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Theodora Suk Fong Jim

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Seized by the Nymph? Onesagoras the '*dekatephoros*' in the Nymphaeum at Kafizin in Cyprus*

Abstract: While dedicatory practices have been a subject of frequent studies by historians of Greek religion, existing scholarship has paid little or no attention to an important dossier of inscriptions from Cyprus: on the conical hill of Kafizin is a cave-sanctuary where some 310 inscribed items of pottery have been excavated, the vast majority of which were inscribed with the name Onesagoras, son of Philounios, and were dedicated to a Nymph between 225 and 218 B.C. Onesagoras displayed such an intensity in his worship of the Nymph that he may be thought of as a *nympholept* or as being possessed by the Nymph. The dossier makes available important material for the study of religious practices at the sub-polis level. This article aims to bring this material to the attention of students and scholars of Greek religion and to raise questions concerning dedicatory practices.

Résumé : Alors que les pratiques dédicatoires ont été régulièrement étudiées par les historiens de la religion grecque, un important dossier chypriote a jusqu'ici été quasiment négligé. Il s'agit d'un sanctuaire rupestre situé sur la colline de Kafizin, où quelque 310 fragments de céramique inscrits ont été mis au jour, dont la grande majorité porte le nom d'Onesagoras, fils de Philounios, et est dédiée à une Nymphé, entre 225 et 218 avant notre ère. Onesagoras a manifesté une telle intensité dans le culte de la Nymphé qu'il peut être considéré comme un nympholepte ou « possédé par une Nymphé ». Le dossier comprend un matériel important pour l'étude des pratiques religieuses à un niveau intermédiaire dans la *polis*. Cet article entend porter ce matériel à l'attention de ceux qui étudient la religion grecque, en soulevant les questions qu'il pose en matière de pratiques dédicatoires.

One of the most interesting dossiers of epigraphic evidence for the study of dedicatory practices has come down to us from the little known cave-sanctuary at Kafizin in Cyprus. Situated some four miles to the south-east of Nicosia, and some seven miles north of Dhali (the site of the ancient city Idalium),¹ the hill of Kafizin has a grotto dedicated to a Nymph near its summit. Excavations in 1939 and 1949, followed by supplementary excavations between 1950 and 1955, have brought to light a large number of pottery fragments. The finds

* I am most grateful to Professor Robert Parker for commenting on earlier versions of this article. I thank also the anonymous referee of *Kernos* for helpful suggestions, and Matthew Gibbs for discussing with me aspects of Hellenistic associations.

¹ On Idalium, see HANSEN and NIELSEN (2004), p. 1225, no. 1013.

were published by Mitford in *The Nymphaeum of Kafizin* (1980),² a collection of 309 items involving a diversity of ceramic vessels and terracotta utensils with incised inscriptions in Greek or Cypriot syllabic script or in both, dated between 225 and 218 B.C.³ The finds are exciting for various reasons. First, they show that the syllabic script and the Cypro-Arcadian dialect still flourished in Cyprus in the last quarter of the third century B.C.,⁴ later than traditionally believed. Second, the inscriptions contain many rare or otherwise unknown words with obscure meanings. Third, they are revealing about the rural economy of early Hellenistic Cyprus. Finally, they testify to the devotion of an individual (or possibly a group) and his close relation with a goddess, presenting us with valuable material for the study of dedicatory practices. However, this dossier has attracted little or no attention among historians of Greek religion in the last three decades.⁵ The aim of this article is to remedy that neglect, and to pose questions concerning dedicatory practices.

It is striking that 269 out of the 310 inscribed items of pottery appear to have been dedicated by an individual Onesagoras, son of Philounios,⁶ mostly in his own name, but in a few instances jointly with other dedicant(s).⁷ The vessels were inscribed with his name, and were addressed almost exclusively to one Nymph.⁸ These dedications were brought to the goddess over a period of eight years (225-218 B.C.);⁹ and what is preserved represents probably only a fraction of what was actually dedicated. The phenomenon is so remarkable that at first sight it may appear tantalizingly inexplicable to historians. In fact Onesagoras was not alone in worshipping the Nymph with such intensity. Towards the end of the fifth century, Archedemos from Thera is known to have built a cave-sanctuary and cultivated a garden for the Nymphs on Mount Hymettos overlooking the modern town Vari in Attica. An abundance of votive offerings has

² MITFORD (1980), *SEG* 30, 1608.

³ Recently one more item (an amphora dated to 224/3 B.C.) has been published by HERMARY (2006), adding to the 309 items published by MITFORD (1980).

⁴ But new texts from Paphos published in MICHAELIDOU-NIKOLAOU (1993) lower the date further to the mid-second to the first centuries B.C.

⁵ Existing scholarly discussions of the material in the early 1980s concentrate mainly on the meaning of particular words or phrases in the inscriptions: e.g. ROBERT (1981), no. 636, BINGEN (1982), POUILLLOUX (1982), MASSON (1983² [1961]). The Kafizin dossier is absent from the recent *Kernos Suppl.* volume by PRÉTRE *et al.* (2009) on dedications.

⁶ The figure 268 is that given by MITFORD (1980), p. 259, to which I add the one published by HERMARY (2006) (see n. 3).

⁷ Joint dedications: e.g. *Kafizin*, nos. 60, 121, 137.

⁸ Except *Kafizin*, nos. 137 and 256, where we find the plural Νυμφαί. In ancient Greece it was more common to address the Nymphs in the plural.

⁹ The inscriptions date from the 23rd year of Ptolemy III Euergetes to the 4th year of Ptolemy IV Philopater. On the chronological distribution of the dedications in this eight-year period where the year is indicated, see MITFORD (1980), p. 272-273.

been found;¹⁰ and the inscriptions in the cave describe his efforts undertaken at this site.¹¹ One of them describes Archedemos as a man seized by the Nymphs (*nympholeptos*), who ‘fashioned the cave at the directions of the Nymphs’: Ἀρχέδημος ὁ Θηραῖος ὁ νυμφόληπτος | φραδαῖσι Νυμφῶν τᾶντρον ἐξηργάξατο.¹² Archedemos may be compared to Pantalkes, who devoted his life to the service of the Nymphs and other divinities, decorating a grotto near Pharsalos in Thessaly in perhaps the fourth century.¹³ A similar kind of personal piety is seen in Artemidoros, son of Apollonios, of Perge in the third century. He founded a shrine in Thera and furnished it with rock-cut inscriptions, reliefs, niches, altars, statues and other dedications for a wide variety of divinities.¹⁴ If it is correct to think that the some 270 items of pottery were Onesagoras’ own dedications, might he similarly have been a *nympholept* who was ‘seized by the Nymph’?¹⁵

Our knowledge of Onesagoras depends entirely on the information revealed in the dedicatory inscriptions. Unfortunately, most of the inscriptions are fragmentary and involve numerous textual uncertainties, and many of Mitford’s restorations are potentially misleading. A useful way into the dossier is to look at the few completely or better preserved inscriptions that survive:

ἀγαθὴ τύχη· Νύμφη τῇ ἐν τοῖ στόριγγι· L β’ ΧΑ’ Ϟ’ Ὀνησαγόρας Φιλουνίου
κουρεὺς ὁ δηκατηφόρος (no. 104).

With good fortune; to the Nymph on the conical hill; the second year (221/220 B.C.);¹⁶ Onesagoras, son of Philounios, barber, the *dekatephoros*.

¹⁰ These probably came not only from Archedemos, but also other worshippers visiting the cave (see the following note).

¹¹ *IG* I³ 977-980; WELLER (1903), CONNOR (1988), p. 166-174, BONNECHERE (2001), p. 37-41. HIMMELMANN-WILDSCHÜTZ (1957), p. 9, argued on epigraphic grounds that not all of them were inscribed by Archedemos himself.

¹² *IG* I³ 980.

¹³ *SEG* 1, 247-248; 2, 357; 3, 476; 16, 377-378; CONNOR (1988), p. 162-163, BONNECHERE (2001), p. 34-37.

¹⁴ *IG* XII 3, 421-2, *IG* XII 3 Suppl., 1333-1350; VAN STRATEN (1976), p. 18, PALAGIA (1992), GRAF (1995), p. 107-112. Several other individuals who were *nympholeptoi* or *theoleptoi* have left traces in literary and epigraphical evidence: see the sources in HIMMELMANN-WILDSCHÜTZ (1957), HERZOG (1983 [1899]), p. 103-105, no. 163 (an epitaph in Cos commemorating a Χρυσόγονος Ν<υν>φῶν λάτρις in second/third century A.D.).

¹⁵ This has been suggested by MITFORD (1980), p. 261, ROBERT (1981), p. 476, CONNOR (1988), p. 164, PACHE (2011), p. 55-69, cf. BINGEN (1982), p. 171. On *Nympholepsy*, see HIMMELMANN-WILDSCHÜTZ (1957), VAN STRATEN (1976), p. 18-20, BORGEAUD (1979), p. 159-162, VAN STRATEN (1981), p. 79, 95, CONNOR (1988), SOURVINOU-INWOOD (2005), p. 109-111, VERSNEL (2010), p. 119-121, 125-130, PACHE (2011).

¹⁶ L β’ ΧΑ’ Ϟ’ apparently signifies the second (β’) year of the reign of Ptolemy IV Philopater, 221/0 B.C., which corresponds to the 90th (Ϟ = 90) year of the Citium era initiated in 311/0 B.C. See the explanation in MITFORD (1980), p. 77-78, 251-252, index 4. The chronology he established is accepted by MASSON (1981), 626-627 and other scholars.

Νύμφη τῇ ἐν τ[οῖ] στρόφιγγι Ὀνησαγόρας Φιλουνίου κουρεὺς ὁ δηκ<α>τηφόρος ἐμὴ τη καὶ ἄλλα πολλά· ἀγαθῇ τύχῃ (no. 138 a).

To the Nymph in the conical hill, Onesagoras, son of Philounios, barber, the *dekatephoros*, (dedicated) me and many others; with good fortune.

Νύμφη τῇ ἐν τῷ στρόφιγγι Ὀνησαγόρας Φιλουνίου ὁ δηκατηφόρος ἐμὴ καὶ ἄλλα πολλά τάδε ε<ὕ>χάρισται· ἀγαθῇ τύχῃ (no. 138 b).

To the Nymph in the conical hill, Onesagoras, son of Philounios, the *dekatephoros*, (dedicated) me and many other thank-offerings here; with good fortune.

Νύμφη τῇ ἐν {ε} τῷ στρόφιγγι Ὀνησαγόρας Φιλουνίου κουρεὺς ἀπὸ Ἀνδρόκλου Οἴκου τῆς Ἰδαλιακῆς ὁ δηκατηφόρος vac. ἐμὴ τη καὶ ἄλλα πολλά (no. 283 c).

To the Nymph in the conical hill, Onesagoras, son of Philounios, barber, from the *oikos* of Androklos of the territory of Idalium, the *dekatephoros* (dedicated) me and many others.

As these examples demonstrate, the standard elements in Onesagoras' dedicatory inscriptions include the phrase ἀγαθῇ τύχῃ, the divine recipient (the Νύμφη with various epithets), Onesagoras' name and patronymic (Ὀνησαγόρας Φιλουνίου), his supposed 'occupational' designations (κουρεὺς, δεκατηφόρος¹⁷), topographical designations (e.g. ἀπὸ πλησίας, ἀπὸ/ἐκ Ἀνδρόκλου Οἴκου τῆς Ἰδαλιακῆς), and occasionally the year in the Ptolemaic era (e.g. L β' ΧΑ'). Sometimes (but not in the examples above) they also mention the source of dedication (e.g. ἀπὸ προσυπάρχοντος δεκατισμοῦ, ἀπὸ τῆς κοινονίας), the kind of vessel dedicated, and the name of the potter (κεραμεύς) who made it. However, the exact relations between these elements remain largely uncertain. These inscriptions vary in length; some of them were incised on the vessels before firing, others afterwards. There are no identifiable trends governing which ones were inscribed before or after firing; but the fact that a lot of them were inscribed before firing seems to suggest that they were specially commissioned in anticipation of dedication rather than 'raw' vessels normally used for other purposes. Apart from inscriptions, some of the vessels carry decorations of human heads, plants, and other patterns.¹⁸ For example, no. 266 depicts a schematic frontal head with features roughly incised and flanked by foliage; it is not sophisticated but is certainly lively (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1. Drawing of the fragmentary pitcher *Kafizîn* no. 266, after Mitford (1980), p. 200.

¹⁷ The word also appears in the spelling δηκατηφόρος: *Kafizîn*, nos. 37, 104, 116, 120, 138a, b, 153, 251.

¹⁸ E.g. *Kafizîn*, nos. 262, 264, 274, 290, 291, 292.

In many inscriptions, this Nymph is qualified by the description ἐν τῷ στρόφιγγι;¹⁹ occasionally ἐπὶ τῷ στρόφιγγι, and ἐπὶ τοῦ στρόφιγγος.²⁰ The phrase ἐν τῷ στρόφιγγι is uniquely attested at Kafizin, and is generally understood by modern scholars to be referring to the ‘conical hill’ or the ‘sharp, pointed hill’, the hill at Kafizin where the cave-sanctuary was situated, and also the spiral route that one had to follow to reach its summit.²¹ The circular imagery might also relate, not to the hill, but to divination: the Nymphs are often depicted as seated on a circular throne; some terracotta figures represent them as dancing or seated in a circle with Pan in the middle. Some scholars think that the whirling movement is

¹⁹ The spelling στρόφιγγι appears in e.g. *Kafizin*, nos. 34, 50, 104, 107, 285, and στρόφιγγι in e.g. *Kafizin*, nos. 14, 305.

²⁰ ἐπὶ τῷ στρόφιγγι: *Kafizin*, nos. 118a, 193, 236a, 243, 251, 275a; ἐπὶ τοῦ στρόφιγγος: *Kafizin*, nos. 237, 259, 286.

