GREEK (AND OUR) VIEWS ON THE KARIANS

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Is that all right? (Amy Winehouse, † 23.07.2011)

1. INTRODUCTION

When the allied Greek forces under the command of Themistocles retreated from the Persians after the sea battle at Cape Artemisium in 480 BCE, Themistocles gave them a strange order, which Herodotus, ‘the father of history’ (Cicero, De legibus 1.5), has preserved for us in book 8, chapter 22. Athenian special forces were asked to engrave the following inscriptions on the rocks around the posts at Cape Artemisium, where the Ionian fleet under Persian command would anchor (Fig. 1):

"Ἀνδρείς Ἴωνες, οὐ ποιέετε δίκαια ἐπὶ τοὺς πατέρας στρατεύόμενοι καὶ τὴν Ἑλλάδα καταδουλούμενοι. ἄλλα μάλιστα μὲν πρὸς ἡμέων γίνεσθε· εἰ δὲ ύμιν ἐστι τοῦτο μὴ δυνατὸν ποιῆσαι, ύμεῖς δὲ ἔτι καὶ νῦν ἐκ τοῦ μέσου ἡμῖν ἐξεσθε καὶ αὐτοὶ καὶ τῶν Καρῶν δέσατε τὸ αὐτὰ ύμῖν ποιέιν· εἰ δὲ μηδέτερον τούτων οἷόν τε γίνεσθαι, ἀλλὰ ὑπ' ἀναγκαίης μέζονος κατέζευχε ἢ ὥστε ἀπίστασθαι. ὑμεῖς δὲ ἐν τῷ ἔργῳ, ἐπεὰν συμμίσγωμεν, μεμνημένοι ὅτι ἀπ' ἡμέων γεγόνατε καὶ ὅτι ἀρχῆθεν ἡ ἐχθρὴ πρὸς τὸν βάρβαρον ἀπ' ὑμέων ἡμῖν γέγονε.

Men of Ionia, you do wrongly to fight against the land of your fathers and bring slavery upon Hellas. It would be best for you to join yourselves to us, but if that should be impossible for you, then at least now withdraw from the war, and entreat the Karians to do the same as you. If neither of these things may be and you are fast bound by such constraint that you cannot rebel, yet we ask you not to use your full strength in the day of battle. Remember that you descend from us and that our quarrel with the barbarian was of your making in the beginning.

(transl. A.D. Godley, slightly changed)

* Thank the gods that we were invited by Alice and Ian, and that Ilya came along! I had a wonderful time in Reading, meeting wonderful people. Diether Schürr generously rescued me from making too many faults and provided me with two unpublished manuscripts. Olivier Henry shared his magnificent knowledge on Karia and Karian tomb architecture with me. For correcting my English I would like to thank Vera Sichelschmidt, Ian and especially Naomi Carless Unwin very much! This article is devoted to the memory of Amy Winehouse, who escaped to the Island of the Blessed while it was being written. Whom the gods love die young!
Alexander Herda

The action of Themistocles not only provides a vivid example of the grade of literacy in early fifth century BCE Greece and the art of political propaganda, but also delivers a key text to my examination of the Greek view on, and their relationship with, the Karians.

The Ionian contingent of 100 ships, listed by Herodotus (7.89–99) in the style of the Homeric catalogue of the ships (Iliad, book 2), acted in concert with the 70 ships of the Karian fleet. This 'symmachia' strongly calls to mind the conjoined ventures of Ionian and Karian pirates and mercenaries in the Levant and Egypt from the eighth century BCE on, which prompted Archilochus of Paros (fr. 216 West) in the mid-seventh century BCE to use the ethnic 'Karian' synonymously with 'mercenary'. It implies that both groups communicated with each other.

Their common language will have been Ionian Greek, as is suggested by inscriptions written in Greek by Karians in Karia, Greece and Egypt. We only have to remember the famous Greek mercenary graffito on the southern giant at the entrance to the temple of Ramesses II in Abu Simbel. It was inscribed in Greek by a Greek officer named Archon and a Karian named Pelekos / Plqo during the campaign of Psammetichus II in c. 591 BCE (Fig. 2).

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1 On literacy in fifth century Athens see now: Pébarthe 2006 and Missiou 2011; see also the review of Missiou by T.S.F. Jim, Bryn Mawr Classical Review 2011.11.02. The scepticism about the spread of literacy in the fifth century BCE, formulated by several scholars, seems hypercritical to me. I hold literacy to be relatively widespread from Archaic times on: see the many law, calendar, grave and votive inscriptions and especially graffiti, found all over Greece and in the places where Greeks settled, e.g. Naukratis (a new, complete edition of the hundreds, if not more than one thousand Archaic and Classical Greek graffiti in many dialects from Naukratis in the British Museum is being prepared as part of a project run by Alan Johnston, London).


3 Vittmann 2003: 156 with n. 2.


5 Jeffery 1990: 354ff., 358, 415 pl. 69 no. 48a; Haider 2001: 204, 212 fig. 2; Adiego 2007: 293 with n. 22, 399; cf. Herda 2008: 43 n. 237; Herda/Sauter 2009: 78 n. 140. In the discussion following the presentation of Haider 2001: 206, F. Kammerzell remarked that the Karian name Pelekos / Plqo (he wrongly equates it with Peldekos / Pleq; see Herda/Sauter 2009:78 n. 140), as well as the form of the My in the inscription, showing crossed middle strokes, speaks for a bilingual, native Karian scribe who would then be this Pelekos. The position of his name at the end of the inscription, and the strange mix of Ionic and Doric dialectal forms also support the assumption: in line 3 shows κατύπερθε Ionic psilosis, as it was also characteristic for Karian (see Adiego 2007: 10, 260; Herda/Sauter 2009: 55 n. 28, 77f. n. 138, therefore the aspirata in the transcription of Haider have to be deleted), also, it has the Ionic contracted ο instead of the diphtong ου. On the other hand is the alphabet Rhodian-Doric, and the names are given in the Doric dialect: Psam(m)atichos, Eudamos. Another significant feature is the replacement of Omega by Omicron in line 2, Ψαμματίχοι τόι, and the personal name Ἀρχόν in line 5. The Archaic Karian alphabet (like