Reading Lycian Through Greek Eyes: The Vowels[1]

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The purpose of this article is to revise the values that have been traditionally attributed by scholars to the Lycian vowels. In order to do that, I intend to study the Lycian names attested in Greek inscriptions, especially those present in bilingual inscriptions. Since the values of the Greek vowels are well known, this will help me to establish the values of the Lycian vowels.

1. Introduction

There are two important studies done on Lycian vocalism: one by H.C. Melchert[2] and the other by I. Hajnal.[3]

In his study, H.C. Melchert[4] establishes the presence of four non-nasal vowels to which he attributes the following phonetic values: [i], [æ] or [a], [ɑ], [u]. He attested the existence of two nasal vowels: [ã], [ẽ] and the possible existence of other two correlate of [i] and [u]. This is a diachronic and a synchronic study at the same time, since it is inserted in a larger work that analyses the phonology of all the Anatolian languages.

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2. H.C. MELCHERT, *Anatolian Historical Phonology*, Leiden, 1994.
3. I. HAJNAL, *Der lyksiche Vokalismus. Methode und Erkentnisse der vergleichenden anatolischen Sprachwissenschaft, angewandt auf das Vokalsystem einer Kleincorpussprache*, Graz, 1995.
4. MELCHERT, *op cit.*, p. 291.

Hajnal's[5] study also establishes the existence of four non-nasal vowels, but his phonetic description is less precise (he mentions that they are clearer than the Greek ones). In addition, he also mentions two nasal vowels: [ã], [ẽ]. This is a diachronic study of Lycian vocalism from Indo-European.

2. The data

Now I will analyse all the evidence that exists for each one of the four Lycian vowels. I will analyse names that are known to be Lycian with some degree of certainty (excluding dubious ones when it is possible). It would be important to keep in mind the distinction between the data provided by the bilingual inscriptions (more reliable) and the correspondences that can be inferred from the rest of the data.[6]

In the lists which gather all the known evidence, the following information will be provided: the Lycian name, the text/s where it is present, the reference given by L. Zgusta[7] for the form, the Greek form and (if it is known) the Lycian inscription in which we can find the Greek rendering of the name.[8]

2.1. 'A' vowel

Lycian alphabet: Ᵽ

In most cases it is represented in Greek with an α:

Lycian name[9]	Text	KPN	Greek form	Greek form in Lycian corpus
Dapara	TL 6	252-2	Λαπαρας[10]	TL 6
Eseimija Seimija[11]	N 320	NO	Σιμίας	N 320
Hla	TL 56; 129; 145	786-2	Λας	TL 56
Hura	TL 47; 119	1100	Ορας	NO
Idazzala	TL 32; N 306	451-10	Ειδασσαλα	TL 32
Ijamara	TL 149	448-4	Ιαμαρας	NO
Iχtta	TL 56	462	Ικτας	TL 56

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5. HAJNAL, *op. cit.*, p. 11-13.
6. That can be very distant in time to.
7. L. ZGUSTA, *Kleinasiatische Personennamen*, Praha, 1964.
8. I am following the model of A.-V. SCHWEYER, *Les Lyciens et la mort, une étude d'histoire sociale*, Paris, 2002. But I have corrected some errors and I adapt them for my own purposes.
9. The lemmata are those from H.C. MELCHERT, *A Dictionary of the Lycian Language*, New York, 2004.
10. For the values of Lycian voiced fricatives: cf. MELCHERT, *op. cit.*, *Anatolian...*, p. 287-289.
11. This name does not have a clear etymology: cf. O. CARRUBA, « Comentario alla trilingue licio-greca di Xanthos », *SMEA*, 1977, p. 295: « c'è il dubbio che *(E)seimija* G 8 e 9 Σιμία A 9 SYMYN sia un nome semitico di origine siriana (probabilemente aramaico) se a Hieropolis il gr. Σείμιος rende il sem. *Esmun* "grasso; fecondo" » and T.R. BRYCE, « Hellenism in Lycia », in J.-P. DESCOEUDRES, *Greek Colonists and Native Populations*, Canberra-Oxford, 1990, p. 538.

