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COIN EVIDENCE FOR THE CARIAN NAME OF KERAMOS*

The city of Keramos lies between Halikarnassos and Idyma on the northern coastline of the Keramic gulf in western Caria. Today called Ören, the village and the surrounding area were until recently known as Gereme or Germe. Although her name is identical with the Greek word for “pottery” or “tile”, and although very little is known of her foundations, her origins are evidently Carian.¹ The city became Hellenised and, at least as early as the reign of Mausolos, it was recognised as a polis.² As is the case with many cities of Caria, we do not know what Keramos was originally called in Carian. The name was Hellenised at an uncertain date and only new evidence such as inscriptions or coins can throw light on its indigenous form. Such evidence has recently surfaced in the shape of a series of bronze coins that bear three Carian letters on their reverse. The following is a die-study of all the specimens known to me, all in private hands.³ All coins are illustrated on p. 164.

* A first version of this article was presented in March 1999 at a seminar given in Bordeaux at the Institut de Recherche sur l'Antiquité et le Moyen-Âge (IRAM-Ausonius).

¹ Two identical five-sign inscriptions in Carian were found near the site; see E. Varinlioğlu, *Die Inschriften von Keramos* (I. K. 30), Bonn, 1986, p. 15–16; J. D. Ray, *Ussollos in Caria*, *Kadmos* 27 (1988), pp. 150–152.

² W. Blümel, *Zwei neue Inschriften aus Mylasa aus der Zeit des Maussollos*, *Epigraphica Anatolica* 16 (1990), p. 32.

³ It is a pleasure to acknowledge the help of Richard Ashton who made available to me the photographs of three coins from a private collection and commented on my text, and the help of the anonymous private collector. I am also grateful to John Ray for his suggestions.

AE (copper alloy), chalkoi

Obverse: (a) Forepart of bull right; or (b) bull standing right; ground-line.

Reverse: Dolphin swimming right; below $\nabla\Lambda O$, all within dotted circle.

(a) Forepart of bull right

O1 – R1

1. 1.35g 06H Private collection.

(b) Bull standing right

O2 – R2

2. 1.05g 04H Private collection.

O3 – R3

3. 0.86g Hauck & Aufhäuser (Munich), auction 15 (21 March 2000), 208.

O4 – R4

4. 0.66g 12H Private collection.

As (b), but in addition, ΞE on the obverse, in front of the bull

O5 – R5

5. 0.91g 09H Giessener Münzhandlung (Munich), auction 97 (11 October 1999), 388 = Classical Numismatic Group (Lancaster, Pennsylvania), mail bid sale 54 (14 June 2000), 702. The letters on the reverse appear to be upside-down.

More dies are bound to surface since each specimen is struck from different dies. This also indicates that the series is imperfectly known and that further variations in the type are likely to appear. A closely similar series of chalkoi with, on the obverse, a depiction of a standing bull and, on the reverse, a dolphin with the Greek letters KE instead of the Carian legend, was recently attributed to Keramos by Richard Ashton⁴. The following is a list of three specimens, each illustrating a known variety:

⁴ R. Ashton in R. Ashton et al., *Some Greek Coins in the British Museum*, *Numismatic Chronicle* 158 (1998), p. 46–49.

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| A. 0.95g 03H | R. Ashton, <i>Some Greek Coins</i> , p. 46, no. 1 (Ashton coll., acquired 1997). The reverse type is within a dotted circle, all in a round incuse. |
| B. 1.40g 06H | R. Ashton, <i>Some Greek Coins</i> , p. 46, no. 5 (Fethiye Archaeological Museum, unaccessioned 1993). No dotted border, no incuse. |
| C. 1.32g 12H | Private collection. As B, but double-axe above the bull. |

Ashton argues that the deep round incuse, the dotted border and irregular die-axis of the only known specimen of variety A indicate that it is the earliest issues of the KE series, and suggests a date of about 400 B.C. It seems to be intermediate between the coins with the Carian legend (which all have dotted borders and irregular die-axes) and the later coins with KE without any border. Ashton's reasons for his attribution were as follows. He noted that several specimens in his catalogue came from southwest Asia Minor and that one specimen was kept at the Fethiye Archaeological Museum, the normal catchment area of which is eastern Caria and western Lycia. Two cities in the area have a name starting with kappa epsilon: Keramos and Kedraei. The latter city is not otherwise known to have struck coins, whereas Keramos issued from the second century B.C. onwards several series of coins with a bull's head or a bucranium, and a dolphin rider was depicted on a bronze issue struck under Caracalla. In addition the double-axe, which appears on variety C of the KE series (and as a countermark on some coins of variety B), is an attribute of a youthful deity who appears on some imperial coins of Keramos. The cumulative weight of these pieces of evidence makes the attribution to Keramos of both Greek and Carian legend *chalkoi* quite certain.

