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ERBBINA IN CARIA?

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The patchy Lycian historiography records a fairly long list of dynasts under the Achaemenids, albeit only a handful is known beyond the simple mention of their name¹. Erbbina (Arbinas in its Greek form) son of Kheriga (Gergis) is one of the better documented dynasts with epigraphic, numismatic and archaeological evidence for his rule which can be dated to c. 400-380 BC². Coin evidence as well as inscriptions from Xanthos and the Letoon suggest that Erbbina had been active in the western part of Lycia. Two Greek epigrams from the Letoon describe the military achievements of Erbbina³. His valour is praised and special mention is made of his conquest and sack of the cities of Xanthos, Pinara and the ‘well harboured’ Telmessos when he was only twenty years old and within a single month⁴. His reign of terror among the Lycians is also

related with pride. At Xanthos, Erbbina is mentioned in the ‘Inscribed Pillar’ whose inscription was probably engraved during his lifetime⁵; he also had a statue base erected for himself on which he is described as a *tyrannos* and he is believed to be responsible for the construction of the Nereid Monument⁶.

From a numismatic point of view, current evidence indicates that Erbbina struck only at Telmessos, a town very close to the Carian border⁷. During the early Lycian dynastic period, the political status of Telmessos is not entirely clear. It seems that until the last quarter of the fifth century BC, it managed to stay independent from Xanthian authority⁸. Erbbina’s predecessors Kherēi and Ddēnewele struck coins inscribed *telebehihe* (Telmessos in Lycian) and no earlier dynast is known to have minted in that

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¹ Thousands of Lycian coins have survived and provide a useful catalogue of personal and place names, many of which are only known from numismatic evidence. At least 50 names are recorded and some coins include both the name of the coin issuer (dynast) and the name of the mint. It is not always easy to distinguish the nature of these names and in the past a number of toponyms have been mistaken for anthroponyms (e.g. Zemuri, Zagaba, Wēdri). New names continue to appear with the discovery of unpublished coins (e.g. *ekhag*, seen in trade); and, in some cases, dynasts are taken out of the Lycian catalogue, like Uvug (Uwug) whose coinage is now more convincingly attributed to the Carian dynast Orou, see Konuk 2007b.

² Keen 1998: 142-147; Bousquet 1975; Robert 1978.

³ Bousquet 1975: 141-146; Bryce 1986: 94-96; Keen 1998: 141-142.

⁴ *SEG* 39, 1414 (Bousquet 1975: 143-144) describes his courage, bowmanship, horsemanship and wisdom. These are skills which are usually associated with hunting which may indicate a Persian origin. It is interesting to note that Erbbina is in fact a Persian name.

⁵ Bousquet 1987: 127. Though all the inscriptions might not be his, see Domingo Gyax - Tietz 2005: 96 who pointed out that the inscribed pillar was not made in one go but was the result of different historical moments.

⁶ Keen 1998: 140-147; Robinson 1999: 370-372.

⁷ Mørkholm - Zahle 1976: 52. Keen 1998: 147 unconvincingly suggests that the anonymous fourth century BC coins struck by Xanthos, Patara, Pinara, Tlos, Telmessos, Kadyanda, Khākbi and Araxa might all have been issued by Erbbina. Telmessos being otherwise the only town to advertise its ethnic, an exception which would be difficult to explain. Contemporary rulers such as Aruwatijesi with whom Erbbina shared a die minted on both the western and eastern standards as did Wekhssere II. Ddēnewele, also minted coins only on the western standard, some at Telmessos, and shared a die with Erbbina but used it before him. Tietz 2003: 62-78 wonders whether Ddēnewele might not be in fact a place name; for the catalogue of these coins: 359-363.

⁸ Keen 1998: 121; Bryce 1986: 105; Tietz 2003: 51-55.

town⁹. Although culturally Lycian, Telmessos was not a typical Lycian town and Carian elements and influence ought to have been present¹⁰. Its geostrategic location made its control essential to anyone willing to exert authority over the westernmost parts of Lycia. The border between Caria and Lycia is to be placed somewhere in the plain between Kaunos and Telmessos, but it is not possible to identify a precise line which must have shifted through times¹¹. Relations between Carians and Lycians in this border area are not well documented but some assumptions have been made. Kaunos, which seems to have been ruled in the late fifth century BC by Lycian dynasts¹², possibly Erbbina's father, was according to Bousquet the starting point of Erbbina's conquest of the three Lycian cities¹³. This suggestion was not based on anything solid and Louis Robert attempted to reconstruct the order of Erbbina's campaign by using historical geography and topography as well as several travel accounts from the last centuries¹⁴. He proposed that Erbbina must have resided in and started his conquests from Tlos and not from Kaunos *contra* Bousquet. It must be acknowledged that current evidence does not favour either town¹⁵, but coins, as will be explained below, indicate that Caria or Carians must have held some interest for Erbbina. Another well-known connection between Kaunos and Lycia is the cult of the "Kaunian king" attested at Xanthos and the Letoon through the inscribed pillar and the trilingual inscription¹⁶. In addition, it has recently been suggested that the letter **V** engraved on stateres of Kaunos might have been the Lycian initial of Erbbina's father: Kheriga-

Gergis¹⁷ who is likely to have been engaged in the war with Humrkhkha/Amorges of Caria¹⁸. The letter was re-engraved on an existing reverse die and positioned above the sacred-stone (baetyl). By placing his initial, Kheriga might have wanted to advertise his capture of Kaunos on its coinage. From a chronological point of view, this hypothetical event would fit the issues marked with **V** as they are dated to c. 430-410 BC, a period which corresponds to Kheriga's rule¹⁹. Furthermore, from a technical point of view, it should be pointed out that the die (R40) was re-engraved during its mid-life, which implies a sudden decision to mark the die rather than wait for a new die to be engraved with the letter in question. This abrupt re-engraving might have been caused by a sudden event which brings to mind the possible take over of Kaunos by Kheriga.

In discussing the political events involving Caria and Lycian dynasts, one should also mention a stater of Erbbina minted at Telmessos which bears a two-letter legend in the Carian script. Its description is as follows:



Obv. Head of Athena (= the Lycian goddess Malija) left in Attic helmet; dotted circle.

Rev. Heracles fighting left with club, left foot placed on rock; along the right edge, *erbbina* in Lycian

⁹ Mørkholm - Zahle 1976: 52.

¹⁰ Tietz 2003: 113-115. In the Athenian Tribute Lists, Telmessians and Lycians are grouped together but are clearly distinguished (occurring three times, in 452/1, 451/0 and 446/5). Did Athens not consider Telmessos as Lycian, at least in a political sense? Bryce 1986: 105.

¹¹ Keen 1998: 17; Tietz 2003: 120-132. A Carian inscription was found at Taşyaka (ancient Krya) situated between Kaunos and Telmessos. The presence of many rock-cut tombs with a temple façade in the area may denote a Carian influence; see Henry 2009: 60, fig. 14 and Schweyer 1996: 11-14.

¹² Bousquet 1987: 124; Bousquet 1992: 175; Briant 1996: 1038.

¹³ Bousquet 1975: 145.

¹⁴ Robert 1978: *passim*.

¹⁵ Keen 1998: 145 prefers Bousquet's Kaunian interpretation.

¹⁶ Childs 1981: 67; Bryce 1986: 184; Raimond 2004: 389-401.

¹⁷ Raimond 2004: 396.

¹⁸ TL 44a 55; Childs 1981: 64; Bryce 1986: 108; Debord 1999: 312.

¹⁹ Konuk 1998: 207-209.

characters; on either side of Herakles, $\Theta \Psi$ (*i t*) all in incuse square with dotted border.

Light Lycian standard stater; c. 400-380 BC.

Munich, Staatliche Münzsammlung (7.84g; 06H).

This stater is part of Erbbina's regular issues from Telmessos and is the only known example to bear a legend in Carian. It was first published by Newton²⁰, and Six entertained the idea that these letters might be Carian and read them as *er*²¹. Babelon followed Six's reading and confirmed that they were the first two letters of Erbbina's name in Carian²². Subsequently various readings based on the changing values given through the years to the letters have been proposed (*er*, *te*, *iš* and finally *it*)²³. As Robinson rightly pointed out these letters give the impression of having been engraved onto the die afterwards²⁴. Given the geographical proximity of Telmessos and Kaunos, we may assume that the letters were close to the alphabet of the Carian city. New evidence from the bilingual inscription from Kaunos has led Adiego²⁵ and Meier-Brügger²⁶ to give Ψ the value *t*. They wondered whether *i* might not stand for the initial of Erbbina in Carian and *t* for the initial of Telmessos (*telebehi* in Lycian). If the two letters are part of the same word, however, this would thus give the transliteration *ti* and stand for the first two letters of Telmessos²⁷. Noting the Carian legend of Erbbina's stater, Bousquet wondered: "Était-il [Erbbina] à la tête d'un canton de Carie au moment de la mort de Gergis? et ne pourrait-on pas penser à *Caunos*, puisque la stèle trilingue a permis de reconnaître

dans la chronique lycienne le nom de Caunos et du *Basileus Kaunios*? L'avenir dira oui ou non"²⁸. Being a Lycian dynast minting exclusively at Telmessos, one should not be surprised to find Carian letters on his coins²⁹. More unexpected would be to have a Carian issue bearing his name in Carian as the following coin suggests:



Obv. Naked male figure, with wings at shoulder and heel, in the kneeling-running position advancing left, head and legs right, trunk frontal, left arm raised and right arm lowered; groundline.

Rev. Bull standing right; above and below, in two lines, $\Sigma \Upsilon \Lambda / \Phi \Theta \Lambda \Gamma$ (*dta / ñibr*); all within incuse square with dotted border.

Aeginetic standard stater; c. 400 BC.

London, BM, CM 1934-0611-4 (11.62g; 09H).

²⁰ Fellows 1855: pl. V, 5.

²¹ Six 1887: 65; Six 1898: 202.

²² Babelon 1910: n° 385.

²³ Friedrich 1932: 122 confirmed the Carian origin of these letters and accepted that they were Erbbina's initials. Robinson 1939: 275; Masson 1974: 128-129; Mørkholm - Zahle 1976: 54, 57; Mørkholm-Neumann 1978: 29, followed him but Steinherr 1955: 184-192 preferred to give the letter Ψ a *t* value and proposed *te* which could correspond to the Lycian legend *te(lebehi) erbbina* found on other coins. Adiego 1992: 28 convincingly showed that Θ should have the value *i*. Schür 1992: 129, 151 proposed *iš*.

²⁴ Robinson 1939: 275.

²⁵ Adiego 1998b: 58-60.

²⁶ Meier-Brügger 1998: 45.

²⁷ Cau 1999b: 48.

²⁸ Bousquet 1975: 145.

²⁹ The supposed Carian legend on the obverse of a stater of Kuprilli is problematic, Cau 1999a. Some of its letters do not seem to be Carian and its meaning is certainly not the Carian ethnic of Xanthos, *contra* Dunford 1991, see Konuk 2007, M54.

This unique specimen was reportedly obtained near Fethiye (Telmessos)³⁰. The winged figure on the obverse is well known from other series (described by Troxell as Mint A [now identified as Kaunos] and Mint B)³¹ of which many specimens were included in the *IGCH* 1180 hoard³². A more recent hoard, unpublished but mentioned by Konuk had a similar composition with many coins of Kaunos³³. Hoard evidence indicates that “winged Carians” of Mint B must have been struck by a mint situated not far from Kaunos. We may therefore take as reliable the Fethiye-Telmessos provenance of our unique coin. The bovine reverse type was quite common on Carian coins, usually depicted as a protome or a head and placed on the reverse³⁴. Keramos put a full depiction of a bull standing right on the obverse of its earliest Carian and Greek legend bronze coins³⁵. With regards to the legend, it appears that there are two separate words written by means of seven letters in the Carian script which makes it the longest inscribed coin in the Carian script known to date³⁶. The orientation of letters suggests a reading from right to left. The last letter, partly erased, is Φ (\tilde{n}) rather than Θ (s), even though the latter is a more common ending used for indicating the genitive form. Robinson also read the last letter as Φ but its value then was assumed to be vo ³⁷. In fact, only the first two letters of the legend (*at*) were given

correct values. The transliteration should thus be *atd / rbiñ*. As an independent word, *rbiñ* shows a striking similarity with Erbbina. We do not know how his name was rendered in Carian but *rbiñ* is a form that would be quite acceptable in that language³⁸. As for the word *atd*, it is likely to be the beginning of the issuing town’s name; though no toponym beginning with these letters is known in the Kaunos-Telmessos region. The few ethnics mentioned in the Athenian Tribute Lists (Telandrioi, Kalyndioi, Kryes) for this region are Greek renditions of Carian names and we know that in some cases these can be quite different (e.g. Kbid-/Kaunos; Kbo-/Keramos)³⁹. There is however a town named Attarimma mentioned in Hittite sources⁴⁰. On philological grounds, Carruba has identified Attarimma as *trmmili*, the native name Lycians called themselves⁴¹. Termessos (major) has been proposed by Börker-Klähn⁴². On geographical grounds, Hawkins has suggested a more convincing location at Telmessos in Lycia⁴³. If we accept Attarimma as the late Bronze Age Telmessos, one wonders whether this form might not have survived in Carian. The beginning *atd* for the mint our coin found in Telmessos would certainly be a perfect fit for Attarimma. If our attribution is right, Telmessos would have basically struck a Carian coin. In contrast to the Telmessian stater of Erbbina with Carian letters, this coin is a typical issue

³⁰ Robinson 1936a: 188, pl. XII, 17; Robinson 1939: 270, 272.

