl. 1962, No. 35, 3; 117, 5; Nilsson, *GGR* 1<sup>2</sup>, Tf. 27, 2 = Athens N.M. 1434; Thönges-Stringaris, *AM* 80, 1965, Beil. 14, 2 = Athens N.M. 1519. Cf. the general terms denoting the Cabiri: B. Hemberg, *Die Kabiren*, 1950, 301ff.). And after all, as far as the evidence goes, the Mycenaean Greeks were acquainted with only one sort of divine servants, so I cannot see that there was much risk of confusion.

e. Finally, what is so objectionable in the genius itself (the genii themselves) being the object of a cult involving offerings of oil? Would offerings of something cheaper than oil be allowable? Or is there a general rule against divine servants having a cult of their own? At least later Greek religion knew of no such bias. On two votive reliefs, in Athens N.M. 1410 (Svoronos Tf. 65) and in Berlin, Inv. 807 (Blümel, *Kl. Gr. Skulpt.* 1966, Abb. 113), a hero and a heroine, or a god and a goddess, are engaged in offering libations, while they themselves are being worshipped by a group of mortals. (On this matter see also E. Simon, *Opfernde Götter*, 1953). And of course we should not forget τοὺς προπόλους καὶ χορευτὰς καὶ θεραπευτὰς τῶν ἱερῶν ... Καβείρους, (Strabo x 15, p. 470 C.

See also Strabo x 7 and 20; F. Chapouthier, *Les Dioscures au service d'une déesse*, 1935, 172 and passim; B. Hemberg, *Die Kabiren*, 1950, 305, 330ff.), who certainly had a cult of their own.

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