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DEPARTMENT OF AMPLIFICATION

The final paragraphs on page 1127, intended to explain the occasion and the circumstances of the publication of the fictitious texts and letters on pages 1123-1127, but compressed to fit the space available, have unfortunately given cause for misunderstanding and confusion to one of my colleagues. Let me therefore state, if possible with less ambiguity, or at least under a clearer rubric and over my signature, the following facts.

Several years ago a colleague (I thought I remembered clearly who it was, but perhaps I was mistaken) sent me, without identifying the author (or authors?, for the originals seem to have been typed on different machines, and mimeographed on different papers) the photocopies I described and reproduced. The indirect attempt I described, to obtain the author's authorization to print, failed. I had therefore no permission whatsoever to print that material.

Although some materials appearing under the rubric *qu'il est permis de rire...* in the past have come from my pen, I did not compose these texts and letters. John Chadwick assures me that he did not compose them—how could I suppose that he had? I do not trust the vague ascription of these texts, to be found in W. Ekschmitt's *Die Kontroverse um Linear B*, for that seems to me to derive solely from internal evidence rather than from any communication or authorization by the author. I do not in any way trust any of the apparent internal evidence of authorship—who would be so silly as to include his own name in

such stuff? In short, I do not know the identity of the author, or authors if there are several, and I do not expect him to step forward. On the chance that he might be one whom otherwise I should have cause to respect, please do not tell me who he was.

The author's intention may be apparent; even so, it may only be guessed and cannot be known. That intention I guess to have been to create and circulate among his cronies a joke. But the butts of the joke rightly consider it a gratuitously offensive and tasteless joke; John Chadwick regards it even as libellous. My intention in printing these materials was to leave a record of an example of the rumblings of the underground in the early days after the decipherment of Linear B. If anyone regards these things as libellous now, I offer him my sincere apologies for publishing them.

Nevertheless, I do not regard these letters as funny, or even as a clever parody. On the other hand to me they seem not so much libellous toward the butts of their jokes (whatever the author's intention), but rather all too clearly, and in his own words, all of them, to characterize the author. My last chance at an April Fool's trick as Editor of Nestor was the malicious one of labelling such stuff as if it were the sort of thing at which *il soit permis de rire entre mycéno-logues*.

1 July 1977