³¹ Troxell 1979; for Kaunos, see Konuk 1998.

³² Robinson 1936b: 265. Reportedly unearthed up-country in the Caro-Lycian border in 1932, it consisted of 144 coins of which at least 85 are staters of Kaunos dated c. 420 BC. Of similar content is *IGCH* 1181 found somewhere between Muğla and Fethiye, see Troxell 1979: 264.

³³ Konuk 2007b: 107.

³⁴ See e.g. *SNG Kayhan*, 832, 949-976, 990; Konuk 2007a: M38-M49. The square form of the reverse incuse is not necessarily indicative of an early date; Erbbina used both square and round incuses for his Telmessian coinage.

³⁵ *SNG Kayhan*, 804-806; for Carian legend bronzes: Konuk 2000; for Greek legend bronzes: Ashton 1998: 46-49.

³⁶ See Konuk 2007a.

³⁷ Robinson 1939: 272, he followed Friedrich’s system which was available at that time: Friedrich 1932.

³⁸ I am grateful to Ignacio Adiego for confirming this (personal communication).

³⁹ Other toponyms in the area include Arymaxa, Lydai, Lyrnai, Lissai, Daidala, Hippukome, Oktapolis, Pisilis, Prepia, Symbra; for these, see Tietz 2003, chapter 4.

⁴⁰ Chiefly the annals of Mursili, year 3 which details the geography of the land of Arzawa and the Tawagalawa letter of the reign of Hattusili III, see Hawkins 1998: 14-26.

⁴¹ Carruba 1996: 33.

⁴² Börker-Klähn 1990: 62.

⁴³ Hawkins 1998: 26, 28. Carruba prefers Kuwalapassa for Telmessos: Carruba 1996: 33.

of a Carian mint on the grounds of its type, legend and Aeginetan weight-standard, which was widely used in south-west Caria and never struck by Lycian mints. With regards to its date, Robinson proposed 475 BC, but like his chronology of other Carian coins (e.g. of Kaunos), it is too early. He considered our coin to have been overstruck on an Aeginetan stater, though I have examined the coin myself and have not seen traces of an undertype. The difficulty is that there is no hoard context to help us and we therefore have to rely basically on style, which is not always very reliable. I believe nonetheless that a date of c. 450-400 BC would be a fair guess and this would not entirely rule out the *rbīñ* - Erbbina equation.

What might have prompted Erbbina to put Carian letters on his Telmessian staters and to apparently issue a Carian coinage near the Lycian border or at Telmessos itself? We already mentioned his military campaign to conquer Xanthos, Pinara and Telmessos. Bousquet, who pointed out that these three cities were used as mints by Erbbina's predecessor, Kherēi, further suggested that Kherēi usurped Erbbina's rightful throne

on the death of Kheriga⁴⁴. It would appear that Erbbina had to fight in order to gain power and that the succession between Kherēi and Erbbina did not happen smoothly. As seen above, Kaunos which was probably under the rule of his father, might have been the starting base of Erbbina's campaign to conquer the three Lycian cities. His presence in this city is entirely conceivable if he was forced to flee to Caria after his father's death when he was probably just an infant. Kaunos then became his starting point when, some years later, at the young age of twenty, he was ready to launch a military campaign (against Kherēi?) to retake the towns over which his father once ruled. These assumptions seem to be supported by coin evidence which draws clear connections between Caria and Erbbina. If our attribution to Erbbina is right, his Carian staters might have been struck to pay for Carian mercenary forces fighting to assert Erbbina's authority over western Lycia, at a time when he was still in Caria or already at Telmessos, engaged in what would turn out to be a successful campaign, c. 400 BC⁴⁵.

⁴⁴ Bousquet 1987: 127. It may be objected that being only twenty when he assumed power, Erbbina would have been simply too young to directly succeed his father. Keen 1998: 143 remarked that Kheriga and Kherēi's respective coinages do not share any die-links in the way that Kupilli's and Kheriga's do; there are also no die-links between Kherēi and Erbbina.

⁴⁵ Erbbina's coinage might have been minted in time of war at the beginning of his reign, which would explain why he minted only at Telmessos: Keen 1998: 146.

ÖZET

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