Starting from A. Kober’s observation that Linear A and Linear B employed different words for ‘total’ in a consistent manner, P. Meriggi pointed out that Linear A summations were always preceded by two syllabic signs. If these were transliterated with the Ventris’s values of their Linear B counterparts, the result would be either ku-ro or ku-lo, which could represent the common Semitic root kl meaning ‘all’. The challenge was soon accepted by C.H. Gordon in two articles. He integrated his results into a monograph Evidence for the Minoan language, Ventnor, N.J. 1966, in which he changed his allegiance from Akkadian to West Semitic, Phoenician in particular, and compared ku-ro with Semitic kull- (e.g. Hebrew סל קלח) ‘all’. Identification of Linear A ku-ro or ku-lo with Semitic kl by P. Meriggi and subsequently by C.H. Gordon seemed attractive on semantic grounds, but Gordon’s approach was soon met with criticism, because terms like ku-ro seem to defy definite conclusions as to the character of the idiom written with Linear A, since the term may be a loanword just as the English word ‘total’ is derived from Latin totus ‘entire’ [through Middle English, from Old French, from medieval Latin totalis].

However, there appears to be one flaw in Furnée’s argumentation, since he does not explain how the phonetic development from *kuɾo/*kupro > kuro could have been completed in the much earlier Linear A form, whereas in the later form ἱερὸς in the gloss of Hesychius of Alexandria the /p/ or /w/ was still fully intact.  


E. Peruzzi had previously argued in favour of an Indo-European connection. Accepting some of L.R. Palmer’s suggestions with regard to a possible Luwian interpretation, he maintained that morphological evidence for noun declension, meagre though it was, might indicate Greek as the language of the texts. For the Linear A word for ‘total’ kuɾo, read with Linear B phonetic values, he proposed an Indo-European etymology *ger- ‘collect’ (cf. Greek ἀγείρω). For the word that was explained as ‘deficit’, Linear A kiɾo, he suggested an Indo-European root *(s)kel- ‘due’, ‘owing’ (cf. Lithuanian skeliu). Though the evidence was put forward in a comprehensive way, one must conclude that it is too thin. For further criticism of Peruzzi’s proposals I may refer to M. Pope’s Aegean writing and Linear A (SIMA 8), Lund 1964, 6.

In The historical significance of onomastic data from Linear A and B texts (Mycenaean Seminar, Institute of Classical Studies, University of London, 28th May 1980, 4) I have explained that Hurrian kuru, which should phonologically be understood as /kuru/, not only provides the exact phonetic equivalent to the Linear A word, but could also be a likely candidate from a semantic point of view. It certainly is one of the most frequent terms in the Tušratta letter.

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9 E. Peruzzi, Le Iscrizioni Minoiche (Atti dell’ Accademia Toscana di Scienze e Lettere 24), Florence 1960, 32-128.

E.A. Speiser, *IH*, 91: “*kuru* ‘again, in return’: cf. *Mit.* III 15, 39, 55, etc. The approximate meaning of this adverbial concept has been known since the beginning of Hurrian studies. The word functions as an independent particle when it is not followed by suffixes. The adverbial connotation helps to explain nominal and verbal uses of the root in the sense of ‘return’.” Cf. also I.M. Diakonoff, *Hurrisch und Urartäisch*, Munich 1971, 147: *kuru/o* ‘wieder’, vgl. *kur*- ‘zurückkehren’.

Semantically the usage of Hurrian /kuro/ ‘again, in return’ can be explained from the mechanism of the scribe’s action of counting the numbers just written on the Linear A tablets and recording them *again* in the summation at the bottom, in the sense of: (here are the numbers) *again*, that is in total. The scribes needed a short word that could serve their purpose as the Linear B scribes used *to-so* and *to-sa* meaning ‘so much / many’, which could in the context be perceived as ‘so much / many in total’.

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T. Richter, *Bibliographisches Glossar des Hurritischen*, Wiesbaden 2012, 227, s.v. kur- III and *kuru* [Mit.].

C.H. Gordon offered not only a West Semitic interpretation of Linear A *ku-ro*, but also of *po-to-ku-ro*: "HT 122 has a total of 31 (*ku-ro* 31) on the obverse, and another total of 65 (*ku-ro* 65) on the reverse. The two totals are combined to form *po-to-ku-ro* 96 ‘grandtotal: 96’ (Plate VIII). The meaning ‘grandtotal’ is fixed by context, but it remains to explain the first element *po-to*. We know that the word for ‘son’ was pronounced *bun-* in Ugaritic. The feminine *bunt-* would become *butt-* (with *nt > it*). Tentatively we suggest that *po-to-ku-ro* stands for what would appear in Hebrew script as נְבָה ‘daughter of all’ = ‘grandtotal’. ‘Son’ and ‘daughter’ are often used as the first element of compound nouns in Semitic.”  

