

LARS KARLSSON – OLIVIER HENRY

A CARIAN GRAFFITO FROM LABRAUNDA

In his recent book, *The Carian Language*, Ignacio Adiego noted the lack of Carian texts from Labraunda.¹ The only inscriptions found so far are graffiti written on terracotta tablets, which were published by Michael Meier-Brügger in 1983.² However, Adiego has suggested that these graffiti should rather be identified as “para-Carian”, i.e. not real Carian texts. An absence of real Carian inscriptions in one of the oldest Carian sanctuaries is surprising.³ But during the excavations at Labraunda in the summer of 2007, a Carian graffito that Adiego has accepted as a “real” Carian text was discovered in one of the fortresses protecting the sanctuary.

Discovery conditions (Lars Karlsson)

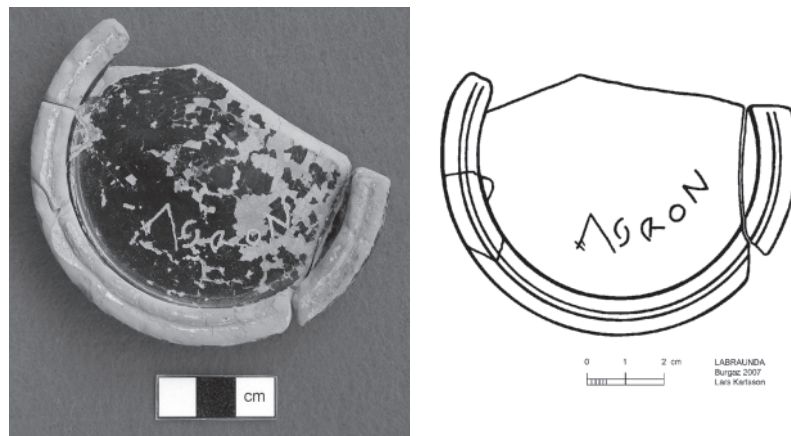
The large fortress at Burgaz Kale, located about 3 kilometres southwest of the Sanctuary at Labraunda, consists of two rectangular buildings connected by a courtyard. The eastern rectangular building has three rooms: two catapult rooms on either side of an entrance room. In the southwest there is another square catapult room, while the rest of the west side is occupied by three rooms with less substantial

¹ Adiego 2007, 22–23.

² Meier-Brügger 1983.

³ Some Carian graffiti on other black-gloss bowls and plates have been published by Hellström 1965, pls. 6–7 (Cat. Nos. 50, 51, 53, 54). Of these, Cat. No. 51 offers the longest word with two letters. Since Carian is much more known today, some of the readings made by Hellström can be corrected: Cat. No. 50 (Hellström 1965, 48) has clearly the Carian letter *I* from Mylasa; Cat. No. 51 was read by Hellström as *MM*, and this cannot be accepted today: first the letters are located on top of each other, which seems strange in the case of an abbreviation; secondly, the shape of the *M* is largely open, which may indicate either the Carian letters *ss* or more probably two juxtaposed *δ* (one of the rare letters common to all Carian alphabets). In this latter case we have an abbreviation *δδ* that is hard to explain (some place names are known such as *Δεδμασα*, *Διδασσαι*, *Δυνδασον*), whereas the *ss* configuration offers many possibilities of personal names (*Σασκως*/*Σεσκως*/*Συσκως*, *Σασσωμος*, *Σαυσσωλος*, *Σεσωλης*).

walls that were not bonded with the catapult rooms. The excavation trenches were laid out in this area, which was used as barracks, i.e. the rooms in which the soldiers on duty had their living quarters. On the threshold leading into Room 2, on July 12, 2007, we discovered the base of an Attic black-gloss bowl. It was decorated on the inside with palmettes joined by large circle segments. On the underside of the bowl a Carian graffito was found, perhaps a name. The base profile and decoration date it to 375–350 B.C. based on a comparison with similar examples from the Maussolleion in Halikarnassos,⁴ as well as already published bases from Labraunda.⁵



Text (Olivier Henry)⁶

(1) The transcription of the text is unproblematic. We can easily read $\Lambda\Sigma\Gamma\text{-ON}$ *bziom*.⁷ The orientation of the text is from the left to the right, as shown by the letter *i*.

⁴ See Vaag et al. 2002, pl. 38, Cat. No. J7 with palmette of so-called Design 1 (pag. 29, fig. 11), and pag. 185 (dated 375–350 B.C.); for a design very similar to an example from Olynthos, see Robinson 1950, pl. 220 and p. 352, Cat. No. 769 (early 4th century B.C.); Sparkes–Talcott 1970, 310, Cat. No. 1056, and fig. 10 (ca. 350 B.C.).

⁵ Hellström 1965, pl. 6, especially Cat. No. 38, which has a similar base profile.

⁶ We are extremely grateful to Ignacio Adiego for his many remarks that enriched this paper, and to Koray Konuk for contributing his views on the ideas presented here.

⁷ The first letter is slightly altered and one could hesitate between reading *a* or *b*. Some comparison with known material, and the fact that the graffito has been carved into a very fragile material, leads us to reject the “a” possibility.

(2) The word is complete since the black gloss is preserved all around it. It probably is a proper name. Although this name is attested here for the first time, it can easily be analyzed. The *bz-* root can be compared to the known name *bzol*, as in the new fragment of a bilingual inscription from Hyllarima (C.Hy 1),⁸ in which the final *-ol* might be the typical Carian suffix *-ollos* or *-oldos*. Then there is the final element *-iom*, as in *kbjom-*, *šarkbiom*, *arliom-*, which translate into Greek *-ωμος*, as in *Κεβιωμος*⁹ and *Αρλιωμος*¹⁰. Therefore, we clearly have in Labraunda a *bz-iom*. The only problem with this new name is the difficulty to find parallel forms of *bz-* in the Carian onomastic lists of Greek sources. The graffito is nonetheless – and without a doubt – written in “canonical” Carian. This text should then be recorded as Carian Labraunda 1 (C.La 1).

(3) There are other interesting points to investigate. Although our text is very short, it contains letters that show different forms in the different versions that existed of the Carian alphabets. Therefore, it allows us to offer a few remarks. The alphabet used here is something one would not expect in this area. According to Adiego, the letter “i”, which presents different forms, can be considered as a “guide sign”.¹¹ It bears the same form in the alphabets of Sinuri and Kildara. The other letters are also comparable to the alphabet of Kildara and the inscription C.Si 1 from Sinuri: the lambda form for *b*, the “non-Egyptian/non-Kaunian” form of the letter *z*. These affinities are so far unrecorded in a Mylasian context.¹² Of course, the alphabet of Mylasa (known only through C.My 1) is very close to those of Sinuri and Kildara.¹³ The differences lie mostly in the angular form of letters such as *i*, *d* and *z*, and the close formation of *y*. Nevertheless, these dissimilarities, including some others as found in the letters *a* and *e*, lead us to conclude that these two alphabets are cousins at best, rather than brothers. Therefore, if we want to link the script used in C.La 1 to some already known alphabet, it would be the one from Sinuri-Kildara.

One explanation as to why the Sinuri-Kildara alphabet was used may lie in the fact that the graffito has been scratched on the underside of the base of an Attic black-gloss bowl. It may be possible to

⁸ Adiego–Debord–Varinlioglu 2005.

⁹ Adiego 2007, 371, 460.

¹⁰ Adiego 2007, 355, 459.

¹¹ Personal communication about this graffito.

¹² Labraunda was the sanctuary linked to Mylasa, situated 14 km north of Mylasa, whereas Kildara and Sinuri are located 25 km south of Mylasa.

¹³ Adiego 2007, 225.

speculate that the sherd was brought to Burgaz Kale by an individual coming from the area of Sinuri-Kildara.¹⁴ Burgaz Kale, where the graffito was found, belongs to a complex defense system protecting the Carian sanctuary of Labraunda. It would not be surprising if people (i.e. soldiers) were sent on duty from different areas of Caria to the sanctuary, since it functioned as a sort of “pan-Carian” cultic place.

On the other hand, if we adopt an “isograph” approach (considering the main shape of the letters) there are two other alphabets that show very close affinities with our C.La 1, viz. the alphabet from Euromos and the alphabet from Stratonikeia. So far, the only slight difference from C.La 1 lies in the letter *i*, which in Euromos has a longer horizontal line (Ϟ) and in Stratonikeia a longer vertical line (ϙ). The fact that the lines of this letter can have different lengths in the very same inscription, as in C.Eu 1, seems to prove the existence of variations from the same hand.¹⁵ These irregularities may also be due to the fact that the inscriptions have been carved by different individuals¹⁶ and in different periods.¹⁷ The latter point can be illustrated by the variations in the way we find the letter *m* written in the Mylasian mints: oblique and reverse before 420 B.C. (Ϟ) and straight after 420 B.C. (Ϟ)¹⁸ All these variations found on coins also show that although a general form of the same letter can slightly change, it still keeps the same “isograph”. That is, a curved line never changes into a straight one. This point seems to confirm our previous analysis of the dissimilarities noted for the letter *i*, which allows us to join together the isographs of Labraunda, Sinuri-Kildara, Euromos and Stratonikeia, while rejecting others (Mylasa in particular).

The alphabets from Sinuri-Kildara, Euromos and Stratonikeia offer, moreover, many similarities. They exhibit some differences, such as the letter “a”, which has a peculiar form in Sinuri-Kildara¹⁹, but most differences seem to be slight. We already noted the varia-

¹⁴ For example, Hellström 1965, 47 (Cat. No. 50) published a graffito on the bottom surface of a black-gloss plate, showing an “i” with angular lines typical of the alphabet from Mylasa and clearly different from our example.

¹⁵ See the remark of Blümel-Kızıl 2004, 138, concerning the inexperience of the engraver of C.My 1 and the subsequent difficulties in reading the inscription.

¹⁶ Note for example the differences of the letter *i*, in the texts 3 and 4 in C.Hy 1.

¹⁷ Compare the evolution of the Greek script, where the different forms of the letters Α or Ω serve as dating criteria.

¹⁸ See Konuk 2007, 472–474, and compare the groups of M1–M3, which cover a period of 500–450 B.C., to M4–M5 (420–390 B.C.).

¹⁹ Here again, just like for *m*, the letter *a* can be found written in two different forms in the same alphabet, whether in an inscription from Tralleis (Adiego 2007, 206) or on a coin issued by the same mint (Konuk 2007, 478, between M15 and M17).

tions of the letter *i*. A comparative analysis indicates that only two close signs (*y* and *e*, which together with *a*, are not known in C.La 1) are different over a total of 20 letters (note that we find the same variations of the letter *n* in both the alphabets of Euromos and Sinuri-Kildara, the locations geographically most distant of our group). Another possibility is to consider that C.La 1 belongs to Labraunda and has been written with a local alphabet that had close affinities to alphabets from Sinuri-Kildara, Euromos and Stratonikeia.

Since Mylasa seems to be excluded from this group, it leaves us with a geographical configuration that, although unusual, has parallels in other sources. Indeed, these affinities may reveal the existence of some sort of ancient and close relationships between these three locations (four, if we admit a separate alphabet for Labraunda), a relationship that could have left a mark in writing traditions.²⁰ Pierre Debord, in a recent article on the historical geography of this area, expressed the possibility of the existence of an Idrian league during the 5th century B.C. that should have included Euromos, Labraunda and cities from the high Marsyas valley (i.e., the territory of the future Stratonikeia).²¹ In addition to these remarks we may also recall some petroglyphs discovered by Paavo Roos east of Labraunda, near the village of Beypinar, in an area that is located at the juncture between the western centres and the Marsyas valley.²² These petroglyphs were repeated in different places. Two times they show, carved on the same rock, a combination of the Greek letters *IE* and another sign representing a triangle. In the first case this triangle is engraved upside-down, as the Carian letter *∇ k* (common in all Carian alphabets), and in the second case it is engraved as a Greek *Δ* (also common as the letter *l* in all Carian alphabets).

These remarks are conjectural and far from being definitive. Future excavations in the sanctuary of Labraunda may provide us with further Carian inscriptions that may confirm or force us to reconsider the preliminary hypotheses offered here.

for example, the former one offering three different shape for the same mint, also for the letter *z* between M12–M14 and M15–M21, etc.).

²⁰ As it seems to be the case between Egypt and the coastal Carian cities of Halikarnassos, Iasos and Kaunos.

²¹ Debord 1994; perhaps even Sinuri, if Hierakome can be associated with this sanctuary (Robert 1937, 559–560).

²² Roos 1980, 21.

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Abstract

During the 2007 archaeological campaign at the sanctuary of Labraunda (Turkey), a ring-foot of an Attic black-gloss bowl was discovered in Burgaz Kale, one of the five fortifications surrounding the sanctuary. The sherd is dated to the second quarter of the 4th century B.C. and bears on its bottom side a graffito written with five Carian letters. It reads *bziom*, a personal name, unknown in Carian onomastics. It is suggested that the letters belong to a group of alphabets from the Sinuri-Stratonikeia-Euromos area. The graffito has been named C.La 1, thus being the first real Carian text discovered in Labraunda.