

KATERINA TZANAVARI - ANASTASIOS-PHOEBUS CHRISTIDIS

A CARIAN GRAFFITO FROM THE LEBET TABLE,  
THESSALONIKI

The Lebet table is situated in the NW side of the valley of Thessaloniki. Its length is 340 m., its width 50 m. and its height 10 m. A rescue excavation in the upper surface of the table offered an opportunity for a more systematic excavation of the site in 1991–92.<sup>1</sup> The earliest habitation dates back to the early Iron Age. The earliest building phase can be dated at the beginning of the 9th century B.C. The five building phases uncovered range from the 9th to the 4th century B.C.

There are few specimens of imported pottery and the predominant type of pottery is the local hand-made or wheel-made variety. The sherd bearing the graffito (Pl. 1) was found in the disturbed layers of the filling of a storage area in the northern sector of the excavation. It is a fragment of the base of a black-glazed skyphos. Its (surviving) length is 0.104 m., its width 0.051 m. and its height 0.035 m. The diameter of the complete base must have been 0.12 m.

The graffito is incised (after firing) in the external surface of the base, in a semi-circular fashion, following the outer outline of the base. Our skyphos belongs to type A of the Attic skyphoi in accordance with the typology established by the excavations of the Athenian Agora.<sup>2</sup> The surviving fragment is too small to lead to a confident reconstruction of the shape of the vase. However, one can plausibly suggest a date in the third quarter of the 5th century B.C.<sup>3</sup>

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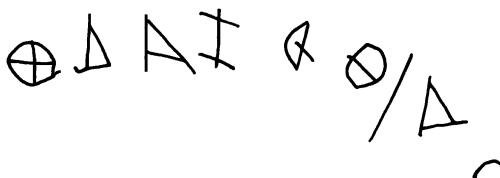
<sup>1</sup> K. Tzanavari – A. Lioutas, *The Lebet Table: A Preliminary Presentation* (in Greek). To *archeologiko ergo sti Makedonia ke Thraki* (AEMΘ) 7 (to appear).

<sup>2</sup> B. Sparkes – L. Talcott, *Black and Plain Pottery of the 6th, 5th and 4th Centuries B.C. The Athenian Agora*, XIII (Princeton 1970) 84–85.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.* (n. 1) 259 no. 342, fig. 4, plate 16 (470–460 B.C.). See also D. M. Robinson, *Excavations at Olynthus*, XIII (Baltimore 1950) 303, no. 561, plates 196, 199 (460–430 B.C.).

### The Graffito

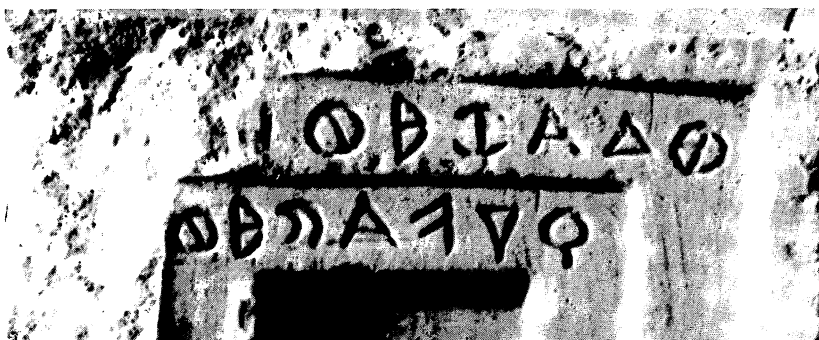
The Carian graffito consists of a complete word divided by a vertical stroke from a following word, of which only one letter and the trace of a second survive:



*th-d-a-7-e-25 / d[-?*

(transcription according to the values as in Masson 1978).

The complete word is identical with the one inscribed on stele 29 from Saqqara (end of 6th century B.C.; Masson 1978, 38):



Detail of Pl. XVII,2 in Masson 1978

*th-d-a-7-e-25 /---*

*14-29-(or 30)-v-a-44-e-25*

(Masson's transcription).

Masson's transcription is based on a right to left interpretation of the text. In our graffito the direction is left to right. Although the stance of the letters does not always decide the issue of direction,

both  $\Lambda$  and  $\Phi$  have a left to right stance.<sup>4</sup> As has been noted, the Carian alphabet is, as a rule, “written according to the prevailing direction of its area of use; left-to-right in the Aegean, generally from right to left in Egypt” (Ray 1982, 84; see also Jucker – Meier 1978, 113, Meier-Brügger 1983, 12). Our graffito confirms this tendency. The Athens Carian-Greek bilingual (Masson 1977, 90) is also left to right.

