A NOTE ON KNOSSOS TABLET L 5561

In the last volume of Minos, J. L. Melena reports the join of KN L 5561 to the fragment (X) 5656. The text that results from the join reads as follows:

L 5561 + 5656 ( — )

.1 ]-ru-wa TELA³ + PU 980[.2 ]

In the critical apparatus to X 5656 in KT5, J.-P. Olivier and I note that the sign before ru on l. 1 is perhaps du. J. L. Melena, however, in a letter of 10 December 1998 kindly telling me of the new join, has commented that ‘I am not ... sure ... that ]du-ru-wa is not actually ]pu-ru-wa’; and on photographs at least pu does certainly look a possible reading.

If the reading here is ]du-ru-wa, no obvious interpretation suggests itself. As Melena notes in his letter, one might think of the Cretan place-name o-du-ru-wo, o-du-ru-we (also spelt u-du-ru-wo); but, as he comments, ‘why an accusative?’ (as a restored o-du-ru-wa would presumably have to be).² If the correct reading is ]pu-ru-wa, however, a possible interpretation does come to mind.

There are occasional instances in Mycenaean where the consonant group -rw- is clearly or possibly spelt in full, rather than as normally with the omission of the r (as in ko-wa, ko-wo for ikorwäl, ikorwosl, ‘girl’, ‘boy’). A certain example is the spelling of the feminine of the perfect participle active of the verb ‘to fit’, viz. lararwohal, as a-ra-ru-wo-a; a less certain instance is the term ]ko-ru-we-ja, standing in initial position on KN L(6) 472, and attractively interpreted as a description of a workgroup ‘owned’ by an ‘owner’ or ‘collector’.³ As C. J. Ruijgh was the first to point out, this might be a scriptio plena of the term ko-we-ja in initial position on KN X 697.1, which may have a similar explanation.⁴ Note also the term ko-ro-we-ja[ in initial position on KN X 1013, which might be a variant form of the scriptio plena.⁵

Given this evidence, the thought comes to mind whether ]pu-ru-wa, if this is the correct reading, might not be complete, and be a scriptio plena of an epithet

² One might just think of a phrase like pe-da o-du-ru-wa, ‘to O.’; but the normal way of expressing motion towards a (named) place in Mycenaeans is by means of the allative suffix -de. pe-da does occur, and with the sense ‘towards’, but only preceding wa-tu, ‘town’, and (probably) i-je-ro, ‘holy place’.) [In his commentary in Minos on the text resulting from the join, Melena suggests a further possibility: that o-du-ru-wa is an adjective, and a variant of o-du-ru-wi-ja (cf. Ai 982.1). This, however, is not easy to accept.]
³ Killen 1983, p. 81.
⁴ Études, p. 268. See also Docs², p. 556; Killen 1983, p. 81.
⁵ Docs², p. 556; Killen 1983, p. 81.
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/purwail/, ‘red’, qualifying the following TELA\textsuperscript{3} + PU, the surcharged pu of which we know abbreviates the cloth-name pu-ka-ta-ri-ja, which we can in turn establish is feminine.\textsuperscript{6} See in particular L(7) 471, where the term pu-ka-ta-ri-ja stands at the beginning of the record, and where the epithets qualifying TELA + PU are me-zo-e and re-u-ka, viz. /medzohesI, ‘of larger size’ and /leukail, ‘white’. The text of the record reads as follows:

\begin{verbatim}
L(7) 471
.a ] me-zo-e
.b pu-[ka-ta-ri-ja , / re-u-ka TELA\textsuperscript{4} + PU
\end{verbatim}

As the evidence of L(7) 471 confirms, it would not be surprising to find a colour term preceding a TELA + PU ideogram; and while, as Chantraine points out, it is difficult to reconcile the form of the word πυρρός, ‘red’, in Attic with the form of the term with a digamma which is attested by way of personal names in alphabetic Greek (such as Πυρφαλίς (Mycenae 6th century b.c.) and Πυρφαλιών (Argos); see also the horse’s name Πύρφος at Corinth), the antiquity of the latter appears to be confirmed by the existence in Mycenaean of the personal names pu-wo, pu-wa and pu-wi-no, which as has long since been noted are attractively —if inevitably not fully certainly— interpreted as /PurwosI, /Purwail and /PurwinosI (cf. Gr. Πύρρινος).\textsuperscript{7} Moreover, a reference to ‘red’ would seem to cohere particularly well with the context of L 5561.

As we have noted, the tablet records TELA + PU, or pu-ka-ta-ri-ja CLOTH; and while the nature of this fabric cannot be established with complete certainty, there is some evidence to suggest that it may be a cloak, or a cloth intended to be made into a cloak. Even if we cannot be certain that pu-ka-ta-ri-ja is /puktaili/ ‘of double thickness, folded’ (cf. Gr. πυκτός),\textsuperscript{8} which if it were the correct interpretation would immediately suggest the Homeric noun δίπλαξ, ‘a double-folded mantle’,\textsuperscript{9} it could be significant that TELA + PU is twice described as ‘purple’ on the records (see L(7) 474, L 758) —and indeed is the only type of cloth mentioned on the tablets which we can be certain is so described.\textsuperscript{10} In Homer at least, the only garments which are described as purple or red are cloaks: see e.g. II. 10.133 χαλάιναν ... φοινικόσσαν, Od. 4.115 χαλάιναν πορφυρέν, II. 8.221 πορφύρεον ... φάρος (the cloak of Agamemnon). And if TELA + PU does denote a cloak, and if /pu-ru-wa is /purwail, the description here

\textsuperscript{6} It would of course be encouraging for the belief that /pu-ru-wa is a scriptio plena if L 5561 were in the same scribal hand as L(6) 472, which also records TELA + PU and where the term ko-ru-we-ja occurs. While this is not entirely impossible, however, there is nothing to confirm it.

\textsuperscript{7} Chantraine, DELG s.v. πυρρός.

\textsuperscript{8} For a full discussion of this possibility, see Ruijgh, Études, p. 111.

\textsuperscript{9} Docs, p. 321 (Chadwick).

\textsuperscript{10} The adjective also occurs on KN X 976, in conjunction with the adjective wa-na-ka-te-ro, ‘royal’; but while the reference here is almost certainly to royal, purple cloth, the precise variety of the latter is not specified.
will find an exact parallel in Herodotus, who at 3.139 describes the cloak
(χλανίς) of Syloson, son of Aeaces, as πυρὴ.

It need hardly be stressed, however, that the reading ḫpu-ru-wa on the record
still remains an uncertain one; nor can we be certain that the term is complete.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY