

Annick Payne / Šárka Velhartická /
Jorit Wintjes (eds)

Beyond All Boundaries

Anatolia in the First Millennium BC

BEYOND ALL BOUNDARIES

ORBIS BIBLICUS ET ORIENTALIS

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Published on behalf of the Swiss Society for Ancient Near Eastern Studies and the
Bible+Orient Foundation

in cooperation with
the Institute of Egyptology, University of Basel,
the Institute of Archaeological Sciences, Near Eastern Archaeology section, University
of Bern,
the Department of Biblical Studies, University of Fribourg,
the Institut romand des sciences bibliques, University of Lausanne,
and the Department of Religious Studies, University of Zurich

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Annick Payne, Šárka Velhartická and Jorit Wintjes

Peeters
Leuven - Paris - Bristol, CT
2021

Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis publishes monographs, multi-author volumes and conference proceedings in the fields of Biblical Studies (Hebrew Bible and Septuagint), Ancient Near Eastern Studies and Egyptology broadly understood (including archaeology, history, iconography and religion). The editorial board and affiliated institutions reflect the series' high academic standards and interdisciplinary outlook. Manuscripts may be submitted via a member of the editorial board. They are examined by the board and subject to further peer review by internationally recognized scholars at the board's discretion. The series is committed to worldwide distribution, notably through open access publication (Gold or Green). Past volumes are archived at the digital repository of the University of Zurich (www.zora.uzh.ch).

Senior editor: Christoph.Uehlinger@uzh.ch



The open access publication of this book has been facilitated by the Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

ISBN 978-90-429-4884-6

eISBN 978-90-429-4885-3

D/2021/0602/188

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LINGUISTIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL CRITERIA FOR DATING LYCIAN TOMBS AND TOMB INSCRIPTIONS

A critical re-evaluation of former approaches

Birgit Christiansen

Abstract: The aim of the present paper is to re-examine some linguistic and archaeological criteria for the dating of Lycian inscriptions and Lycian tombs that have been suggested in previous studies. The analysis is based on a palaeographic survey, the results of which were presented in an earlier paper (Christiansen in press). As linguistic criteria, the accusative ending *-ã* and *-u* and the so-called *atli ehbi* formula are reviewed. In addition, it will be asked to what extent the design of the burial chambers can be used for the dating of Lycian inscriptions. As a result of the study, it will be shown that none of the criteria examined allows reliable dating. In particular, the occurrence of the *atli ehbi* formula and the chamber design are not very informative for the dating of the inscriptions. The accusative ending *-u* is more revealing. But since it is already attested in inscriptions from the first half of the 4th century, and the *-ã* accusative remained in use in the subsequent period, it is not possible to determine from the accusative form alone whether an inscription dates from the time before the middle of the 4th century or the following period. At best, the various criteria can be used in combination with other dating criteria. It should be noted, however, that apart from the text-internal dating information, all criteria remain uncertain.

Keywords: Lycian inscriptions; tombs; palaeographic, linguistic, and archaeological dating criteria; *atli ehbi* formula; accusative forms ending in *-ã* and *-u*; chamber design of Lycian rock-cut tombs; *isbazi/ispazi*; TL 75; TL 84; TL 128

1 INTRODUCTION¹

In a former paper, I re-evaluated the palaeographic dating criteria established by other scholars for the dating of Lycian inscriptions. The focus was on the in-depth study by Emma Rix (2016), which was based on preliminary work carried out by Trevor Bryce (1976: 168–170), Emmanuel Laroche (1979: 54–56), Gernot Lang (2003), as well as Heiner Eichner and Linn Kogler in the framework of the Austrian TL project.²

I came to the conclusion that some of the criteria suggested so far are not tenable, or need to be modified. It turned out that most of the letter forms which had been assumed to indicate a later date for an inscription are already attested in inscriptions from the reign of Erbbina. They might therefore date from the beginning of the 4th century or even earlier. Only very few of the alleged young letter forms are not to be found in inscriptions that, on the grounds of their content, are likely to be dated before the middle of the 4th century. This concerns the alleged late variants of *n* (𐌺) and *s* (𐌸). If TL 99 also dates from the second half of the 4th century, which is very likely due to the Greek inscription composed by the same author, this also applies to the variant 𐌹 of the letter *s*.³ It should, however, be noted that both letters show many variants which diverge from each other only gradually. The following variants of *n* are of particular interest: 𐌺 and 𐌻 in N 310 (Harpagos), 𐌺 in TL 44, 𐌺 in N 324 & N 325 and 𐌺 in N 311 (all Erbbina),⁴ and 𐌺 in TL 83 (Perikle). With regard to the letter *s*, the following variants are of particular interest: 𐌸 in TL 44 (Xeriga/Xerēi) and 𐌸 in TL 61 (Autophradates). We cannot therefore be sure that the alleged late variants were not in use before the second half of the 4th century. Furthermore, it should be taken

