

A NOTE ON KNOSSOS TABLET L 5561

In the last volume of *Minos*, J. L. Melena¹ 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 TELA ³ + 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 /*korwā*/, /*korwos*/, ‘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

¹ Melena 1998, p. 418.

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 Mycenaean 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 *Docs*², p. 556; Killen 1983, p. 81.

⁵ *Docs*², p. 556; Killen 1983, p. 81.

lpu-rwail, 'red', qualifying the following TELA³ + 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.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. *lmedzohesl*, 'of larger size' and *lleukail*, 'white'. The text of the record reads as follows:

L(7) 471 (211)
 .a] me-zo-e
 .b pu-]ka-ta-ri-ja , / re-u-ka TELA⁴ + PU 10

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 ΠυρFίας (Mycenae 6th century B.C.) and ΠυρFαλίων (Argos): see also the horse's name ΠύρFος 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 *lPurwosl*, *lPurwāl* and *lPurwinosl* (cf. Gr. Πύρρινος).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 *lpuktaliail* 'of double thickness, folded' (cf. Gr. πτυκτός),⁸ which if it were the correct interpretation would immediately suggest the Homeric noun δίπλαξ, 'a double-folded mantle',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.¹⁰ In Homer at least, the only garments which are described as purple or red are cloaks: see e.g. *Il.* 10.133 χλαῖναν ... φοινικόεσσαν, *Od.* 4.115 χλαῖναν πορφύρεην, *Il.* 8.221 πορφύρεον ... φᾶρος (the cloak of Agamemnon). And if TELA + PU does denote a cloak, and if *lpu-ru-wa* is *lpu-rwail*, the description here

⁶ It would of course be encouraging for the belief that *lpu-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 *lko-ru-we-ja* occurs. While this is not entirely impossible, however, there is nothing to confirm it.

⁷ Chantraine, *DELG* s.v. πυρρός.

⁸ For a full discussion of this possibility, see Ruijgh, *Études*, p. 111.

⁹ *Docs*, p. 321 (Chadwick).

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 (χλαρίς) of Syloson, son of Aeaces, as πυρρή.

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

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