Lycian name	Text	KPN	Greek form	Greek form in Lycian corpus
Xñtab[u]ra	TL 103; 125	614-3	Κινδαβυρις Κενδεβορα	NO
Xñtanube	TL 70	614-1	Κινδανυβας	NO
Xudalijẽ	TL 54; 72	NO	Κυδαλιης	TL 72
Xudara	TL 143	643	Κοδαρας	NO
Xuwata	TL 134	640	Κοατα	TL 134
Mahanepijemi	N 302	855a	Μαναπιμις	N 302
Maχa	TL 78	848-2	Μαγας	NO
Masasa/i	TL 99; 118; 134	875	Μασα	TL 134
Merimawa[12]	TL 27	902	Μεριμαοσσα Μεριμαυασα	NO
Mida	TL 141	912	Μιδας	NO
Mula	TL 32	946-4	Μολας	TL 32
Muraza	TL 2; 54; 72; 84	985	Μορωζα	TL 72
Murñna	TL 136; 139	967	Μορνα	TL 139
Piχñma	TL 116	1254	Πιγομας	NO
Punamuwe	TL 35	1288-1	Ποναμοας	NO
Qñturahe/i	N 320	NO	Κονδορασις	N 320
Sbikaza Sbi◇aza	TL 10; 70; 106	1468-1	Σπιγασα	TL 70
Tewinaza	N 306	1543-1	Τευινασος	NO
Zizahãma	TL 139	1435-5	Σισαμας	NO
Zzala	TL 32	1358-1	Σαλας	TL 32

Exceptions in which it appears with an o:

Hñprãma	TL 36; 37	332	Εμβρομος	NO
Xpparama	TL 32	742	Κπαραμω	TL 32
Muraza	TL 2; 54; 72; 84	985	Μορωζα	TL 72
Ssewa	TL 32; 34	1413	Σηο	TL 32
Tewinaza	N 306	1543-1	Τευινασος	NO
Zi[s]qqa	TL 32	1410-1	Σεσκως	TL 32

2.2. 'E' vowel

Lycian alphabet: ↑

The ε/η forms alternates with α forms in Greek.

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12. The Greek forms have to be related to this one, maybe with a Lycian derivative suffix -aza. This suffix seems to be present in other personal names: *Apuwaza, Epñtibaza, Hanadaza, Izraza, Maχzza, Muraza, Pumaza, Sbikaza.*

ε/η forms:

Lycian name	Text	KPN	Greek form	Greek form in Lycian corpus
Erm̃menēni	TL 121	355-35	Ερμενηννις	NO
Huzetēi	N 309	1122	Οσετης	NO
Idãχre	TL 78	451-3	Ιδαγρης	NO
Kerbe[s]eh	N 312	NO	Θέρβεσιος	N 312
Xeriga	TL 44	582	Γεργις	NO
Xesñtedi	N 320	NO	Κεσινδηλις	N 320
Xudrehila	TL 73; 132	767-4	Κυδρηλος	NO
Merimawa	TL 27	902	Μεριμαοσσα Μεριμαυασα	NO
Mulesi	TL 105	946-7	Μολεσις	NO
Pubiele	TL 117	1313	Πυβιαλης	TL 117
Sedeplm̃mi Esedeplemi	TL 29; 85; 114; 115	1387	Σεδεπλεμις	NO
Ssewa	TL 32; 34	1413	Σηο	TL 32
Tewinaza	N 306	1543-1	Τευινασος	NO
Tikeukēpre	TL 25	1566	Τισευσεμβραν	NO

α forms:

El[puw]eti	TL 23	331	Ελποατ[ις]	TL 23
Hlm̃midewe	TL 139	330	Ελμιδαυα	TL 139
Huzeimi	N 308	1118-1	Οσαιμις	NO
Mahanepijemi[13]	N 302	855a	Μαναπιμις	N 302
Mlejeusi	TL 139	934	Μλααυσις	TL 139
M̃mije	TL 143	924-2	Αμμια Αμμις	NO
Punamuwe	TL 35	1288-1	Ποναμοας	NO
Purihimeti	TL 6; 25; 99	1292	Πυριματις Πυριβατης	TL 6 TL 25
Ssepije	N 302	1372 a	Σαπια	N 302
Tilume	TL 139	1561	Τιλομας	NO
Trijētezi	TL 7; 8	1602	Τριενδασις	NO
Wesepije	TL 9	NO	Οσσαπιας	NO

α forms are slightly more frequent in bilingual inscriptions than ε/η forms. But if the non bilingual material is also analysed it can be inferred that the rendering of e in Greek is not consistent.

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13. Take into account that Greek does not usually renders the intervocalic Lycian *h* or *j*, cf. TL 6 *Purihimeti* = Πυριματις.

2.3. 'I' vowel

Lycian alphabet: E
It is normally represented in Greek with an ι.

Lycian name	Text	KPN	Greek form	Greek form in Lycian corpus
El[puw]eti	TL 23	331	Ελποατι[ις]	TL 23
Erm̃menēni	TL 121	355-35	Ερμενηννις	NO
Hlm̃midewe	TL 139	330	Ελμιδαυα	TL 139
Huzetēi	N 309	1122	Οσετης	NO
Idãχre	TL 78	451-3	Ιδαγρης	NO
Ijamara	TL 149	448-4	Ιαμαρας	NO
Iχtta	TL 56	462	Ικτας	TL 56
Xudalijē	TL 54; 72	NO	Κυδαλιης	TL 72
Mahanepijemi	N 302	855a	Μαναπιμις	N 302
Mlejeusi	TL 139	934	Μλααυσις	TL 139
Merimawa	TL 27	902	Μεριμαοσσα Μεριμαυασα	NO
Mida	TL 141	912	Μιδας	NO
M̃mije	TL 143	924-2	Αμμια Αμμις	NO
Mulesi	TL 105	946-7	Μολεσις	NO
Mullijesi	TL 6	946-9	Μολλισις	TL 6
Mutli	TL 150	975-2	Μοταλις	NO
Pigrēi	N 320	1255-6	Πιγρης	N 320
Piχm̃ma	TL 116	1254	Πιγομας	NO
Pubiele	TL 117	1313	Πυβιαλης	TL 117
Purihimeti	TL 6; 25; 99	1292	Πυριματις Πυριβατης	TL 6 TL 25
Sbikaza Sbi◇aza	TL 10; 70; 106	1468-1	Σπιγασα	TL 70
Ssepije	N 302	1372 a	Σαπια	N 302
Tewinaza	N 306	1543-1	Τευινασος	NO
Tikeukēpre	TL 25	1566	Τισευσεμβραν	NO
Tilume	TL 139	1561	Τιλομας	NO
Trijētezi	TL 7; 8	1602	Τριενδασις	NO
Wesepije	TL 9	NO	Οσσαπιας	NO
Zizahãma	TL 139	1435-5	Σισαμας	NO

Exceptions:

Idazzala	TL 32; N 306	451-10	Ειδασσαλα	TL 32
Zi[s]qqa	TL 32	1410-1	Σεσκως	TL 32

I do not think that these two names suppose any problem for the value of this vowel.

2.4. 'U' vowel

Lycian alphabet: O
Sometimes it is represented in Greek with an o:

Lycian name	Text	KPN	Greek form	Greek form in Lycian corpus
El[puw]eti	TL 23	331	Ελποατι[ις]	TL 23
Hura	TL 47; 119	1100	Ορας	NO
Huzetẽi	N 309	1122	Οσετης	NO
Xudara	TL 143	643	Κοδαρας	NO
Xuwata	TL 134	640	Κοατα	TL 134
Mula	TL 32	946-4	Μολας	TL 32
Mullijesi	TL 6	946-9	Μολλισις	TL 6
Mulesi	TL 105	946-7	Μολεσις	NO
Muraza	TL 2; 54; 72; 84	985	Μορωζα	TL 72
Murñna	TL 136; 139	967	Μορνα	TL 139
Mutli	TL 150	975-2	Μοταλις	NO
Tilume	TL 139	1561	Τιλομας	NO

Sometimes it is represented in Greek with an υ:

Krupsse[14]	TL 25	435	Θρυψις	TL 25
Xñtanube	TL 70	614-1	Κινδανυβας	NO
Xudalijẽ	TL 54; 72	NO	Κυδαλιης	TL 72
Xudrehila	TL 73; 132	767-4	Κυδρηλος	NO
Pubiele	TL 117	1313	Πυβιαλης	TL 117
Purihimeti	TL 6; 25; 99	1292	Πυριματις Πυριβατης	TL 6 TL 25

Looking at the number of instances in which it appear in bilingual inscriptions it is not possible to determine whether it is o or υ.

3. Some remarks about the data

It is possible to make a series of observations based on the analysis of the Greek rendering of the four Lycian vowels:

- The inadequacy of the traditional transcription system is obvious. Even though it is a useful tool, it does not adjust to the phonetic reality of Lycian as some of the hesitation on the Greek inscriptions demonstrates.
- The contexts in which a Greek vowel /o/ appears for Lycian *a* present contexts that I do not consider neuter: a *m* (labial), the semi consonant *w* (rounded), the *z* (dental affricate) and the velar *q* (a velarized or the result

of a labiovelar).[15] In three of them the presence of the labial element and the rounding of the lips can be determinant for the pronunciation of the vowel.
- It has not been possible to establish a fixed pattern for the representation of the Lycian /e/ in Greek.
- Lycian *u* does not seem to be consistent in its Greek representation.[16] Some of the cases can be seen as the reinterpretation of the Lycian name in a "Greek manner".[17] Greek has two back vowels (/o/ or /u/) where Lycian only has one back vowel, and possibly, from a Lycian point of view, they were almost the same. Another possibility exists: that the use of υ in Greek adaptations of Lycian names could have been done for social status reasons.[18]

4. A new proposal for Lycian Vocalism

4.1. Prior considerations

Taking into consideration the data previously presented, it seems adequate to make a different proposal for Lycian vocalism, but first the following information should be taken into account:

- The four-vowel systems are considered by I. Maddieson to be defective systems (the infrequency of these systems in natural languages seems to justify this classification).[19]
- The /u/ has a greater tendency to be absent in natural languages than /e/ or /o/.[20]
- There is a tendency for which in the defective systems some of the remaining vowels are moved towards the position of the absent vowel.[21]

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14. Considered a Greek name by T.R. BRYCE, *op. cit.*, p. 538.

15. For the values of Lycian velars: cf. MELCHERT, *op. cit.*, *Anatolian...*, p. 40 and 282-289. For a general view of the Greek-based alphabets of Asia Minor and their IPA representation: cf. I.-J. ADIEGO LAJARA, « Los alfabetos epicóricos anhelénicos de Asia Menor », in P. BÁDENAS DE LA PEÑA, S. TORALLAS TOVAR, E.R. LUJÁN, M.A. GALLEGO (ed.), *Lenguas en Contacto: El testimonio escrito*, Madrid, 2004, p. 299-320.

16. If we have a look at the data we will find out that the presence of υ or o in bilingual inscriptions is quite similar (four instances or υ and five of o).

17. I am thinking of Πυριματις and Πυριβατης (by means of popular etymology), and maybe Κυδαλιης (connected to κυδάλιμος?).

18. Since they do not have a distinction between an /o/ and /u/ sound, they use /u/ from the two possibilities that Greek offers them in order to differentiate themselves from the common men who do not speak Greek, and do not have the sound in their speech inventory (see section 4 for full description). It would somehow become a mark of status (anyone can think of similar parallels in our modern languages).

