Nowhere else in the ancient world of the Mediterranean and the Near East can one find encounters and symbioses of different cultures as manifold as on the Anatolian peninsula. That applies to almost all periods of its history as far back as written records exist.¹

Our concern is with two neighbouring regions in the southwest where ethnic groups speaking different languages settled close to each other for centuries.² Both were conquered by Cyrus the Great in the sixth century BCE, but in the fifth century Persian domination suffered a severe setback by the establishment of the Athenian League in the coastal region, while in the interior, especially of Lykia, local dynasts acted quite independently, some even offensively. However, after the peace of 387 BCE the strategic situation changed again in favour of the Great King. In the southwest a dynasty of local origin emerged that ruled as loyal satraps, first in their homeland Karia, and later, from about the middle of the century onwards, in Lykia too. After a succession of five brothers and sisters to the progenitor Hekatomnos, and a short-lived restoration of Ada the Elder who had been deposed by her brother Pixodaros, the dynasty disappeared when the Diadochi redistributed the satrapies at Babylon 323 BCE. The most prominent member of that dynasty is Maussollos, who moved his headquarters from the family’s seat at Mylasa to the Greek city of Halikarnassos at the west coast.

In Asia Minor of the late Classical period, Karia and Lykia provide exceptional evidence for the study of transcultural encounters because only from here do we possess—in addition to Greek texts—a considerable number of documents written in epichoric languages, Karian and Lykian, both subdivided into different dialects. The inscriptions on coins, pottery, metal jars,

¹ Marek 2010; Swain 1996; Bowersock 1990; for an overview see now Steadman and McMahon 2011.
rock, stone sarcophagi, pillars and stelai use regionally different alphabets, the origins of which are debated.

Karian inscriptions amount to about 200, but only 50 of these were found in Karia. The tradition of epichoric writing commences slightly earlier in Karia than in Lykia: Since the second half of the seventh century votive inscriptions on objects and coin legends in Karian occur, among them the famous coins of Kaunos named the ‘winged Karians’ taking a prominent place in the history of the decipherment of Karian script. Even if the decipherment has proved to be successful after the discovery of the bilingual inscription in Kaunos (Fig. 13), lexicography as well as morphology and syntax remain but poorly understood.

If we trust Herodotos’ perspective on the past, the relationship of the Karians to their neighbours in the west, the Ionian and Dorian Greeks, was hostile. The geographer Strabo points out that Homer applied the adjective barbarophonoi to denote the Karians (II. 2.867–868), and he refers to the grammarian Apollodoros when claiming that the word ‘barbarians’ was first pejoratively used by the Ionians κατὰ τῶν Καρῶν.\(^3\) However, when the Karians of the Archaic period are compared with the Greeks, they appear to be neither provincial nor backward. Being familiar with the art of alphabetic writing they were also renowned for their skills and qualities abroad. The oldest Karian inscriptions dated c. 700 BCE were found outside Karia, almost all in Egypt, engraved by Karians who had settled in the land of the Nile and served the Pharaohs as mercenaries, shipowners, translators and consultants.\(^4\) Perhaps the oldest bilingual inscription in stone, from the last quarter of the sixth century BCE, is engraved into the statue base of a noble Karian in Athens, with the Greek sculptor’s signature added underneath.\(^5\) A considerable diaspora of Karians is attested by literary sources also in the world of the Persian Empire. Apart from other skills, particularly in diplomatic missions, their polyglotism proved to be highly esteemed.\(^6\)

Not later than in the Archaic period Karians at home begin to engrave inscriptions in Greek. And by that time their own language, according to Philippos of Theangela writing τὰ Καρικά in the third century BCE, was full

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\(^3\) Strabo 14.2.28.

\(^4\) Psammetichos had a Karian named Pigres as advisor: Polyaenus, Strat. 7.3.

\(^5\) IG I\(^1\) 1344; the Greek text of two lines: σέμα τόδε Τυρ[----] | Καρὸς τὸ Σκύλ[ακος] is followed by one line of Karian: sjas: san tur, below the artist’s signature in Greek: [Ἀ]ριστοκλε̃ς ἐπ[οίε̃]. Cf. Adiego 2007, 164 (no. G1).

\(^6\) Klinkott 2009, 149–162.