CHAPTER 23

Carian

H. CRAIG MELCHERT

1. HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXTS

The land of Caria lay during the first millennium BC in the southwest of Anatolia between Lydia and Lycia. A few dozen texts in the epichoric language, mostly very short or fragmentary, have been found in Caria itself or on objects likely to have originated there. These are dated very approximately to the fourth to third centuries BC. There is also a very fragmentary Carian–Greek bilingual from Athens, dated to the sixth century. By far the largest number of Carian texts consists of tomb inscriptions and graffiti left by Carian mercenaries in Egypt, dating from the seventh to fifth centuries BC. A new epoch in Carian studies has now begun with the dramatic discovery in 1996 of an extensive Carian–Greek bilingual by Turkish excavators in Kaunos and its remarkably swift publication by Frei and Marek (1997).

2. WRITING SYSTEM

The Carian script surely stands in some relationship to the Greek alphabet. The direction of writing is predominantly right to left in texts from Egypt, and left to right in those from Caria. *Scriptio continua* is frequent, and use of word-dividers is sporadic.

Decipherment of the Carian script has been a long and arduous task. Pioneering efforts by A. H. Sayce at the end of the nineteenth century were followed by several false steps based on the erroneous assumption of a syllabic or semisyllabic system and a long period of relative neglect. It was the merit of V. Shevoroshkin (1965) to have shown that the Carian script is an alphabet. However, the specific values he and others assigned to individual letters led to no breakthrough in our understanding of the language. Particularly striking was the virtually complete absence of any matches between Carian personal names, as attested in Greek sources, and putative examples in the native alphabet.

A new era began in 1981 when John Ray first successfully exploited the evidence of the Carian–Egyptian bilingual tomb inscriptions to establish radically new values for several Carian letters, as well as to confirm the values of others. Additional investigation, notably by Ray, Ignacio-Javier Adiego, and Diether Schürr, has led to further revisions and refinements of the new system. The basic validity of this approach was shown by its correct prediction of Carian personal names which have subsequently appeared in Greek sources. Nevertheless, many uncertainties and unsolved problems remained, and several reputable experts were skeptical of the new interpretation of the Carian alphabet. One can

conveniently gain a sense of the state of Carian studies prior to 1997 from Giannotta *et al.* 1994.

The new Carian–Greek bilingual from Kaunos has shown conclusively the essential validity of the Ray–Adiego–Schürr system, while also confirming the suspicion of local variation in the use of the Carian alphabet. While some rarer signs remain to be elucidated, the question of the Carian alphabet may be viewed as decided. The new bilingual has not led to immediate equally dramatic progress in our grasp of the language. One reason for this is that the Greek text of the Kaunos Bilingual is a formulaic proxenia decree, while the corresponding Carian is manifestly quite independent in its phrasing of what must be essentially the same contents. The Kaunos Bilingual has provided welcome confirmation of the view that Carian is an Indo-European Anatolian language, and indeed, of the western type of Luvian, Lycian, and Lydian. However, one cannot speak of a complete decipherment until there are generally accepted interpretations of a substantial body of texts – a stage not yet fully attained. This remark applies even to the new bilingual, as one can easily confirm by reading the competing linguistic analyses in Blümel, Frei, and Marek 1998. The following very sketchy description of the language must therefore be taken as highly provisional!

Table 23.1 A subset of characters of the Carian alphabet

Character	Transcription
𐊠	a
𐊢	d
𐊣	l
𐊤	ù
𐊥	r
𐊦	λ
𐊧	q
𐊨	b
𐊩	m
𐊪	o
𐊫	t
𐊬	š
𐊭	s
𐊮	u
𐊯	x
𐊰	n
𐊱	p
𐊲	ś
𐊳	i
𐊴	e
𐊵	w
𐊶	k
𐊷	ú
𐊸	í
𐊹	τ
𐊺	w

3. PHONOLOGY

3.1 Consonants

3.1.1 Obstruents

Carian certainly has a series of voiceless stops /p/, /t/, and /k/. There are actually three letters for dorsal stops: *k*, *q*, and *x*. It is quite unclear whether this orthographic distinction reflects a linguistic contrast, phonetic or phonemic, and if so, of what nature. There are also letters for *b* and *d* the basic value of which is assured by Greek renderings of Carian names. Whether these sounds are voiced stops or fricatives cannot yet be determined. Several indications point to the latter: the existence of separate signs for [mb] and [nd] (Schürr, 1991–1993: 169ff.); the absence or extreme rarity of a corresponding velar; and the apparent lack of voicing contrast in the velar stop(s) as suggested by Greek correspondences. Compare for the first and last points the situation in Lycian. One should, however, avoid premature conclusions.

