

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor: - In the December 1974 issue of Nestor Dr. J. L. Melena discusses the value of Linear B \*18. As he acutely points out, there must be a good chance that the erased entry on KN Da 1098 lat. inf., which we read in KT<sup>4</sup> as [[ki-ṛe-i-ṣo, qa-ra OVIS<sup>m</sup> 100]] (noting ki-ṛe-i-ṣo as a possible alternative reading), refers to the same 'shepherd' and flock as are listed on the newly joined Da 1363 + Dv 1428, by the same scribe: ]ki-\*18-i-so / qa-ra OVIS<sup>m</sup> 100. For the join, see L. Godart, J.-P. Olivier, "98 raccords et quasi-raccords de fragments dans les tablettes de Cnossos" in Minos 13 (1972) 120. On the basis of the equation of [[ki-ṛe-i-ṣo]] and ]ki-\*18-i-so Melena then suggests a phonetic value for \*18 of re<sub>2</sub>.

We should I believe exercise considerable caution before we accept this value. With Melena's suggestion in mind that there may be a connexion between 1098 lat. inf. and Da 1363, I have rechecked the reading of the lat. inf. on the photograph in the Cambridge collection; and whilst a final decision must await confirmation on the original, it seems to me virtually beyond doubt that the reading of the crucial term is not ki-re-i-so or ki-ne-i-so, but as on 1363, ki-\*18-i-so: though the last three signs should still certainly be dotted. Dr. Olivier has kindly consulted his own copy of the photograph and is of the same opinion. The central part of the second sign is completely obliterated. At the top there is a curved element to the right and a probable trace of the top of what could be a corresponding curved element at the left; this could be reconciled with either re or \*18. Between these two elements, slightly to the right of centre, is a clear vertical stroke; but one can also see, to the left of this, a trace of what seems certain to be a second, and parallel, vertical. This second vertical, if it is not a mirage, must rule out re as a reading (this has only one central stroke), and makes \*18 virtually inescapable. And there is also a trace at the base of the sign of what looks like the horizontal 'foot' of \*18: the same 'foot' appears on ne (hence our suggestion in KT<sup>4</sup>), but ne is excluded both by the two central strokes and by the shape of the right-hand curved element. [[ki-\*18-i-ṣo]], then, should almost certainly be read; the lat. inf. of 1098 shows (almost certainly), not a variant spelling of the 'shepherd's' name on 1363, but the same name; and the case for taking \*18 as re<sub>2</sub> accordingly disappears. We are naturally most grateful to Dr. Melena for the observation which has led to this improvement in the reading--Mycenaean epigraphy is always easiest when one is working, not completely in the dark, but with a particular possibility in mind.

Cambridge, England  
20 March 1975

Yours, &c.  
J. T. Killen

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