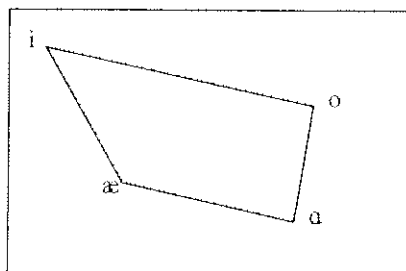19. I. MADDIESON, *Patterns of Sounds*, Cambridge, 1984, p. 141.

20. MADDIESON, *op. cit.*, p. 142: "Our own frequency count of the missing vowels in UPSID confirms that the high front and the low central vowels are less likely to be missing than the high back rounded vowel, i.e. /a/ and /i/ > /u/. It further shows that the high back vowel is more likely to be absent in natural languages than either the front or the back mid vowels, i.e. /e/ and /o/ > /u/".

21. MADDIESON, *ibid.*, p. 151: "When a gap occurs in the peripheral vowel system, some or all the remaining peripheral vowels are often found to be displaced in the direction of the gap".
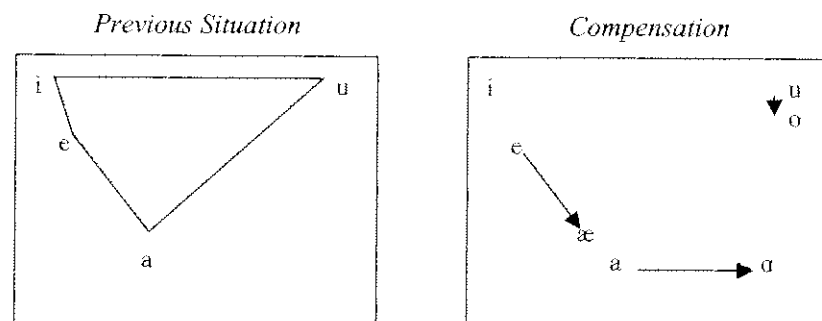
– It is possible that there was a compensation of the vocalic system in Lycian before it appeared in written texts.

4.2. The proposal

I propose the following values for Lycian vowels:

The possible compensation that we mentioned before could have happened as follows:

Previous Situation · *Compensation*

5. Conclusions

5.1. Consequences of the proposal

This vocalism proposal has the following consequences:

– The negation of the existence of the /u/ in Lycian as an independent vowel. The semi consonant /w/ does exist and I can not discard the presence of /u/ in diphthongs.[22] Moreover it is possible that when the movement occurs, these other elements are not affected.
– It is possible to interpret the cases of /o/ in Greek for the Lycian *a* as a variant with the rounding of the lips caused by the context.
– It explains the hesitation between /a/ and /e/ sound in Greek to represent the Lycian /æ/, since it is a sound that does not completely correspond with either one from the point of view of Greek phonetics but it appears to be closer to /a/.[23]

5.2. Advantage of the proposal

This proposal helps to explain the origin of the Lycian alphabet:[24]

– Lycian Ⱶ derives from a Greek α, where the central vowel character would be the most important fact for Lycian adaptation.
– ↑ seems to derive from the previous sign or from the Greek α, which would agree with its articulation, closer to a Greek α.
– | is used with the value of a semi consonant, which could cause the E sign (that, after the creation of ↑, became a "dead letter") to be used to represent /i/, since this is a vowel close to this value.
– The use of O would be coherent with the value of this vowel in Lycian, since it would not be a /u/ and it would be closer to the Greek o.

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22. It is interesting to notice that instances of *ai* or *ei* are much more numerous than instances of *au* or *eu*. Maybe *au* and *eu* are hiatus, but I can not prove it.

23. I have already mentioned that the number of instances of α is bigger than that of ε/η.
24. Cf. ADIEGO, *op. cit.*, spec. p. 304-308.