

KO-RO-NO-WE-SA

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Mycenaean *to-ko*

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The word *to-ko* has received very little attention from researchers.* It is found in two documents: **KN As(3) 1518** and **PY Xa 412**. The aim of the paper is to propose a reading and interpretation of the term for both documents.

In **KN As (3) 1518** *to-ko* appears four times.

- .1] VIR 5 to-ko[we-e-]wi-ja 1 .[
.2]VIR 5 we-e[-wi-ja] , to-ko 1 .[
.3] VIR 5 we[-e-]wi-ja to-ko 1 .[
.4]r̥e-we VIR 5 w̥e-e-wi-ja , to-ko 1 .[
.5] vac. [] vac.].
 .3 Perhaps]r̥e-w̥e (but very faint).

In a previous paper,¹ following a proposal by Ruijgh,² I argued in favour of interpreting *we-e-wi-ja* (also documented in **PY Ub 1318.4, .6, .6**) as $\text{w̥e}\eta\eta\text{f}\acute{\iota}\tilde{\alpha}$, a derivative in *-iā* of a trade name in $\text{-}\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\varsigma$, $\text{*}\text{w̥e}\eta\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\varsigma$ ‘tailor’, which would derive in turn from the root $\text{*}\text{wes-}$ ‘to dress’ (cf. $\xi\text{v}\nu\upsilon\mu\iota$). $\text{w̥e}\eta\eta\text{f}\acute{\iota}\tilde{\alpha}$ would mean both ‘tailor’s trade, tailoring’ and ‘product(s) manufactured by a tailor, dress(es)’.³

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¹ BERNABÉ 2014, 9, 17.

² RUIJGH 1966, 144-145; 1967, 124-125.

³ Cf. LGM, 204. For alternative interpretations see *DMic* 416, s. v. *we-e-wi-ja*.

As for *to-ko*, the interpretations τόκος, τοῖχος or στοῖχος have all been proposed.⁴ However, τόκος is not congruent with the context in the sense of ‘breeding,’ ‘gestation,’ nor is it if interpreted as ‘childbirth,’ or in the economic sense of ‘interest.’ τοῖχος ‘wall’ is not acceptable, either.⁵ It is, therefore, preferable to interpret *to-ko* as στοῖχος.⁶

As for its formation, στοῖχος is a noun related to the verb στείχω, a variant with *o*-grade of the zero-grade form στίχος. στείχω means ‘march in line or order, walk, march, go or come towards a determinate direction.’ The noun refers to a row in an ascending series (Hdt. 2.125); especially to a row of persons marching one behind another, as in a procession (Ar. *Ec.* 756); or a row of soldiers (Th. 4.47). In **KN As (3) 1518**, which deals with dresses, it would mean ‘series, fixed number.’ Each group of five men (‘VIR 5’) would be responsible for making a ‘series’ of dresses (φεηφιῖᾱς στοῖχος), which would involve a certain quantity or an outfit of various sizes as a whole.

The Pylos tablet in which the word reoccurs, **PY Xa 412**, is a very peculiar document.

PY Xa 412

Recto

to-κ̄Ϸ : : : : *vest.* [⁷

Verso

di-we Ϸ̄i-po-ro ti-m̄i-to-qo⁸

to-κ̄Ϸ is found in the *recto*, which is divided into five or more sections by vertical ruling; there is trace of sign after the last rule.

In the *verso* of this tablet a mysterious sequence *di-we Ϸ̄i-po-ro ti-m̄i-to-qo* appears, which is repeated with few differences in **Aq 218 v.**, and

⁴ *DMic s. v. to-ko.*

⁵ *Docs¹ 410; Docs² 586.*

⁶ *LGM, 428-429; Ruijgh 1966, 150; 1967, 125; Sacconi 1967, 123 n. 109.*

⁷ “r. sans doute palimpseste; divisée en au moins cinq compartiments par des lignes verticales transcrites par un double point:” *ARN, PTT²* “Ruled into 5 or more compartments by vertical ruling, transcribed by semicolons (:):” *PT³* ([[]]) [instead *vest.*].

⁸ “Division en mots par comparaison avec **Aq 218 v.** et **Tn 316 r.** ... traces après le *-go* non incompatibles avec un *ma* (mais plus petit et avec une autre inclinaison):” *ARN, PTT²*. “Word division by comparison with **Aq 218 verso**, and **Tn 316 recto**.” *PT³*.

Tn 316 r. bottom right. The position of this sequence in the documents, its apparent lack of relationship with the text of the tablets on which it occurs, and the difficulties in segmenting it and making sense of it have led to the proposal that it is a school calligraphic exercise reflecting a mnemotechnic order of the elements of the syllabary – as in the *iroha* order of the Japanese *kana* script – that is, the standard order of the first signs of the Linear B syllabary.⁹

Given this interpretation of the *verso* of **PY Xa 412**, which I find quite acceptable, *to-ko* could be precisely interpreted as the designation of this sequence of graphic signs.¹⁰ This is why I also propose to read it as *στοῖχος* ‘row,’ but in the sense of ‘series (of signs).’ We have related forms derived from the same root in alphabetic Greek, as *στοιχείον* ‘letter’ (Pl. *Cra.* 424d), *κατὰ στοιχείον* ‘in alphabetical order’ (*AP* 11.15). In 1st millennium Greek we find several attempts to differentiate *στοιχείον* ‘a simple sound of speech’ from *γράμματα* ‘written letters,’ but the two terms usually alternate.¹¹ The etymology of *στοιχεῖα* and the use of *to-ko* in Mycenaean suggest that the distinction would be between *γράμματα*, which would refer to ‘signs that are written’ (*γράφω*), and *στοιχεῖα*, which would refer to ‘letters or sounds as a sequence,’ both when writing words and learning by heart their fixed sequence. However, such distinction must not have been too evident to the speakers.

If this is so, it is curious that the ‘row’ metaphor would have already been applied in the 2nd millennium BC to the graphic signs, in order to refer to their fixed sequence.

⁹ BERNABÉ & LUJÁN 2020, 41 n. 13; DEL FREO 1996-1997, 158; DUHOUX 2008, 327; MELENA 2014, 89-91, 163; PALAIMA 2011, 51-52, n. 30; RUIPÉREZ & MELENA 1990, 110.

¹⁰ The vertical lines in **Xa 412 r.** could symbolise the ‘established’ order of the syllabic signs.

¹¹ Instances in *LSJ* online, s. v. *στοιχείον*.

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