²¹ MITFORD (1980), p. 262: ‘upon the Spear Butt or the Pointed Hill’; MASON (1981), p. 634: ‘celle de la colline pointue’; ROBERT (1981), p. 475: ‘celle du pivot’; LSJ Supplement, s.v. στρόφιγγι I.4: ‘applied to the conical hill at Kafizin in Cyprus’. MITFORD (1980), p. 15, no. 14, thought that the name of the hill Στρόφιγγι ‘is clearly the Cypriot form of στρόθυγγι, tyne of an antler, spike, tusk, a tongue of land’. However, HADJIOANNOU (1982), p. 255, suggests that the word is more appropriately related to στρόφιγγι etymologically. LSJ, s.v. στρόφιγγι. I: ‘pivot or axle or pin on which a body turns’. Accordingly HADJIOANNOU explains στρόφιγγι as ‘the hill of which the ascent is a zig-zag path up the hillside, i.e. the hill up to which one goes turning hither and thither’. Similarly KARAGEORGHIS (2005), p. 251, says: ‘the hill on which she had her sanctuary was called Strophynx, no doubt because of the spiral route which had to be followed to reach the top’.

symbolic of the divinatory power of the Nymphs.²² The presence of this sanctuary at Kafizin is interesting as the cult of a Nymph or the Nymphs is hardly known elsewhere in Cyprus. There is piecemeal evidence that a Nymph was probably also worshipped at Chytroi, Troulloi and Tamassus; but the evidence is not substantial.²³ In other parts of Greece the worship of the Nymphs is much more common.²⁴ Perhaps because of the Nymphs' association with natural features and landscape (such as mountains, the sea, springs, rivers and trees), their cults were frequently located in caves or springs.²⁵ As Mitford pointed out, the description ἐν τῷ στροφιγγί, along with several others, presents the Nymph in question as primarily a mountain Nymph or an Orestiad: she was also ὄρεονόμος (mountain-ranging) and ὀρέων δεσπότης (mistress of the mountains).²⁶ In this dossier, she is also frequently described as Νύμφη Ἀδελφή.²⁷ Two inscriptions have a doubtful and disputed reference to θυγάτηρ,²⁸ but Mitford's restorations are uncertain. It is unparalleled and inconceivable in Greek religion for a mortal to address a goddess as his daughter.

²² On the material evidence, see PASQUIER (1977), LARSON (2001), p. 236-238, BONNECHERE (2003), p. 253-262. On the possible link with divination, see BONNECHERE (2001), p. 38-43, BONNECHERE (2003), esp. p. 255-258.

²³ Chytroi: MYRES (1914), p. 547, no. 1900; Troulloi: *RDAC* (1968), p. 78, no. 11; Tamassus: MITFORD (1958), p. 266-274; discussed in MITFORD (1980), p. 261; followed by KARAGEORGHIS (2005), p. 251. On religion of ancient Cyprus, see e.g. HILL (1940), ch. 4, p. 55-81, KARAGEORGHIS (1998), KARAGEORGHIS, MATTHÄUS and ROGGE eds. (2005).

²⁴ On the cult of the Nymphs in ancient Greece, see PARKER (1996), p. 165-167, 233, HALM-TISSERANT and SIEBERT (1997), p. 891-902, with extensive bibliography on p. 891-892, LARSON (2001), SOURVINOU-INWOOD (2005), p. 103-116.

²⁵ Caves that hosted the cult of the Nymphs were broadly distributed in different parts of the Greek world: see Hom., *Od.* XIII, 103-108, MITFORD (1980), p. 261, AMANDRY (1984), esp. p. 403-11, PARKER (1996), p. 165-167, LARSON (2001), p. 226-258, SOURVINOU-INWOOD (2005), p. 103.

²⁶ ὄρεονόμος: *Kafizin*, nos. 8b, 13; ὀρέων δεσπότης: *Kafizin*, nos. 9, 307, 308 (all partially restored). Discussed in MITFORD (1980), p. 262. The word ὄρεονόμος is also used (not of the Nymphs specifically) in e.g. Eur., *HF*, 364, Theophr., *Hist. Pl.* IX, 18.3, *Anth. Pal.* VI, 107. Some deities are associated with mountains and have the epithet ὄρειος/α, such as Meter Oreia (*IG* XII 7, 75, *SEG* 6, 718, *SEG* 41, 1329), Aphrodite Oreia (in EKMANN [1937], p. 626, no. 12 = *BE* 1942, no. 179), and Dionysus Oreios (*IEphes.*, 1267). The title δέσποινα can also apply to many goddesses: see e.g. Aesch., fr. 342 (which refers to δέσποινα νύμφη) and HENRICHs (1976) (on Δέσποινα Κυβέλη and Δέσποινα Ἀθηνᾶ). However, to my knowledge, there are no parallels to the description ὀρέων δεσπότης being used for a goddess. On mountain nymphs (orestiades), see LARSON (2001), p. 9.

²⁷ Νύμφη Ἀδελφή: e.g. *Kafizin*, nos. 26, 35, 44, 46, 82a, 83a, 88, 98a, 101a, 283a. In three inscriptions the goddess appears to be addressed as Onesagoras' own sister (αὐτοῦ ἀδελφῇ) according to MITFORD's doubtful restorations: *Kafizin*, nos. 48, 194, 213d; but all of them are fragmentary and the supplements are disputed. Scepticism has been expressed by ROBERT (1981), p. 475, HADJIOANNOU (1982), p. 258-259, POUILLoux (1982), p. 102-103, HERMARY (2006), p. 68-69.

²⁸ *Kafizin*, nos. 253 ([τῇ] ἀ[τ]οῦ θυγατρ[ί]), 293 (θυγατρ[ί]). MITFORD (1980), p. 189: the Nymph is Onesagoras' daughter; ROBERT (1981), p. 475: the Nymph is the daughter of Agathe Tyche, restoring instead ἀγαθῇ τύχη. [τῇ] ἀ[τ]οῦ θυγατρ[ί] Νύμφη; HADJIOANNOU (1982), p. 259: Onesagoras' physical daughter, not the Nymph is meant. Equally doubtful is the reference to μνηστὴρ in *Kafizin*, no. 251a ([μνηστὴρ]?). MASSON (1981), p. 634, doubts the restoration and whether the word can be applied to the goddess.

The cult of the Nymph at Kafizin seems to concern in an obscure way not only Onesagoras but also a *koinonia* or two *koinoniai*. Unfortunately all the inscriptions mentioning this are fragmentary. A relatively better preserved text reads:

ἀπὸ [τοῦ —] (ἔτους)· ἀπὸ τῆς Ζήν[ο]νος κοινονί[ας τὸν λίνον] καὶ τοῦ σπέεργματος
τὸ χαριστήριον τόδε Ὀνησαγόρας Φιλουνίου κου<ρ>[εὺς Νύμφῃ τῇ ἐν τῷ
στρόφιγγι ὁ δεκατηφόρος]

[διὰ τοῦ δεῖνος] κεραμῶς κώμης Γύ[ψου], ἐμή τη καὶ ἄλλα [πολ]λά τάδη
εὐ[χάριστα καὶ εὐά]ρμοστ[α ἐπ' ἀγαθῇ τύχῃ]? (no. 119).

from [the ...] (year); from the koinoni[a] of Zen[o]n, [the one (involved in) flax
and linseed, [this] thank-offering [Onesagoras, son of Ph]ilonios, barb[er], (dedica-
ted?) [to the Nymph in the conical hill, the dekatephoros], [through someone],²⁹ a
potter, of the village of Gy[psos], m]e and [ma]ny other than[k-offerings and
approp]riate gifts here, [with good fortune]?

Sometimes the inscriptions refer to Zenon's *koinonia*, but elsewhere to Androklos' *koinonia* and Androklos' *oikos*.³⁰ It is not certain whether they were one *koinonia* or two independent *koinoniai*, and what the precise relations (if any) between Zenon and Androklos were. Based on several inscriptions which refer to κώμη Ἀνδρόκλου Οἴκου,³¹ Mitford assumed that Ἀνδρόκλου κοινονία or Ἀνδρόκλου Οἶκος was a village (κώμη) in Idalium³² where the 'head-quarters' of Zenon's *koinonia* was located. In other words, he took the two *koinoniai* as the same; but his interpretation is far from certain.³³ As we shall see later, the *koinonia* (or *koinoniai*) appears to be involved in some way in flax and linseed; and Mitford spoke of it as a 'commercial company' and a 'tax-farming' association involved in the collection of taxes on flax and linseed.³⁴

There are reasons to think that the *koinonia* (or *koinoniai*), apart from being a 'commercial organization' (in Mitford's view), was also a religious association actively involved in the worship and perhaps maintenance of this cult, and that it met occasionally for drinking parties and small-scale celebrations possibly

²⁹ Apparently the word διὰ followed by a genitive in the Kafizin dossier can denote the agent through which a vessel was fabricated and/or dedicated. Mitford thought that in no. 119 the potter (whose name is not preserved) was both the fabricant and the agent through which Onesagoras performed the act of dedication; but his interpretation remains uncertain.

³⁰ ἀπὸ τῆς Ζήνονος κοινονί[ας]: e.g. *Kafizin*, nos. 119, 265; Ἀνδρόκλου κοινονία: e.g. *Kafizin*, nos. 217, 218; Ἀνδρόκλου Οἴκου: e.g. *Kafizin*, nos. 123, 125, 228, 263, 283. Note also the references to Λευκὸς Οἶκος in nos. 45, 46, 51 (all partially restored). MITFORD (1980), p. 35, 255, took it as signifying perhaps an estate or farm in modern Kefkoniko; but he did not explain the relation (if any) between Leukos' *oikos* and Androklos' *oikos*.

³¹ κώμη Ἀνδρόκλου Οἴκου: e.g. *Kafizin*, nos. 116a, 125, 251, 255a.

³² MITFORD (1980), p. 253, noted that no less than 15 inscriptions (but some of them are doubtfully restored) describe Androklos' *oikos* explicitly as τῆς Ἰδαλιανῆς. See e.g. *Kafizin*, nos. 263b (Ἀνδρόκλου Οἴκου τῆς Ἰδαλιανῆς ὁ δεκατηφόρος), 283c (ἀπὸ Ἀνδρόκλου Οἴκου τῆς Ἰδαλιανῆς).

³³ MITFORD (1980), p. 86, 254.

³⁴ MITFORD (1980), p. 256-8.

with sacrifices. No. 228 is a *οἰνοφόρον* ('wine-carrier') *ἰς τὰς κοινὰς συνόδους* ('for the common reunions'). The reunions are likely to be religious occasions celebrated by members of the *κοινωνία* (or *κοινωνία*).³⁵ Apart from the *οἰνοφόρον*, it has been suggested that the *θηρίκλειος* was also used in a ritualized drinking context.³⁶ As for sacrifices, the *σπλαγχνοεντεριφόρον*, a 'tray for carrying *σπλάγχνα* and *ἔντερα*',³⁷ incised after firing (no. 285), might have been a cult utensil used in sacrifices during similar religious reunions. We have a dedication (no. 137) made jointly by Onesagoras and two individuals *ὑπὲρ κοινῆς ἐργασίας* ('[on behalf of common] work').³⁸ Might the dedicants have been members of the association(s) praying to the Nymph for the prosperity of their trade? Despite the close connection between the cave-sanctuary and the association(s), we do not know whether the Nymphaeum was established by this group(s) and whether the Nymph's worship was exclusive to its members. Nor can we establish with certainty the nature of the association(s) and its connection with Onesagoras. The fact that Onesagoras described himself as *ἀπὸ Ἀνδρόκλου Οὔκου* or *ἀπὸ Ἀνδρόκλου Οὔκου τῆς Ἰδαλιακῆς* in several inscriptions indicates that he was a member of the *κοινωνία* (or *κοινωνία*).³⁹ Another hint comes from the human heads carved on some of the vessels:⁴⁰ most of these depict a single bearded face, probably a self-portrait of Onesagoras himself;⁴¹ but in a few cases a bearded head appears alongside smaller heads without beards, representing perhaps other members of the

³⁵ ROBERT (1981), no. 636, p. 476, compared this reunion to 'les beuveries de village ou d'association dans les inscriptions de Mysie et Bithynie et d'ailleurs, où le vin joue un grand rôle'.

³⁶ *θηρίκλειος*: also spelt *θυρεικλείος* in *Kafizîr*, nos. 40, 41, 42; MITFORD (1980), p. 31, explained it as 'a vase of an excellence worthy of the famous Corinthian potter Therikles'. Athen., XI, 470e-472e; MALFITANA (2004); *SEG* 54, 1534.

³⁷ *Kafizîr*, no. 285. LSJ, *s.v.* *σπλαγχνοεντεριφόρον*; cf. MITFORD (1980), p. 220, who translated the word as 'meat tray'. Note that MITFORD also identified *Kafizîr*, nos. 286 and 287 as *σπλαγχνοεντεριφόρα*, but the word does not survive in the inscriptions and it is unclear how secure his identification is.

³⁸ *Kafizîr*, nos. 137 (*ὑπὲρ κοινῆς ἐργασίας Δ[ημήτρι]ος καὶ Π[τολεμα]ῖος καὶ Ὀναςαγ[όρας]*); see also no. 145c (*ὑπὲρ κοινῆς ἐργασίας*).

³⁹ E.g. *Kafizîr*, nos. 125, 228, 263b, 283c. Note, however, that in the evidence available Onesagoras never described himself as *ἀπὸ τῆς Ζήνωνος κοινωνίας*.

⁴⁰ The use of self-portraiture seems to be a feature shared by several *theolepts*: Archedamos seems to have carved a self-portrait of himself in the cave at Vari: a slightly more than life-size figure holding stone-working tools is depicted, and the name Archedamos is cut twice next to his head: *IG* I³ 979, WELLER (1903), p. 271-3, fig. 6, CONNOR (1988), p. 166. Artemidoros of Perge too carved an image of himself, a head with a laurel surrounded by a circular inscription *IG* XII 3 Suppl., 1348, with figure on p. 296, in the shrine he founded in Thera. On the use of self-portraits as a sign of *nympholepsy*, see LARSON (2001), p. 16.

⁴¹ The bearded heads are taken as probable self-portraits of Onesagoras by e.g. MASSON (1981), p. 631, CONNOR (1988), p. 164, PACHE (2011), p. 66. Cf. HERMARY (2006), p. 71, who thinks that the five bearded faces on the newly published vase represent participants in the 'common reunion' (*κοινὴ σύνοδος*) alluded to in no. 228.

association(s).⁴² It is tempting to see Onesagoras as a leading or influential member of the group(s), charged with the religious duty of bringing dedications to the Nymph on behalf of his associates (see below), perhaps in fulfillment of some vow made collectively by the *koinonia* (or *koinoniat*); but this remains a conjecture. These institutional uncertainties present one of the greatest impediments to our understanding of Onesagoras and the dossier at Kafizin. What is more or less certain is that this was a local sanctuary maintained by the initiative and at the expense of individuals or a small group(s), and one wonders whether it belonged to some *genos* or a private association. In any case, the cult at Kafizin was evidently a focus of religious activities to Onesagoras' circle(s) of associates, but it is unclear whether it was also open to other worshippers.

There is evidence to suggest that pottery was an economic activity in the area around Kafizin. Some of the vessels in the dossier were dedicated by potters,⁴³ the most prominent one being Demetrios, son of Kallikles, from Tamassus, located some eleven miles to the west of Idalium. He is known to have dedicated at least seven items of vessels to the Nymph, appearing in these inscriptions more frequently than any other does, with the exception of Onesagoras.⁴⁴ Another potter, Aristagoras, in no. 290, is known to have brought a dedication to Kafizin.⁴⁵ So prominent is Demetrios, son of Kallikles, that Mitford took him as a partner (*koinonos*) of Onesagoras in the same *koinonia*.⁴⁶ Some examples of his dedicatory inscriptions are as follows:

[ἀγαθῇ] τύχη[ι]· Νύμφη τῇ [ἐ]ν τῷ στρόφιγγι Δημήτριος κεραμεύς (no. 239).

With good fortune; to the Nymph in the conical hill, De]metrios, a potter, (dedicated).

[Νύμφη Ἀδελφῇ]? Δημήτριος Καλλικλεὺς Ταμάσιος ἀπὸ Φιλοίτου τῆς Ἰδαλιακῆς τὸ τριῦβ]λιον vac. τό[δ]ε vac. εὐχρεστον (no. 49).⁴⁷

[To the Nymph Sister]? Demetrios, son of Kallikles, of Tamassus, from Philoitos of the territory of Idalium, (dedicated) th[is] useful bo[w].

⁴² One bearded head: *Kafizin*, nos. 262-266; a bearded head with smaller heads without beards: *Kafizin*, nos. 262(?), 271, 274; five bearded heads of similar sizes: HERMARY (2006), p. 66, fig. 4. MITFORD (1980) thought that no. 271 has a small female face; but from his drawing it is hard to tell whether it is male or female.

⁴³ On potters and their pots, see MITFORD (1980), p. 255, 259-60.

⁴⁴ Demetrios' dedications: *Kafizin* nos. 49, 50, 62, 130, 239, 242, 278. MITFORD (1980), p. 162, identified as many as fourteen items dedicated by Demetrios, but I have omitted here the ones too fragmentary for the identification to be secure.

⁴⁵ *Kafizin*, no. 290.

⁴⁶ MITFORD (1980), p. 259.

⁴⁷ MITFORD (1980), p. 39-40, suggested that Philoitos, a village or property in the territory of Idalium, signifies 'not the domicile of Demetrios, but – as commonly in these inscriptions – the locality out of the revenues of which the dedication was made'.

[Νύμφη τῇ ἐν τῷ στόρφιγγι Δεμέτ[ριος Καλλι]κλεὺς εὐπατρίδης [ἐκ κώμης . .]
 ασου χαριστέ[ριον] καὶ εὐχόμενος ν κεραμεὺς vac. [δι]ὰ συνέργου Κλέο[νος] vac.
 Μ[νασέ]ου? (no. 50).⁴⁸

[To the Nymph in the] conical hill, Demet[rius, son of Kalli]kles, of noble family, [from the village . .]astos (dedicated) as a thank-offering and as a vow, the potter, through a co-worker Kleon, son of M[nase]as?⁴⁹

However, the word *κεραμεὺς* in the Kafizin corpus can refer to potters as fabricants of the pots being dedicated as well as potters as dedicators. Where the word *κεραμεὺς* appears in vessels inscribed with Onesagoras' name, it never refers to Onesagoras himself but to someone else, most probably the maker of the vessels. For example, no. 6 reads [Νύμφη Ἀδελφ]ῆ? Ὁ[νησ]αγόρας Φιλ[ο]υνίου, κεραμ[ε]ὺς δ<ε> Φιλοίτιος ([To the Nymph Sister?], O[nes]agoras, son of Phil[o]junios, potter Philoitios); and no. 63: [Νύμφη Ἀ]δελφῆ Ὁνησαγόρας Φιλουνίου ἀπὸ πλε[σί]ας κεραμεὺς Μενεκράτης κή[ρα]μον τόνδε τύχη ἀγαθῇ ([To the Nym]ph S[ister], Onesago[r]as, son of Philounios, from the neighbouring area; potter Menekrates; [this] ve[ss]el, with good fortune). Despite Onesagoras' possible connection with potters, there is no evidence that he was a potter who dedicated his own wares to the Nymph.⁵⁰ Where the ethnic or toponymic of some of the potters (as fabricants) have survived, potters are known to have originated ἀπὸ πλησίας, Χύ[τρι]ος, [Κερ]υνήτης (?), κώμη Γύ[ψου], and perhaps Φιλοίτιος τῆς Ἰδαλιακῆς.⁵¹ Pottery is thus prominent at the shrine in three ways: most of the objects dedicated are ceramic, often of unusual form; potters dedicate; potters are mentioned in dedications made by others. The reason for this prominence, however, is unclear.

It is uncertain whether the *koinonia* (or *koinonía*) was involved in pottery production itself. Nor do we know if these potters – whether as dedicants or fabricants – were connected with the *koinonia* (or *koinonía*); and if so, in what ways. As will become apparent shortly, the association(s) was engaged in the

⁴⁸ The word εὐπατρίδης suggests that Demetrios claimed to be well-born: see HADJIOANNOU (1982), p. 257, cf. MITFORD (1980), p. 162, no. 219.

⁴⁹ It is unclear whether Kleon was the agent through which the vessel was fabricated or dedicated. MITFORD (1980), p. 41, envisages both possibilities: 'Demetrios, himself a potter, has engaged a colleague, if not to fabricate this pot, certainly to perform the act of its dedication'. There are a few instances where the fragmentary nature of the texts renders it uncertain whether the appearance of the word *κεραμεὺς* (whether partially or completely preserved) signifies a dedicator or a maker: *Kafizin*, nos. 119, 121, 264, 302.

⁵⁰ Cf. LATTE (1955), p. 194-5: 'Die Inschriften sind ... vor dem Brande eingeritzt. Das erklärt sich am einfachsten, wenn er selbst Töpfer war und nun seine Ware in natura der Nympe weihte'. Latte did not have access to the whole corpus of the materials at the time of writing; from MITFORD's publication it is clear that some inscriptions were inscribed after firing.