The values of the three Carian letters $\nabla\Lambda\Theta$ on the reverse of the first three new coins from Keramos do not present any difficulty; they can be transcribed as *k-b-o*.⁵ The fact that the letters on the reverse die of specimen 5 are upside-down and resemble a Greek delta, a lambda and an omicron does not affect in any way the reading, as this is most probably a mistake of the die-cutter who had to

⁵ The reading of Carian letters is based on the Egyptian system which has now received common acceptance, see e.g. J. D. Ray, *An Approach to the Carian Script*, *Kadmos* 20 (1981), p. 150–162; I.-J. Adiego, *Studia Carica*, Barcelona, 1993; M. E. Giannotta, R. Gusmani et al. (eds.), *La decifrazione del Cario. Atti del I° Simposio Internazionale*, Roma, 3–4 maggio 1993, Roma, 1994.

work in negative on the die and whose likely knowledge of Greek might have led him into error.⁶ The three other reverse dies all give the correct shape of the initial letter, which is sign no. 29 in the Carian alphabet. An interesting parallel is the early bronze issues of Kaunos, which have recently been discussed by the present author.⁷ Like Keramos, Kaunos struck two series of chalkoi, the first with two Carian letters *k-b* (for “of the Kbideans”), and the second with two or three Greek letters K-A/K-A-Y (for “of the Kaunians”). Note that the name *Kbide* is as different from Kaunos as *Kbo*[] is from Keramos, and that both names in Carian share the beginning *k-b*.

How many letters are missing from the coin legend of Keramos? Since it is an ethnic, the full legend would be in the genitive plural case. Two Carian letter-sequences beginning with *k-b-o* are known to me, both attested in inscriptions from Egypt: *k-b-o-s* in inscription M16 from Saqqâra,⁸ and *k-b-o-k-t-ś* (so the editor, although the final sign might also be 9 = *q*) in graffito Š 48 from Thebes (tomb of Montuemhêt).⁹ We do not know what the meanings of these two words are, but John Ray has suggested that the ending *-os* of *k-b-o-s* in M16 might be nominative and that “the word is, therefore, in apposition to the first name, and may be a title or epithet”¹⁰. In his outline of Carian grammar, Ray restated that the ending *-os* was probably used to indicate titles, adjectives and similar epithets, but prudently added that “in the present state of our knowledge, it is always possible that words classified as adjectives will turn out to be nouns, and vice versa”¹¹. The second letter-sequence *k-b-o-k-t-ś*, which is attested in graffito Š 48 from Thebes, is even more obscure, and little worthwhile can be said about it. It would be imprudent at

⁶ The letter in the shape of a Greek delta does exist in the Carian alphabet and is sign no. 4 whose value was *l*.

⁷ K. Konuk, The Early Coinage of Kaunos, in: Studies in Greek Numismatics in Memory of Martin Jessop Price, eds. R. Ashton and S. Hurter, London, 1998, p. 219.

⁸ O. Masson, Carian Inscriptions from North Saqqâra and Buhen, London, 1978; M16 (1) *t-d-u-ś-o-λ*; (2) *k-b-o-s ś-a-m-s-q-i*.

⁹ V. V. Ševoroškin, Issledovanija po dešifrovke karijskich nadpisej, Moscow, 1965; (1) *d-t-w-b-r* | *k-b-o-k-t-ś* (or *q*?) (2) *k-ś-a-t-w-b-r*.

¹⁰ J. Ray, The Carian Inscriptions from Egypt, JEA 68 (1982), p. 186.

¹¹ J. Ray, An Outline of Carian Grammar, Kadmos 29 (1990), p. 66; I.-J. Adiego, Deux notes sur l'écriture et la langue cariennes, Kadmos 29 (1990), p. 135, further added that “Ray a remarqué que ce mot, et d'autres qui finissent par *-os*, peuvent être des titres ou des épithètes quelconques. Pourquoi pas des termes ethniques ou même simplement des toponymes?”.

this stage to take either of these words as the toponym or the ethnic of the Carian name for Keramos. We may however suggest that on the basis of the chunky fabric of the coin, the use of the dotted border, and the similarity with the Kaunian bronzes, our Carian-legend coins belong to c. 420–400 BC.

The last coin of my catalogue (no. 5) is the only recorded specimen in the series to bear letters other than the ethnic beginning with *k-b-o*. These two letters, placed in front of the bull on the obverse, are both used in Greek (as ksi-epsilon) and Carian (as signs nos. 38 and 5: *í-ù*). We saw that the Carian letters on the reverse of this specimen were engraved upside-down and resemble letters of the Greek alphabet: delta-epsilon-omicron. The more developed style of the bull and the dolphin suggests that it is a late issue, probably from the end of the Carian-letter series, just before the KE-series was struck. The die-cutter might have had to engrave a Greek letter-sequence on the obverse and might have been confused when engraving on the reverse the Carian letter-sequence which he might have mistaken for Greek by inverting them. However, it would be surprising (but not inconceivable) for a coin to have a Greek legend on the obverse and a Carian on the reverse. Indeed, these two letters on the obverse might be Carian as well. The initial letter is indeed well attested in inscriptions from Egypt and Caria, where it is written horizontally, whereas on the coin legend it is vertical. Interestingly enough, the only other known example of the vertical orientation is on another coin legend on a series of silver coins from the 5th century B.C. from an uncertain mint.¹² We may assume that ksi-epsilon or *í-ù* are the first two letters of the name of the official responsible for the issue.

Now that the first three letters of Keramos in Carian have been identified as *k-b-o*, further evidence such as new inscriptions or coins are needed to complete what is missing.

¹² I.-J. Adiego, *Studia Carica*, Barcelona, 1993, p. 323, D18, D and E.

