

COMMUNICATIONS

The coming year should bring interesting discoveries, if a writer of science-fiction can be as accurate about future events as he is quick to incorporate the recent past in his adventures.

"Michael Ventris found something like that, back in the Fifties," Hubert Penrose's voice broke in from directly behind her....

"He found a lot of Greek inventories of military stores," Penrose continued. "They were in Cretan Linear B script, and at the head of each list was a little picture, a sword or a helmet or a cooking tripod or a chariot wheel. That's what gave him the key to the script." ...

"Yes, cryptanalysis," von Ohlmhorst pounced. "The reading of a known language in an unknown form of writing. Ventris' lists were in the known language, Greek. Neither he nor anybody else ever read a word of the Cretan language until the finding of the Greek-Cretan bilingual in 1963, because only with a bilingual text, one language already known, can an unknown ancient language be learned. And what hope, I ask you, have we of finding anything like that here? Martha, you've been working on these Martian texts ever since we landed here—for the last six months. Tell me, have you found a single word to which you can positively assign a meaning?" H. Beam Piper, "Omnilingual," in Prologue to Analog, edited by John W. Campbell, New York, Doubleday & Co., 1962. (Reprinted, apparently from Astounding Science-Fiction, sometime in the Fifties.)

In a paper on "The Knossos Sheep Tablets and Economic History" read to the London Mycenaean Seminar on November 21st, J. T. Killen explained the Knossos Da-Dg tablets as records of a census of flocks, mainly consisting of wethers (castrated males), distributed and maintained by the palace. He suggested that the Dk texts, where there is a fixed proportion between the number of sheep and the total amount of wool recorded, provide evidence that shepherds had to reach a fixed target for wool production, and that there is a similar explanation of the D1 records, where the 1:1 ratio of EWES to ki.RAMS is most easily understood as reflecting a target for lamb production similar to that commonly set in Medieval England, one lamb for each ewe held. He further suggested that the adjuncts pe and za, which appear on Do records (which he also regarded as records of breeding flocks) were abbreviations of perusinwos "last year's" and an adjectival form of the adverb za-we-te, found at PY Ma 225. L. R. Palmer has suggested that the Knossian form of za-we-te is *85-u-te (KN Od 666); but Killen reported that the reading of KN Fh 5496 should be amended to read:

.1. za-we-te[
.2. A-MI-NI-SI-JA a-pu-do[

and suggested that the appearance below za-we-te of a-pu-do[-si] "payment" (cf. o-u-di-do-si on PY Ma225) makes it certain that za-we-te here is either

precisely the term which appears on Ma 225, or else an adjectival derivative (za-we-te-ja vel. sim.) in agreement with a-pu-do-si.

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CORRIGENDA - P. 220, line 21, read: 769-773 in 1901. ✓ (entered)