⁵¹ ἀπὸ πλησίας: *Kafizin*, nos. 64, 68, 81, 91, 296. Unfortunately the others are all partially or doubtfully restored: *Kafizin*, nos. 46 (κή[ρα]με[υ]ς Σόλ[ων] τοῦ δεῖνα Χύ[τρι]ος), 119 (κεραμ[ε]ως κώμης Γύ[ψου]), 307 (Ὀλύμ[πιος] Κερυνήτης?). MITFORD thought that the potter whose name is Philoitios (nos. 7, 22, 60) might come from the place Φιλοίτιος τῆς Ἰδαλιακῆς mentioned in no. 49.

cultivation or trading of flax and linseed. One would like to know what connection (if any) there was between flax cultivation and pottery, and whether the association(s) was simultaneously engaged in both kinds of economic activities. Mitford concludes that potters and ‘tax-farmers’ (on this idea see below) formed a commercial enterprise, and that ‘the profits [of Zenon’s *koinonia*] were ploughed back into the manufacture of pots on this massive scale’, with the advantage being that ‘the company could thus operate throughout the year. Its activity was not confined to a short season, and a fluctuating harvest’;⁵² but this remains speculative. What the evidence suggests is a possible connection between Onesagoras and some potters, but their precise relation is difficult to pin down.

While there is no evidence that Onesagoras was a potter, it is more or less certain that he was a barber: the word *κουρεύς* recurs in many inscriptions immediately after his name and patronymic Ὀνησαγόρας Φιλουνίου. Before the whole dossier was published in 1980, the word was (mis-)interpreted as a deme name from the territory of Idalium,⁵³ or a variant of the city-ethnic of Kourion *Κουριεύς*.⁵⁴ Mitford’s full publication made available new evidence which shows that the word indicates almost certainly a trade or craft: an inscription no. 227 carries the phrase ἀπὸ τ[ῶν πόρον τ]ῆς κουρικῆς τέχνης[ς] (‘from t[he revenue] of barber trade’), and another no. 117 b speaks of Onesagoras as being appointed as a *κουρεύς* (ἐπι(σ)τάς κωρούς). In other occurrences of the word, it almost always qualifies the name Onesagoras, signifying his trade and possibly the source of the dedications to the Nymph.⁵⁵ By comparison with similar offices in the cults in other parts of Cyprus, Phoenicia and Syria, some scholars have taken him as a temple-barber.⁵⁶ Yet there is no reason why Onesagoras could not have been an ordinary artisan in the barber trade:⁵⁷ that a sacred barber is possibly attested in fourth-century Citium does not preclude the presence of ordinary barbers at Cyprus. The case cannot be proved either way.

Barber trade aside, Onesagoras was engaged in at least one other activity, namely the cultivation or trading of flax and linseed. That Onesagoras’ and/or

⁵² MITFORD (1980), p. 227, 259. PILIDES (2004) thinks that MITFORD’s conclusion may be supported by the mixed economical activities (pottery and weaving) attested by archaeological evidence at the hill of Agio Georgios in Nicosia, some four miles away from Kafizin.

⁵³ MITFORD (1950), p. 102.

⁵⁴ BERNAND and MASSON (1957), no. 29, p. 36, MASSON (1983² [1961]), 253, n. 4. The editors of *LGPNI*, s.v. Ὀνησαγόρας (7), also (wrongly) indicate that our Onesagoras came from the city Kourion.

⁵⁵ Cf. other occurrences of ‘job descriptions’ in private dedicatory inscriptions are e.g. *IG* I³ 616 (χαναφεύς), *IG* I³ 633 (κεραμεύς), *IG* I³ 794 (πλύντρια), *IGASMG* IV, no. 15 (ἄρταμος).

⁵⁶ E.g. *CISem* I, 86 (a) (Citium, fourth-century B.C.), DOHAN and KENT (1926), p. 249-256, esp. p. 254, MITFORD (1980), p. 261-262. See also LSJ Supplement, s.v. *κουρεύς* I.1b: ‘app. as title of official, *Kafizin* 117b, 118b, al.’ MITFORD (1980), p. 261-262, suggested that this sacred office was connected to the cult of Apollo Amyklaos at Idalium, and not to the Nymph at Kafizin; but POUILLOUX (1982), p. 101, considers the latter as more probable.

⁵⁷ Doubts have already been expressed by BINGEN (1982), p. 170, POUILLOUX (1982), p. 100.

the association(s)'s income was related to flax and linseed is indicated by such phrases as [ἀπὸ] τῆς Ζήνον[ος] κοινονίας ν τὸν λίν[ο]ν καὶ τοῦ σπέρματ[ος], and Ἀνδρό[γλω]ν κοινονίας τ[ὸν] λίνον καὶ [τοῦ] σπέρματος.⁵⁸ In no. 119 quoted above, the dedication is described as a 'thank-offering, from Zenon's *koiononia* (involved in) flax and linseed' (ἀπὸ τῆς Ζήν[ο]νος κοινονί[ας] τὸν λίνον καὶ τοῦ σπέρματος τὸ χαριστήριον τὸδε Ὀνησαγόρας Φιλουνίου κου<ρ>[εὺς] Νύμφη τῇ ἐν τοῖς στρόφιγγι ὁ δεκατηφόρος]). Given that flax was a material for making thread and cloth, and its seed for linseed oil, Onesagoras and the association(s) were probably engaged in some sort of linen and oil production or trade.⁵⁹ It is perhaps in connection with these agricultural produce that the phrase ἀπὸ προσπάρχοντος δεκατισμοῦ, found in some of the dedicatory inscriptions, is to be understood.⁶⁰ For example, no. 266 b speaks of ἀπὸ τῷ προσπάρχοντι δεκατισμῷ ἀπὸ ταῖς ἀφαιρέσιν τῶν λίνων καὶ τῶ σπέρματος ταῖς ἐν Ἀνδρόκλω Φοίβῳ ('from the additional tithe from the takings of flax and linseed, the ones in the *oikos* of Androklos').⁶¹ If it is correct to understand the phrase to mean 'from an additional tithe',⁶² it would point to some unexpected income, from which the dedications were made. If we accept that agriculture was a major source of income for Onesagoras and the association(s), it is possible that ἀπὸ προσπάρχοντος δεκατισμοῦ indicates an exceedingly bountiful harvest of flax. It is interesting and baffling that Onesagoras had multiple professions: he seems to be simultaneously involved in the barber trade and the production or sale of flax and linseed.⁶³ Accordingly, we are presented with the possibility that the dedications were made from the earnings of more than one economic activity.

⁵⁸ ἀπὸ τῆς Ζήν[ο]νος κοινονί[ας]: e.g. *Kafizîn*, nos. 119, 265; Ἀνδρό[γλω]ν κοινονίας: e.g. *Kafizîn*, nos. 217, 218.

⁵⁹ The cultivation of the two commodities in modern Cyprus is discussed in STORES and BRIEN (1930), p. 177, MITFORD (1980), p. 257.

⁶⁰ ἀπὸ προσπάρχοντος δεκατισμοῦ: e.g. *Kafizîn*, nos. 251, 264a, 266b, 286. But in one instance no. 256, we find [ἀπὸ] τοῦ δεκατισμοῦ.

⁶¹ The use of *apo* with the dative in the Cypro-Arcadian dialect is explained in MITFORD (1980), p. 264. In Onesagoras' dedicatory inscriptions, ἀπὸ is followed by the genitive or dative to indicate the place of origin, the source of dedication, or the year. See also MITFORD (1980), p. 275, index 7, *s.v.* ἀπό.