1 For the invitation to the conference and the opportunity to present my research in a workshop dedicated to the dating of inscriptions, I would like to thank Annick Payne and Jorit Wintjes. Furthermore, I owe my thanks to Diether Schürr and Stephen Durnford for valuable suggestions and comments on an earlier version of this article. I am further indebted to Martin Seyer, the head of the “Corpus der Lykischen Sprachdenkmäler” project (in the following referred to as “TL project”) for granting me the right to publish photographs taken during the campaigns of the project.

2 Some preliminary results of these studies are presented in various publications of the project. See, e.g., Kogler in Seyer 2005: 153–157; Seyer 2006a: 725 n. 42; Kogler in Kogler/Seyer 2007: 116–117; Seyer 2009: 61 with n. 54.

3 For the Greek inscription and its relation to TL 99, see in detail Wörrle 1991: 223–224.

4 The form is taken from Rix (2016: chart 2). It was not possible for me to check it on the basis of the original or on the basis of a photo or copy.

into account that the variants $\text{^}\text{^}$ and ^ appear only in two inscriptions from Western Lycia with internal dating reference. The dating of one of them, namely TL 35, to the reign of Ptolemy I or II is not absolutely certain. Thus, it cannot be excluded that the name *Pttule* or *Pttulum*[.. in line 1 does not refer to Ptolemy I or II, but to another regent (e.g., a Lycian dynasty).

Another problem with previous studies is that their results were partly based on circular reasoning.⁵ To avoid such problems, I restricted my research initially only to inscriptions with an internal indication of their date of origin, in order to establish palaeographic dating criteria. Since the study has demonstrated that a reliable dating on the basis of palaeography is not possible, we have to check whether there are other reliable dating criteria. In previous studies, both linguistic and archaeological criteria have been suggested.

As for linguistics, the occurrence of the accusative ending *-u* instead of *-ã* as well as the phrase (*hrppi*) *atli* (*ehbi*) ‘for himself’, have been assumed to suggest a later date of origin.⁶ Archaeological methods have focused on the dating of the tombs and thus on the largest group of objects bearing Lycian inscriptions. Their aim was to establish a dating model based on the design of the tomb façades and chambers as well as on reliefs and objects found inside or outside the tomb. In contrast to reliefs and grave goods, which are only rarely present, as well as the façade design, which proved to be an unreliable criterion,⁷ the design of the burial chambers was considered to be a more promising dating criterion. In the following, the linguistic and archaeological criteria mentioned will be reviewed on the basis of the newly established palaeographic criteria.

5 For examples see Christiansen (in press).

6 For the accusative forms as a dating criteria see the detailed study by Jenniges/Swiggers 2000 and subsequently also Rix 2016: 113–115. For the *atli ehbi* formula see Borchhardt et al. 2004: 28–29; Seyer 2006a: 726–727; Eichner *apud* Seyer 2006a: 726 n. 50 and Seyer 2009: 55 n. 21. According to Seyer (2009: 55 n. 21), the attestation of this formula in an inscription points to a dating to, at least, the second half of the 4th century BC.

7 See, e.g., Hüllden 2006: 18–21, 44–50, 102–106; Seyer 2006a; Seyer 2009; Kuban 2012: 120–123 (all with further literature).

