

La decifrazione del Cario. Atti del 1° Simposio Internazionale Roma, 3-4 maggio 1993. A cura di M. E. Giannotta, R. Gusmani, L. Innocente, D. Marcozzi, M. Salvini, M. Sinatra, P. Vannicelli. Roma, Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, 1994, 4°, 253 S. (Monografie Scientifiche. Serie Scienze umane e sociali.) Geb. 50 000 Lire.

Despite the efforts of a number of scholars over more than a century, the decipherment of the Carian script and the status of the Carian language remain the subject of intense controversy. The present volume reflects the proceedings of a recent symposium which brought together leading representatives of the chief opposing schools of thought in a friendly and collegial "confrontation". Also participating were other researchers who have contributed to the study of Carian but who have not taken a definite stand on the controversy, as well as other scholars who addressed general methodological issues involved.

Since I am on record (Melchert, 1993) as endorsing the 'new' or 'Egyptological' approach to Carian, I cannot pretend to offer a disinterested and objective review of this volume. A short review is also not the place to respond to arguments or criticisms of adherents of the 'conservative' approach: undue compression for reasons of space would turn arguments into mere assertions unsupported by sufficient evidence. I invite interested readers to examine the various contributions for themselves and to make their own judgment. I do believe that all points of view have received their fair chance to be heard.

What I wish to stress here is that the symposium consisted of far more than merely a (re)statement of already established views, hypotheses and arguments. To the great merit of the organizers and participants, it produced many new facts and analyses, as shown by these published proceedings. I cite the following by way of example.

M. Meier-Brügger offers a new Carian text (numbered 40*), which has interesting consequences for the value of certain signs (see below). L. Innocente reviews a series of previously known inscriptions which have not received due attention in recent discussions of Carian. The quality of this material is variable, and the Carian status of several items is debatable, but at least one is undoubtedly Carian, and it presents a problem for the 'new' approach (see her discussion, 105). I will return to this below.

I.-J. Adiego and J. Ray present a number of new onomastic identifications obtained by their system of sound values. Adiego also gives a tentative schema of the Carian phonological system implied by his system (a prime desideratum, as stressed by C. Boisson in his article). W. Blümel provides an invaluable revised and updated summary of Carian personal names attested in Greek inscriptions, organized according to chronology and geography.

From V. Sevoroskin we receive a thorough and comprehensive statement of his current views, including responses to specific claims of the 'new' approach. His presentation thus makes possible a fair comparison and evaluation of the two major competing systems of decipherment. M. Janda makes several thoughtful and stimulating new proposals regarding the alphabet and the language (based on the values of the 'new' system).

C. Boisson cites a number of points where typological considerations, both graphemic and linguistic, can either offer solutions to Carian problems or at least help to properly frame the questions. The remaining contributions by G. Neumann, G. Salmeri, R. Gusmani, D. Schürr, H. Eichner, and O. Masson also address chiefly methodological issues.

As examples of new perspectives offered I may cite the following. The new text 40* ends with a sequence 19-5-41-11 (or 29-5-41-11). The cooccurrence of sign 41 with both 5 and 28 in the same text contradicts the long-held idea

that sign 41 is the Kildara-Sinuri alternate to one of the latter two signs (Shevoroshkin 1965, 101; Schürr 1992, 147f.; Adiego, this volume, 30). Further, none of the few alleged spelling alternations between 41 and 5/28 are compelling (Shevoroshkin 1965, 170, and this volume, 152). Finally, by the new system the sequence above would read *k/u-ú-ü-m*. Even if we take the second letter in the value of a semivowel, a sequence /uwum/ or /kwum/ seems unlikely (the surfeit of *u*-vowels in the new system has already been noted). The new text argues that we should view the value of sign 41 as undetermined.

Another issue which sorely needs reexamination is the question of whether the sign *ḫ* read as /š/ based on Egyptian-Carian correspondences is to be equated with the rho-like sign *P* of texts from Caria (see the variants 15 and 15' in the chart, 13). This is a critical point, because the strongest factual argument against the new approach is the putative quasi-bilingual inscription on the coin from Telmessos, read *e-r* in the conservative system (= Lycian *Érbbina* on the other side), but as an unexplained *i-š* in the new. Innocente (105) also points out that by the new system text 28* from Kaunos appears to end in an implausible sequence -*s-š-š*. However, as correctly shown in the chart by Masson 1978, 12, in all texts from Egypt whose epigraphy we can control the sign for /š/ has a semi-circle attached to the middle of a vertical or encompassing the entire vertical (*ḫ*, *ḏ*), versus the 'rho' sign *P* of Caria, where the semi-circle is consistently confined to the upper half of the vertical. The only example from outside Egypt in which a direct equation can be made with Egyptian evidence for /š/ (*šr=quq* in the New York bronze, 34*) has the former shape (see no. 38 on p. 34 of this volume). I know of no cases where Carian 'rho' may be directly identified with the /š/ of texts from Egypt. Another value (such as a form of /r/ or similar phoneme) thus remains possible for "P". The entire matter calls for further study.

The volume is handsomely produced and includes a very useful bibliography. My only cavil is the table of 'Carian' signs on page 13 (reproduced on the dust-jacket), which includes eight signs beyond the standard 45 listed by Masson, Adiego, Schürr and others. We are given no information on the provenance of these signs or the basis for their inclusion as Carian.

Professors Gusmani and Salvini and the other organizers are to be congratulated for conceiving of and carrying out with such distinction this symposium, which will unquestionably stand as a landmark in the history of Carian studies.

References

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