⁶² Cf. MITFORD (1980), p. 187: 'from a tithe which exceeded the estimate'. LSJ, *s.v.* προσπάρχω: 'exist besides'; LSJ Supplement, *s.v.* δεκατισμός: 'prob. collection of tithe, *Kafizîn* 266b.1'. MITFORD (1980), p. 287, n. 1, noted that the phrase is 'on the evidence available confined to the first two years of the company's activity'.

⁶³ Apart from barber trade and flax cultivation or trade, a third profession has been associated with Onesagoras, but on rather tenuous grounds. *Kafizîn*, no. 258b has a possible but difficult reference to μαγζιαρχήσαντος. The inscription reads Ὀνεσα[γόρου] ἀγαθῇ ναι. τύχη μαγζιαρχήσαντος, and may be translated as 'with good fortune; when Ones[agoras] was a *mantiarchos*/es'. The word μαγζιαρχήσαντος is perhaps a variant or error for *μαντιαρχήσαντος*, the aorist participle of the otherwise unattested verb *μαντιαρχέω*. Accordingly, it has been suggested that Onesagoras might have served as a *μαντιάρχος* or *μαντιάρχης*. E.g. CONNOR (1988), p. 164, infers from this unusual word that Onesagoras might have had a prophetic role, as is known to have been the case with some *nympholepts*. However, the single appearance of this otherwise

About ten of his surviving offerings are described as *χαριστήρια* or ‘thank-offerings’.⁶⁴ This is noteworthy as the word seldom appears in dedicatory inscriptions before the third century. Onesagoras’ usage is among the earliest applications of the word in dedications by private individuals.⁶⁵ Unfortunately we are not told what good tidings occasioned these *charisteria*. Only in one instance is the word *charisterion* accompanied by further information: no. 119 (quoted above) speaks of the object as a ‘thank-offering from Zenon’s *koinonia* (involved in) flax and linseed’. If it is correct to understand this as a thank-offering from Zenon’s *koinonia* for the flax and linseed harvested or sold, this was perhaps offered to give thanks to the goddess for the proceeds collected while at the same time hoping for continual success in the future.

There remains for us to consider the meaning of the recurring word *δεκατηφόρος* with which Onesagoras described himself, a word crucial to our understanding of Onesagoras and the dedications. The word can mean ‘tithe-receiving’ or ‘tithe-paying’ depending on the context. Apollo has the epithet *δεκατηφόρος*, meaning ‘tithe-receiving’.⁶⁶ On the other hand, the *aparchai* sent to Apollo at Delos from different parts of the Greek world are qualified with the adjective *dekatephoroi* (ἀλλά τοι ἀμφιετείς δεκατηφόροι αἰὲν ἀπαρχαί πέμπονται), literally meaning ‘tithe-paying *aparchai*’.⁶⁷ The *Kafizîn* inscriptions aside,⁶⁸ it is unparalleled for a mortal to be described as *δεκατηφόρος*. Several questions arise: was Onesagoras ‘tithe-paying’ or ‘tithe-receiving’, and what was the nature of the *dekate/ai* (if any) involved? The simplest explanation is that Onesagoras was ‘bringing a tithe’ to the Nymph using his income,⁶⁹ which came from his *κουρικὴ*

unknown verb in an incomplete inscription makes this interpretation highly uncertain. See MITFORD (1980), p. 194, no. 258, ROBERT (1978), *SEG* 28, 1299, ROBERT (1981), no. 636, p. 476; LSJ Supplement, *s.v.* *μαντιάρχεω*: ‘serve as *μαντιάρχης*’; LSJ, *s.v.* *μαντιάρχης*: ‘in Cyprus, president of a college of *μάντιες*’.

⁶⁴ *Kafizîn*, nos. 6, 50, 119, 139, 146c, 193, 278, 253, 224a, 270. A related word is *εὐχαρίστος* in e.g. nos. 117b, 138b, 144c, 228, 303. But LSJ Supplement, *s.v.* *εὐχαρίστος*. I. explains it as ‘acceptable gifts, *Kafizîn* 117b, 303’, not ‘thank-offerings’.

⁶⁵ The words *χαριστήριον* and *χαριστήρια* became common from the second half of the third century B.C. in victory dedications of the Attalids: e.g. *OGIS* 269, 273, 280, 328. In literary sources, on the other hand, *χαριστήρια* appeared from Xenophon onwards. The late appearance of the word in Greek dedicatory inscriptions was observed by HEWITT (1912), BEER (1914), p. 118–31.

⁶⁶ E.g. Paus., I, 42.5, *IC*, I iii, 1 (= MCCABE, *Teos Inscriptions*, no. 4), xvi, 3, III iii, 9–10; *RE s.v.* Apollo, 47; PARKER (1983), p. 341.

⁶⁷ Callim., *Hymn* IV, 278.

⁶⁸ The word is used in e.g. *Kafizîn*, nos. 76, 100, 103, 106, 117b, 135a, 138b, 144c, 151, 153, 154, 169b, 171, 181, 192, 193, 196, 198, 201, 204, 216, 217a, 220a, 237, 238, 256b, 275, 286, 299.

⁶⁹ LATTE (1955), p. 194: ‘Das Wort bedeutet den, der die *δεκάτη* gibt, nicht den, der sie einnimmt. Es liegt also am nächsten, zu verstehen, dass er den Nymphen den Zehnten von seiner Arbeit oder seinem Gewinn gelobt hatte und nun darbringt’; BINGEN (1982), p. 171, sees in it no relation with tax-farming: ‘la *δεκάτη* n’est certainement pas une dîme sacrée en nature sur un ensemble d’activités économiques... La notion de ‘dîme’ a pu être ici plus symbolique que quantitative’, MASSON (1983² [1961]), p. 256: ‘un potier qui consacrerait le dixième’. But later in MASSON

τέχνη and flax and linseed production or trade. But it is not clear why, uniquely, Onesagoras needed to assume the title 'tithe-bringing' to refer to the common-place act of bringing a tithe.

Another explanation, that suggested by Pouilloux, is to see Onesagoras as an intermediary between the Nymph and those who paid a tithe. Pouilloux suggested that 'la divinité percevait une dîme sur les récoltes par l'intermédiaire d'un personnage', and that 'il est chargé de prélever une dîme et il en fait offrande à la divinité'.⁷⁰ Given that flax and linseed constituted an important source of income, this would most likely concern a tithe from agricultural produce payable by the *koinonia* (or *koinoniat*) to the Nymph, or possibly from the profits of the association(s) more generally. On this theory, Onesagoras would cease to be a religious enthusiast who brought some 270 separate dedications on his own account: he was acting as an agent for others, and we would be dealing with equally remarkable group piety. But even so, he might have been chosen by the group(s) for the service of the Nymph because he had a special connection to the goddess. Yet the problem shifts to the *koinonia* on whose behalf *ex hypothesi* Onesagoras was acting: recurrent 'tithes' (whether vowed voluntarily, or compulsory in some way) brought by a religious society are without parallel. Moreover, it is not clear why Onesagoras should inscribe the dedications with his own name rather than that of the *koinonia* (or *koinoniat*).