The Lebet graffito is a “frühkarisch” (in Ševoroškin’s 1964, 73 terminology) document (5th century B.C). The sequence *th-d-a-7-e-25* (in Masson’s transcription) – most probably a personal name – which finds its second (or possibly third, see below) attestation in our document, has been commented on by Ray in a number of articles and in accordance with his understanding of the values of the Carian signs. In Ray 1981, 153 it is transcribed as *t-d-a-ld-e-ś* ( $\Gamma$  = *ld*). Ray wonders whether it is not based on the name for the city of Tralles (cf. Tarsi = Ταρσέας, Adiego 1992, 37). He hypothesizes that the Carian *d*-sound would have been closer to [dr] and would have been heard by non-Carians as [r] (see also *ibid.* 161). In Ray 1982a, 187 the text of Masson’s stele 29 is transcribed as:

1. *t-d-a-ld-e-ś* [
2. *q-k-r-a-44-e-ś*

“The first name, *Tdalde(s)*”, notes Ray, “may be a gentilic derived from the city of Tralles, with Carian *d* rendered as *r* in Greek . . . The word, however, may simply be used as a personal name without being a certain guide to the man’s origins.”<sup>6</sup> In the same paper (p. 188) he revises Masson’s reading of stele 37 as:

1. *t(?)]-d-a-ld-e-s*
2. *]e-a-m-ś-h-e*
3. *a-d-o-s-h-a-r-k<sup>c</sup>-o-s*

‘Tdaldes, son of [ . ]eam, the *a-d-o-s-h-a-r-k<sup>c</sup>-o-s*’. This gives us a third probable instance of the same name. He considers *Tdaldes* as a

<sup>4</sup> On this issue see Meier-Brügger 1983, 13.

<sup>5</sup> As Ray 1981, 161 notes, “I suspect that  $\Theta$  is a kind of -s, whose exact nature is still unknown. The use of a double letter in the Greek -σωλδος suggests that it is an emphatic sound.”

<sup>6</sup> On the alternation Ταλλεῖς/Ταλδεῖς see L. Robert, *Hellenica* 8 (1949) 19, n. 2.

possible nominative in *-es* (see also Ray 1982b, 89) and points out (1981, 160) the use of sign  $\Theta$  “at the end of names, either in filiations (‘genitive’) or . . . as a possible nominative” (see also Ray 1990, 67, 76 where he opts for the transcription *t-d-a-λ-e-ś*, ‘of Tralles’).

If one follows Adiego’s (1990, 132; and Faucounau’s 1984, 235) analysis of  $\Delta$  as a lateral *l* (and of  $\bar{\Gamma}$  as a geminated lateral) the transcription would be *t-l-a-l-d-e-s* or rather *t-l-a-λ-i-s* ( $\text{Ϡ} = i$ ; Adiego 1992, 27).<sup>7</sup>

With respect now to the fragment of the second word in our graffito, the first letter is a clear  $\Delta$ . The following letter could be an  $\text{O}$  (although this is not, of course, the only possibility):

*d/l-o(?)[---*

One is tempted to relate this fragment with *d-o-u -l-a-32* (stele 41 from Saqqara; Masson 1978, 45 and note 4; *d-o-u-l-a-ε* in Innocente 1992, 51 s. v.).

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### Postscript

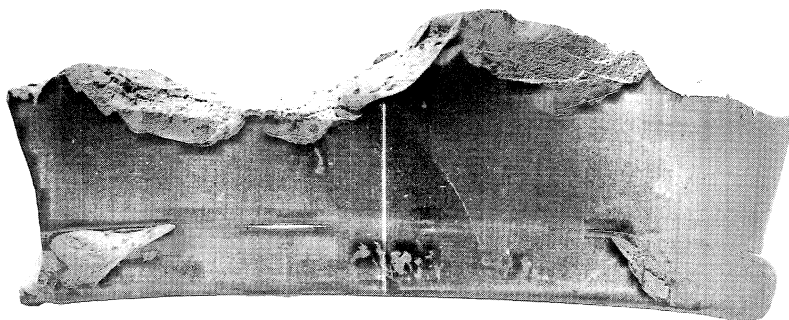
As I.-J. Adiego’s *Studia Carica. Investigaciones sobre la escritura y lengua carias* (Barcelona 1993) was not available to me while writing the linguistic commentary on this graffito, I did not include Adiego’s transcription of Masson’s stele 29 as *q-l-a-λ-i-ś* and its possible relationship with the attested personal names  $\text{Κολαλδης/Κυλαλδης}$  (op. cit. 235). I would like to thank Prof. W. Blümel for pointing this out to me.

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<sup>7</sup> Innocente’s (1992, 73f.) concordance prefers the “conservative” transcription *tdaze25*.



Pl. 1 Fragment of a black-glazed skyphos with Carian graffiti



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