However ingenious, Gordon’s interpretation of Linear A *po-to-ku-ro* as ‘daughter of all’ = ‘grandtotal’ does not appear convincing. So if Hurrian *kuru*, phonologically /kuro/, with Hurrian *o*-sound, is an exact phonological equivalent to Linear A *ku-ro*, it is necessary to examine whether *po-to-* may also be interpreted as Hurrian, in particular since it has been established that Hurrian cuneiform ü represents [u] and Hurrian cuneiform u represents [o]. In the Tušratta letter (so in fact in the chancellery of the Royal Palace of Waššukkanni, where the letter was written) the orthographic conventions were allegedly strictly applied, but elsewhere the scribes seem to have paid less attention to the rules. Anyway Hurrian [o] was probably a close sound.

E. Laroche did not yet attempt to interpret the form *pu-ud-du-ú-uk-ki-a-šu-un-na-a-al-la-an*, Mit. III 60.  It is important to realize that double writing of consonants in medial position in cuneiform indicates that a consonant is voiceless (so -t-t- or -d-d- is [t]), whereas single writing in medial position shows that a consonant is voiced (so -t- or -d- is [d]). During the last thirty years much progress has been made. Chr. Girbal interprets Hurrian *puttukki* [Mit.] as *puttu-* ‘Leistung’, mit *-kki*. I. Wegner and M. Salvini mention ‘achievement’, M. Giorgieri ‘Wert(?)’ (*puttū-kki*), I. Wegner ‘Leistung’ in her *Introduction to the Hurrian language.*

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T. Richter, who refers to these publications, also mentions a possible relation with the root *putt-* II, that might be interpreted as ‘ausheben, anwerben’.21

With regard to a feasible meaning of *po-to-* in Linear A *po-to-ku-ro* M. Giorgieri’s interpretation of ‘value’ for Hurrian *puttu-* ‘Wert(?)’ in *puttū-ikki* would yield the meaning ‘value again’ for *po-to-ku-ro*, which is in fact a concept that is expected in the context of the scribe’s action of counting several items and giving the total results ‘again’ (first *ku-ro*) and ‘again’ (second *ku-ro*) and adding the two total numbers together providing ‘the value again’ (*po-to-ku-ro*) in the summation of the totals. The notion ‘value’ is emphasized by the high numbers of men and commodities mentioned on both HT 122 and HT 131. This means that the sequence *po-to-ku-ro* or the sequences *po-to ku-ro* (HT 122b.6 and HT 131b.4) on these accounting tablets from Hagia Triada does or do not mean ‘grand total’ as most modern scholars had expected, but simply refer(s) to the scribe’s action of counting the results. Incidentally, even if the scribe wrote *po-to-ku-ro* as one sequence, *po-to-* should in my view not be taken as a prefix, because Hurrian is only suffixing, but as a term that was so firmly connected with the usage of *ku-ro* that the scribe joined the two terms in one notion. If Linear A *po-to-ku-ro* can be identified with Hurrian *puttu(-)kuru*, one thing is clear: Linear A *kuro* and Hurrian *kuru* (or *ku-ro*), is not a loan word from another language, but a truly Hurrian adverb, when used without suffixes. Comparison with the related Hurrian verbal root *kur-* ‘to return’ and the parallels with Urartian leave no doubt about that.

A parallel example of bookkeeper’s terminology is provided by the term ‘sum’, if used in the sense of ‘total amount resulting from addition of items’. Through Middle English and Old French *summe, somme* it is derived from Latin *summa*, feminine of *summus*, ‘highest, at the top’. The etymology of ‘sum’ can thus be explained from the bookkeeper’s action of placing the total amount resulting from the addition of items at the top of the page instead of at the bottom. So the meaning of ‘total amount’ of the word ‘sum’ is secondary. The original meaning is ‘at the top’ and refers to the bookkeeper’s action of putting the total number at the top where it can be seen at a glance. If Minoan scribes were not so much interested in using an abstract notion such as our word ‘total’, but rather focused on the action and result of counting, interpretation of Linear A *po-to-ku-ro* = Hurrian *puttu(-)kuru*, phonologically /po-to ku-ro/, ‘value again’ makes sense in the simple conditions of scribal workshops. If this interpretation is accepted, it is also a warning, how cautious one ought to be not to jump to conclusions too readily because of a seemingly obvious assumption. A. Kober’s clever observation was only an indication with regard to the semantic sphere of the term *ku-ro* and should not have been taken too literally.

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da. 1. ]ra-ri, u-de-za 2
2. ] 2 da-si-85 or: da-si TAL 2 pa-
3. [ . ] [ . ] [ . ] di 1 te-ki 2
4. qa-63-i 3 ja-mi-da-re 1
5. si-da-re 1 so-di-ra 1 pa-de 1
6. ku-pa3-nu 1 pa-ta-ne 1 83a-tu 1
7. [ . ] du 1 ku-pa3-nu 1 da-we-da 1
8. ku-ro 31 ku-da 1

b. 1. je-di, CAPSUS, VIR[
2. 83a-ki-ta2 7 '[
3. a-ra-68 < , > u-de-za 2 qa-qa-
4. ru 2 di 2 da-re 2
4bis. vacat
5. ku-ro 65
6. po-to-ku-ro 96 []
7. vacat


J. Raison-M. Pope1971: scribe III; GORILA 5: scribe 9 HT. The top left corner of the tablet is missing. The preserved parts are broken into 4 pieces.