A third possibility which has been raised is that the *dekatai* signified in the words *dekatephoros* and *dekatismos* concern not religious tithes to the Nymph, but 'secular' tithes or taxes payable to Onesagoras and/or the association(s) from a third party (other than the *koinonia/ai*). In other words, both *dekatephoros* and *dekatismos* refer to the collection of taxes of some sort. This leads some scholars to assume that Onesagoras and/or the association(s) was a tax-farmer and/or a tax-farming association(s) engaged in the collection of taxes. Thus Mitford took Onesagoras to be the 'managing director' of 'the company of Zenon', which was engaged in the collection of tithes on flax and linseed.⁷¹ And yet why should a tax-farmer or a tax-farming corporation offer these vessels to the Nymph?

It seems to me more likely that we are dealing with a religious rather than a commercial phenomenon, and that the *dekatai* were dedications rather than non-religious payments. Onesagoras was most probably a dedicator or a tithe-bringer in the service of the Nymph. This can be supported by numerous parallels. It was a customary practice in ancient Greece to bring tithes to the gods using the proceeds from a diversity of human activities, such as farming, fishing, handicraft work, and trade. Such tithes are most abundant in Athens and Cyrene, but are

(1981), p. 630, he rejects his earlier view, suggesting instead that 'il signifie évidemment « receveur de la dîme »'.

⁷⁰ POUILLOUX (1982), p. 100.

⁷¹ MITFORD (1950), p. 102: 'a receiver of tithes'; MITFORD (1980), p. 256; followed by KARAGEORGHIS (2005), p. 251: 'a tax-collector'.

also widely attested in other parts of Greece. A wide variety of dedications have come down to us, ranging from humble ceramic vessels to expensive marble monuments.⁷² Equally plausible is the suggestion that Onesagoras was a religious intermediary bringing tithes for others to the Nymph. The word *dekatephoros* possibly indicates some sort of a religious title. In Athens in the Classical period there were basket-bearers called *kanephoroi*, who walked at the front of sacrificial processions carrying on their heads a basket containing the essential items for sacrifice. We also have evidence of metics serving as parasol-bearers (*skiadephoroi*), tray-bearers (*skaphephoroi*) and stool-bearers (*diphrophoroi*) in the Panathenaic procession.⁷³ By comparison with these known titles, it is attractive to think that *dekatephoros* was a religious title referring to the duty of carrying tithes to the goddess. Considering that flax and linseed feature prominently in the Kafizin dossier, I wonder whether Onesagoras might have been responsible for collecting tithes on the agricultural produce payable by the association(s) to the Nymph.

Whether Onesagoras was bringing items of pottery on behalf of himself or others, these numerous dedications and the act of dedicating them must have been for Onesagoras a way of maintaining a close relation with the Nymph. His exceptional devotion and special relation with the Nymph are strikingly similar to those exhibited by Archedemos at Vari, Pantalkes at Pharsalos, and Artemidoros at Thera mentioned at the beginning, all of whom fashioned a local sanctuary of the Nymphs (and/or other divinities), adorned it with dedications and inscriptions and, in the case of Archedemos and Artemidoros, self-portraits, thus providing us with valuable historical examples of *nympholepts*.⁷⁴ Amid the different manifestations of *nympholepsy*, such as a heightened state of eloquence and understanding, the ability to prophesy, physical seizure by the Nymphs, and a strong commitment to the establishment or maintenance of a cult, it is in the last respect that Onesagoras resembles a *nympholept*: he displays a remarkable degree of religious devotion and possibly service to the Nymph. The dedications inscribed with his name were more frequent and numerous than those attested for any other individual made to any divinity in antiquity; and what has come down to us must have been only a fraction of what was actually dedicated. The remarkable

⁷² Athens: e.g. *IG* I³ 533, 536, 540, 542, 544, 548bis, 565, 567, 574, 583p, 608, 616-7, 621, 631, 638, 644, 652, 655f, 657, 660, 667, 691, 698, 704, 727, 735, 738, 764, 766-7, 775, 779, 794, 800, 809, 810, *IG* II² 4318, 4587, 4853, 4889, 4909. Cyrene: e.g. *SEG* 9, 76; 9, 78; 9, 80; 9, 84; 9, 87-88; 9, 100; 9, 303-4; 9, 307; 9, 309-12; *ASAA* n.s. 23-4 (1961-2), p. 219-375, nos. 35-41, 49, 132-5, 137-42, 151-2, 248-52; *SEG* 38, 1870, *SEG* 44, 1541, nos. 6, 7, 8. Most of these tithes in Cyrene are collected in Parker (1983), 341. On tithing practices, see also ROUSE (1902), p. 39-94, LANSDELL (1906).

⁷³ See e.g. *Ar.*, 1549-1552, Din., fr. 16.5 *ap.* Harp., σ 21, Ael., *VH*, 6.1, Poll., III, 55; WHITEHEAD (1977), p. 87-88, PARKER (2005), p. 170, n. 56, p. 223-226, 258.

⁷⁴ On these three *nympholepts*, see n. 11-14 above. On the literary motif of *nympholeptic* encounters, see PACHE (2011), *passim*. However, PACHE (2011) understands *nympholepsy* narrowly in terms of a mortal man's love relation with, and physical seizure by, a goddess, when in fact one could be a *nympholept* without experiencing an erotic encounter with a goddess.

amount of dedications bear out the phrase that Onesagoras (dedicated) ‘ἐμε καὶ ἄλλα πολλὰ’ frequently applied in the dedicatory inscriptions. While Onesagoras’ motivations and the circumstances of dedication may escape us, his special relation – whether as a dedicator himself or an intermediary between the Nymph and others – with the goddess strikes the reader throughout the corpus. One notices a sense of pride in his inscriptions, with repeated mention of his name and his role as *dekatephoros*, sometimes accompanied by what might have been his self-portraits. Although Onesagoras never described himself explicitly as *nympholeptos*, the exceptional quantity of the dedications, the intensity of his devotion, his close bonds with the Nymph, and the language with which he described his relation with the goddess makes this interpretation very likely.

Although much remains uncertain about Onesagoras and the *koinonia* (or *koinoniai*) associated with him, the finds at Kafizin provide important testimonies to the devotion of an ordinary individual (or possibly a group or groups), presenting us with valuable material for the study of personal (or group) piety and an individual’s close relation with his favoured goddess in a way not normally possible for most ordinary ancient worshippers. Despite the many uncertainties and questions raised earlier about the corpus, what is certain is that an irreducible quantity of religious activities is involved here. Onesagoras adds to our knowledge of dedicatory practices by showing that individuals (or groups) could bring gifts to the gods more frequently than is sometimes thought possible. He provides a rare example in the study of Greek religion where, outside communal festivals, and possibly outside any specific need to seek divine favours, an individual (or a group) could express his/its piety and reinforce his/its ties with the divinities by repeatedly bringing something to the gods. The humble and simple nature of the ceramic vessels also shifts our attention away from the expensive monumental dedications which have traditionally dominated the attention of historians. This valuable dossier deserves more attention in the study of religious practices than it has hitherto received.

Theodora Suk Fong JIM

St. Antony’s College,
Oxford, OX2 6JF
Email: suk.jim@classics.ox.ac.uk

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