There are three contrasting sibilant phonemes. Carian *š* is palatal or palatalized, based on Egyptian correspondences in personal names and etymological considerations (*šr-* "up(per)" or similar < **ser-*; cf. Lydian *serli-* "supreme" likewise with palatal(ized) sibilant). Carian *ś* reflects Proto-Anatolian **-ss-* in the relational adjective suffix *-ś-*. The nature of the contrast with the third sibilant *s* remains to be defined. The Carian sound transliterated as *τ* is some kind of coronal obstruent, probably an affricate, but its source and hence its precise value is unknown.

3.1.2 Sonorants

Carian sonorants include /m/, /n/, /r/, and /l/. There is a second lateral transliterated λ, which definitely contrasts with ordinary *l* (/l/). The former is rendered consistently in Greek as geminate λλ or λδ and probably continues prehistoric geminate **-ll-*. It is reasonably certain that the sonorants have syllabic allophones.

There are no certain distinct signs for glides, but there are undoubtedly nonsyllabic correspondents of the high vowels /i/ and /u/. Their phonemic status is indeterminate.

3.2 Vowels

Carian appears to have a standard five-vowel system: /i/, /u/, /e/, /o/, and /a/. That the mid-vowels /e/ and /o/ are relatively close and long is suggested by both their likely historical sources and by Greek renderings (Adiego 1994:48ff.). A synchronic contrast in vowel length is unlikely. There is an apparent surfeit of letters for /u/ (*u*, *ú*, *ù*, *ü*, *w*), and additional linguistically real contrasts may eventually emerge, but the possibility of multiple graphemes for a single phoneme must also be taken seriously. Diphthongs /ai/ and /au/ seem assured.

4. MORPHOLOGY

4.1 Nominal morphology

Only fragments of Carian morphology are as yet recoverable. In the noun one may identify an animate accusative singular ending /-n/ contrasting with animate nominative singular

ending zero (for the first see Melchert 1993: 79, and now the confirmatory evidence of the Kaunos Bilingual). Possession or appurtenance is indicated by a suffix which appears as *-ś* in the frequent patronymics and ethnica of the sepulchral inscriptions. Identification by Schürr (1992:138) of an animate accusative form in *-śñ* argues that the examples in *-ś* represent the corresponding animate nominative singular of a relational adjective (thus also Adiego 1994:54), rather than a nominal genitive case-marker. The equation of this relational adjective suffix *-ś-* with that of Luvian and Lycian is one of the strongest arguments for the status of Carian as an Indo-European Anatolian language. The Kaunos Bilingual has now also given us *kbdun-* "Caunian," where the *-un-* clearly is cognate with the Luvian suffix *-wann(i)-* which also derives adjectives from place names.

4.2 Pronouns

Adiego (1992:32f.) and Melchert (1993:79) have identified a demonstrative stem *s(a)n-* "this." Hajnal (1997) has now fully confirmed the earlier suspicion that Carian enclitic *-xi* represents the Proto-Indo-European relative pronoun $*k^wi$-.

4.3 Verbal morphology

Melchert (1993:78f.) has argued that *wbt* represents a preterite third singular verb "has dedicated" (matching Lycian *ubete*). Janda (1994:178) proposes that the verb of the sentence in question is rather *pídl* "has given," corresponding to Lydian *bil(l)* (< **bidl*). A choice between these alternatives depends on finding further convincing examples of one or the other. The lack thus far of any other persuasive identifications of finite verb forms, due in part to the nature of the available corpus, is the most serious obstacle to a complete decipherment of the language. The Kaunos Bilingual has not yet remedied this situation.

5. SYNTAX

Hajnal (1997) has compellingly analyzed the enclitic *-xi* as functioning in some instances as a relative pronoun, but in most cases as an invariant particle marking a definite noun phrase. Also noteworthy is the coordinating conjunction *sb* "and," first correctly identified by Neumann (comparing Milyan *sebe*).

6. LEXICON

In addition to various lexemes cited above, one should note the recent identification of *ted* "father" and *en* "mother" (Schürr 1996). Important also is the stem *otr-* "oneself" of the Kaunos Bilingual, independently identified by several scholars with Lycian *atra-* "oneself."

7. READING LIST

The most complete survey is Adiego 1993. One should also consult Giannotta *et al.* 1994, and Blümel, Frei, and Marek 1998.

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