2 THE LINGUISTIC CRITERIA

2.1 The *atli ehbi* formula

According to Heiner Eichner, the phrase (*hrppi*) *atli (ehbi)* ‘for himself’ is a Greek loan and equivalent to the Greek reflexive pronoun $\epsilon\alpha\upsilon\tau\tilde{\omega}$ or $\alpha\upsilon\tau\tilde{\omega}$ which regularly appears in the Greek inscriptions from Lycia, whereas most inscriptions in Lycian do not explicitly refer to the tomb owner or builder as beneficiary. Eichner therefore assumes that the use of the *atli ehbi* formula indicates a growing influence of Greek on Lycian and thus a rather later date for the inscription (presumably to the second half of the 4th century BC).⁸ In contrast, Rix (2016: 108–113) casts doubts on this hypothesis. She argues that a literal translation of the Greek reflexive pronoun would only be *atli*, not (*hrppi*) *atli ehbi*. Furthermore, she points out that the formula appears also in inscriptions whose palaeography shows no indication of a late date. Her first statement is, however, incorrect since the Greek reflexive pronoun is a contraction of ϵ (‘he’, ‘him’) and $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$ (autoû, ‘self’). It is to be asked, though, whether the Lycian phrase is actually to be regarded as a loan or merely as an equivalent. In order to answer this question we have to consider which words a speaker of Lycian in a non-Greek environment would have used to express his wish that he, i.e., his body, should be buried in the tomb. A possible answer might be that he would have only used the dative of *atla-* or *atra-*, without the possessive pronoun *ehbi*, as attested in TL 29, TL 37 and TL 63 from Tlos. Yet, in view of the fact that similar expressions are known from Hittite, namely *apel es(s)ari*, and Hieroglyphic Luwian, namely *apas(a) at(a)ri*, the phrase with the pronoun *ehbi* is not necessarily to be regarded as an expression foreign to Anatolian.⁹ Reference should also be made to the bilingual inscription TL 25, where the accusative forms *atru ehbi* and *ladu ehbi* refer to the inscribed statues as representations of their donor Xssbezē and his wife. The Greek version has the accusative of the reflexive pronoun $\epsilon\alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{\omicron}\nu$ and the word for ‘woman’, $\gamma\upsilon\nu\alpha\acute{\iota}\kappa\alpha$ (without possessive pronoun) as equivalents.

8 See Borchhardt et al. 2004: 28–29; Seyer 2006a: 726–727; Eichner *apud* Seyer 2006a: 726 n. 50 and Seyer 2009: 55 n. 21.

9 See also Eichner *apud* Seyer 2006a: 727 n. 55 with further references. Eichner’s argument that the Hittite and Hieroglyphic-Luwian phrases are used in other contexts is, in my view, not conclusive.

Irrespective of whether (*hrppi*) *atli ehbi* is a true loan or a simple equivalent to the Greek phrase, the fact remains that in most Lycian inscriptions an explicit reference to the tomb owner as beneficiary with the (*hrppi*) *atli (ehbi)* phrase is missing, whereas in the monolingual Greek inscriptions and the Greek versions of the bilingual inscriptions the reflexive pronoun is regularly to be found. It is therefore very likely that the use of the Lycian phrase instead of the brachilogic formula is influenced by the standard Greek formula. The question, however, is whether the phrase becomes more frequent over time and is therefore suitable as a dating criterion. As Rix (2016: 110–111) has already pointed out, the formula is attested in a number of inscriptions that otherwise show no signs of a late date of origin. Since she did not provide an in-depth study, a detailed analysis will be given in the following. Among all Lycian inscriptions, 19 show the (*hrppi*) *atli (ehbi)* formula (with several or multiple inscriptions carved into a single object, such as N 309a–d or N 328a and b, counted as one inscription). In one further inscription, namely TL 60, the formula is very likely to be restored (TL 60) (**Fig. 1**).

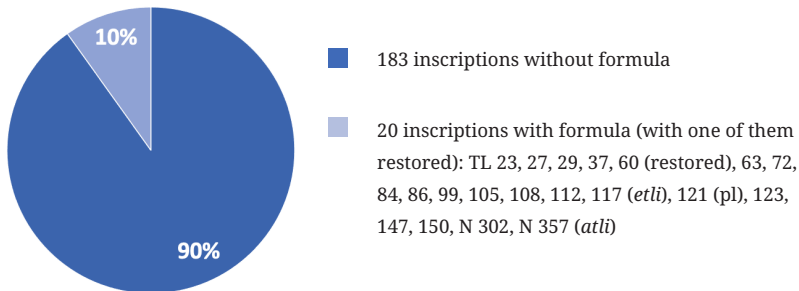


Fig. 1. Inscriptions with and without *atli ehbi* formula.

Of the others, 17 are tomb inscriptions (TL 23, 29, 37, 63, 72, 84, 86, 99, 105, 108, 112, 117, 121, 123, 147, 150; N 357), two are engraved on stone blocks (TL 60 with broken formula; N 302) and one on a stela (TL 27). 13 tomb inscriptions are engraved on rock-cut tombs, i.e., façade tombs (TL 23, 37, 84, 86, 99, 105, 108, 112, 121, 123, 147, 150; N 357), while four are inscribed on sarcophagi and/or free-standing house tombs with hyporion (TL 29, 63, 72, 117) (**Fig. 2**).