Ad a.2-3: Brice: pa-i-to; GORILA, Raison-Pope and Meijer: pa-[ . ] [ . ] [] .
Ad a.7: Brice: ja-du; GORILA Raison-Pope and Meijer: [ . ]-du.
Ad a.7: Brice and GORILA (in analysis): da-ri-da; GORILA (in transcription), Raison-Pope and Meijer: da-we-da. The middle sign has no dot and is to be considered -we-.
Ad b.1: Sign L11 looks like Linear B sign *242 = CAPSUS = the wagon-body of a chariot or of a wagon. Cf. sign 35 = (another form of) a chariot-body, often combined with 87.
Ad b.3: Brice: a-ra-96; GORILA, Raison-Pope and Meijer: a-ra-68. < , > may be postulated between a-ra-68 and u-de-za on the analogy of ]ra-ri, u-de-za in line a.1.
HT 122. Analysed structure of the text.

a. l. ]ra-ri, u-de-za 2
2. ] 2
2. da-si-85 or: da-si TAL 2
2-3. pa-[]TAL 2
3. ]di 1
3. te-ki 2
4. qa-63-i 3
4. ja-mi-da-re 1
5. si-da-re 1
5. so-di-ra 1
5. pa-de 1
5. ku-pa3-nu 1
6. pa-ta-ne 1
6. 83a-tu 1
7. ]-du 1
7. ku-pa3-nu 1
7. da-we-da 1
8. ku-ro 31
8. ku-da 1

b.1. je-di, CAPSUS, VIR
2. 83a-ki-ta2 7 ']
3. a-ra-68 <,> u-de-za 2
3-4. qa-qa-ru 2
4. di 2
4. da-re 2
4bis. vacat
5. ku-ro 65
6. po-to-ku-ro 96 [ ]
7. vacat

Cf. also po-to-ku-ro on HT 131b.4. Interpretation of L11 as CAPSUS (wagon-body of a chariot) has significant implications for the character of Minoan society, since the royal palaces probably offered residence to charioteers’ aristocracies as the Hittite, Mitannian, Babylonian, Syrian, Egyptian (since the Hyksos period) and Mycenaean societies. Cf. also the commentary on the tablets from Hagia Triada and roundels from Khania with sign L35 that is likely to represent the wagon-body of the chariot as well.
HT 131.  HM 1372 (1912). Probably Late Minoan I b.  
Probably from the Villagio (Village) of Hagia Triada.  
Possibly from a house south of the ‘Casa del Lebete’.  
Same provenance as HT 115.  

Sup. mut.  

a. 1.  FIC 62 ku [-ro]  
2.  353 i-qa  
3.  TAL GRA 58  
4.  ] OLE 12 J 67 12 JE  

Sup. mut.  

b.1.  ] ' ' [  
2.  ] FIC 40 [  
3.  [ ] OLIVA 2 VIN +sa [  
4.  po-to-ku-ro 400[  
5.  52 J [  

détériorée à gauche postérieurement à MAXL, pl. XVIII.  

Only the lower right corner of the tablet is preserved. Most of the surface is palimpsest.  
Brice and Meijer only read the a-side of this tablet. The scribe was probably not accustomed to  
drinking too much wine as he was truly not able to write in straight lines on both sides.  

Ad a.1: Brice: FIC 51 ku [ ];  GORILA: FIC 62 ku [ ];  Raison-Pope: FIC 62 ku [-ro];  Meijer: ][[  
Raison-Pope’s addition of -ro to ku[ is an excellent conjecture in view of ku[-ro 353.  
Ad a.2: Raison-Pope: i-qa- sur [[]].  
Ad a.2-3: All editors treat i-qa-85 as if it is one sequence, but there is no reason why sign 85,  
the TALENTUM ideogram, cannot be combined with the GRANUM ideogram.  
Ad a.4: GORILA: JE: partie droite de E sur lat. dex.  
Ad b.2: Raison-Pope: 40 sur [[]].  
Ad b.4-5: GORILA and Raison-Pope: po-to-ku-ro 452 J.  Raison-Pope: -ku-ro sur [[]].
HT 131. Analysed structure of the text.

Sup. mut.

a. 1. FIC 62
   1-2. ku[-ro] 353
   2-3. i qa TAL GRA 58
   4. ] OLE 12 J
   4. 67 12 JE

Sup. mut.

b. 1. ] ' ' [ FIC 40 [ ]
   2. ] OLIVA 2
   3. VIN+sa [ ]
   4-5. po-to-ku-ro 452 J [[

If the total of 452 is the sum of the numbers on both sides, the number is too low. So we must postulate either another illegible hundred in the damaged lower right corner of the b-side or po-to-ku-ro only counts the numbers of the incomplete b-side. I consider the first option preferable.
Cf. also po-to-ku-ro on HT 122b.6.