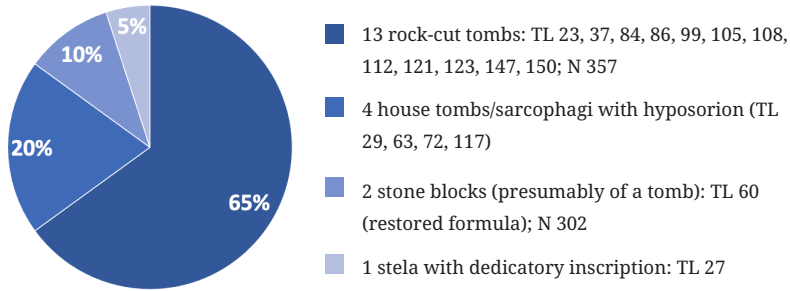


Fig. 2. Monuments bearing inscriptions with *atli ehbi* formula.

The two stone blocks probably also once belonged to tombs. As far as their regional distribution is concerned, five monuments are located in Western Lycia (TL 23, 27, 29, 37; N 357), five are located in Central Lycia (TL 60, 63, 72, 84, 86), and ten originate from Eastern Lycia (TL 99, 105, 108, 112, 117, 121, 123, 147, 150; N 302). Among the inscriptions are four bilingual Lycian-Greek texts, three with the Lycian version preceding the Greek (TL 23, 72, 117) and one with the Greek version preceding the Lycian (N 302). The other inscriptions are monolingual Lycian inscriptions (TL 27, 29, 37, 60, 63, 84, 86, 99, 105, 108, 112, 121, 123, 147, 150; N 357) (Fig. 3).

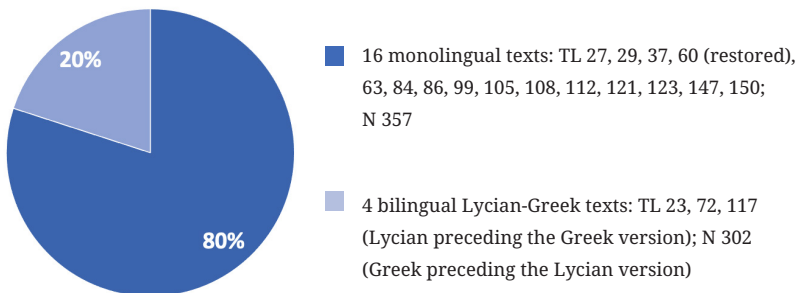


Fig. 3. Mono- and bilingual texts with *atli ehbi* formula.

Only one of these inscriptions, namely TL 29, can be dated on the basis of its content to after Alexander's conquest of Lycia. One inscription, namely TL 99, can also probably be dated to the second half of the 4th century on the basis of a Greek inscription which in all likelihood was

authored by the same person.¹⁰ The date of the other inscriptions can only be estimated on the basis of palaeography and the archaeological evidence.

With respect to palaeography, the inscriptions can be divided into the following four groups:

1. inscriptions showing exclusively older letter variants: TL 37, 72, 84, 86, 117, 150.
2. inscriptions showing later variants of \tilde{a} , \tilde{e} , p , and/or x which, however, are already attested in inscriptions of the early 4th century: TL 23, 63, 105, 112, 121, 123, 147.
3. inscriptions with young variants of n and sometimes also of s which indicate a late date of origin (possibly the second half of the 4th century): TL 27, 29 (young n and s), 99 (young n and s), 108; N 302.
4. unclear, due to the lack of diagnostic letter forms or insufficient documentation of the inscription (TL 60 with the formula restored, and N 357).¹¹

Except for N 302, the inscriptions of group 3 also show, in addition to the young variants of n , some other younger variants: TL 27 (younger \tilde{e} , p , x), TL 29 (younger \tilde{a} , \tilde{e} , p , x), TL 99 (younger \tilde{a} , \tilde{e} , p , x), TL 108 (younger \tilde{a} , \tilde{e} , p , x) (Fig. 4).

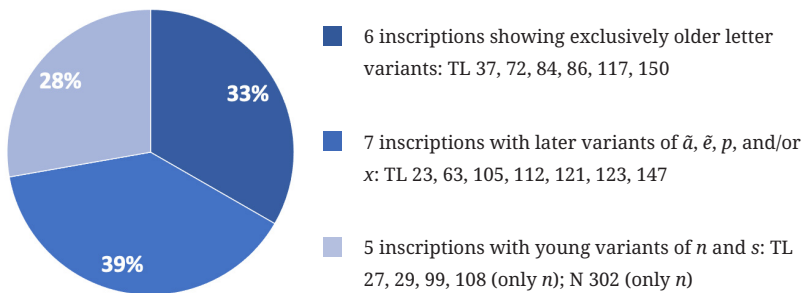


Fig. 4. Text-internal and palaeographic dating information in inscriptions with *atli ehbi* formula.

¹⁰ See Wörrle 1991: 223–224.

¹¹ N 357 is only known to me from a photograph published in the edition by Tekoğlu 2017: 65 and 68 Pl. 8. Unfortunately the quality of the photo is insufficient, so that the shapes of the characters remain partly unclear.

In view of the fact that most Lycian inscriptions date from the first half of the 4th century, it is remarkable that the *atli ehbi* formula is attested in five inscriptions whose palaeography indicates a younger date of origin. Furthermore, it appears in seven inscriptions showing variants of the letters *ã*, *ẽ*, *p*, and/or *x* which, although already attested in inscriptions of Erbbina, become more frequent in the course of time. From this it can be concluded that the use of the *atli ehbi* formula increases over time. However, since it also appears in six inscriptions which otherwise show no indication of a young date of origin, the formula cannot be used as a criterion to decide whether an inscription was composed before or after the middle of the 4th century.

2.2 The accusative ending in *-ã* and *-u*

In an article from the year 2000, Jenniges and Swiggers investigated the question of whether Lycian A inscriptions exhibit a chronological distribution of the accusative ending in *-ã* versus the ending *-u*. The authors argue that the *-ã* forms are typical for older inscriptions and the *-u* forms for more recent ones. Inscriptions showing both forms represent a transitional phase (Jenniges/Swiggers 2000: 113).

The study has, however, some methodological shortcomings. One problem, for example, is that the list of inscriptions with the *-ã* accusative, which, according to the authors, date before 360/350, contains not only texts that can be dated on the basis of their content, but also texts such as TL 32, TL 36, TL 84 and TL 149 to which this does not apply. For TL 84 and TL 149 the authors assume a date before 360/350 solely because of the presence of the older form of *ẽ* (Jenniges/Swiggers 2000: 113). However, since older letter variants occur in younger inscriptions too, it is not the appearance of older forms that is relevant for palaeographic dating, but the appearance of younger forms. Given that TL 149 shows the young variant of *n* and the younger variants of *ã* and *x*, it might instead date from the second half of the 4th century.

Another weakness is that Jenniges and Swiggers do not clearly explain their approach. As a methodological basis for determining the distribution of *-ã* and *-u* forms, the authors name contextual, archaeological and palaeographic criteria. It remains unclear, however, which archaeological criteria they have used. Content-based criteria include dating formulae and other text-internal information. As far as the palaeographic criteria are concerned, they use mainly variants of the let-

ter \tilde{e} , which both Trevor Bryce (1976: 168–170) and Emmanuel Laroche (1979: 54–56) have established as relevant for dating. Why they only occasionally include other letter variants, which according to Laroche (1979: 54–56) are also relevant for dating, is left unanswered.¹² It should also be noted that the *-u* accusative is attested in Lycian B (Milyan) as well. It certainly makes sense to examine the texts in Lycian B and Lycian A separately. However, since Lycian B in various features is more archaic than Lycian A, it is remarkable that the *-u* accusative is also represented in texts composed in this dialect (cf. *kalu* TL 44d.47; *neriu* TL 55.6; *pasbu* TL 44d.50; *qliju* TL 44d.59; *xñtabu* TL 44c.33, d.41; *timlu* TL 44c.48; *xupeliju* TL 44d.59).

Due to these shortcomings of Jenniges' and Swiggers' study, as well as the availability of new palaeographic criteria, a re-examination appears necessary. The results are as follows: Among all Lycian inscriptions (excluding the coin legends), 110 inscriptions show accusative sg. forms ending in *-ã* and/or in *-u*. 81 inscriptions exclusively have the *-ã* accusative, 9 have both *-ã* and *-u* forms and 20 show exclusively *-u* forms (Fig. 5).

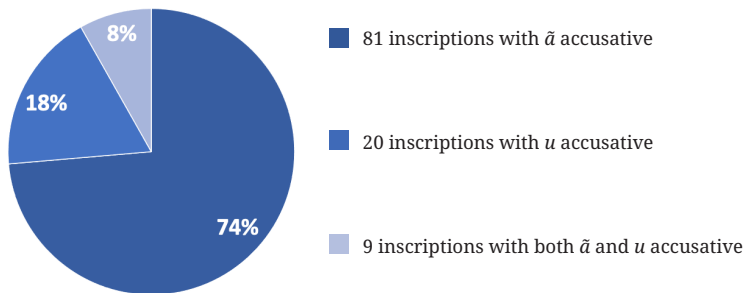


Fig. 5. Inscriptions with *-ã* and/or *-u* accusative (total number 110).

14 of the 81 inscriptions with accusative forms ending in *-ã* have only older letter variants (TL 32, 52, 73, 75, 77, 84, 89, 90, 106, 128, 142, 150; N 321, N 335 (not entirely clear)). One of these inscriptions bears a dating formula, according to which it was established in the time of Hargagos (TL 77, second half of 5th century BC).

12 In the description of their methodological approach, the authors only mention the variants of the letter \tilde{e} as a criterion for dating. Later, however, they occasionally refer to other letter variants that are relevant for dating (see, e.g., pp. 114 and 116). Their statements, however, remain general and sketchy.

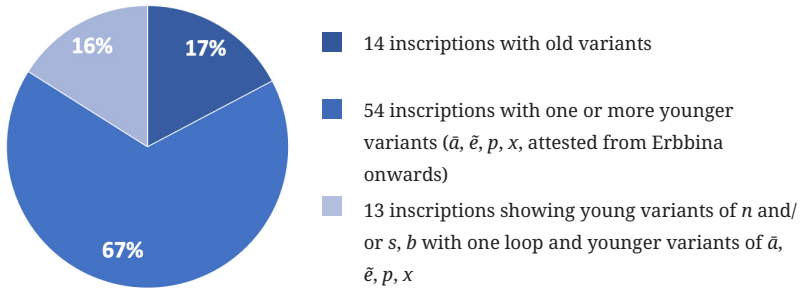


Fig. 6. Inscriptions showing exclusively the \tilde{a} accusative (total number 81).

54 of the 81 inscriptions with \tilde{a} accusative show one or more variants of the letters \tilde{a} , \tilde{e} , p , x which are already attested in inscriptions of Erbbina, but become more frequent over time. The inscriptions are TL 1, 3, 7, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 21, 36, 37, 40, 42, 48, 61, 63, 66, 67, 70, 71, 80, 85, 86, 87, 88, 92, 94, 101, 103, 104, 109, 110, 111, 113, 118, 120, 121, 122, 132, 135, 136, 137, 138, 140, 145, 146, 147; N 306, N 309, N 314, N 316). 22 of these 54 inscriptions bear only one younger variant, most often of the letter \tilde{a} (13 attestations): TL 9 (younger \tilde{a}), TL 11 (younger \tilde{a}), TL 17 (younger x), TL 18 (younger \tilde{e}), TL 21 (younger \tilde{a}), TL 36 (younger besides older \tilde{a}), TL 37 (younger \tilde{a}), TL 42 (younger p), TL 48 (younger p), TL 61 (younger \tilde{a}), TL 66 (younger \tilde{a}), TL 67 (younger \tilde{a}), TL 71 (younger \tilde{a}), TL 86 (younger p), TL 94 (younger \tilde{a}), TL 122 (younger \tilde{a}), TL 132 (younger p), TL 135 (younger \tilde{a}), TL 136 (younger \tilde{a}), TL 140 (younger p), TL 146 (younger p); N 309 (younger p). The rest show more than one younger letter form.

13 of the 81 inscriptions with \tilde{a} accusative have one or more letter variants which, according to the inscriptions datable in terms of content, indicate a young date of origin (possible the second half of the 4th century). These are: TL 4, 6, 8, 12, 35, 59, 99, 108, 112, 119, 149; N 317, N 322. A late date of TL 99 is also indicated by a nearby Greek inscription which, in all likelihood, was authored by the same person.¹³

All of these inscriptions contain, besides the young variants of the letters n , s and/or b , also one or more of the younger variants of \tilde{a} , \tilde{e} , p and x which for the first time are attested in inscriptions of Erbbina: TL 4 (young n , younger \tilde{a} , \tilde{e} , p , x), TL 8 (young n , younger \tilde{a} , \tilde{e} , p , x), TL 12 (young n , younger \tilde{a} , \tilde{e} , p , x), TL 35 (young n , younger \tilde{a} , \tilde{e} , x), TL 59 (young n , younger \tilde{a} , \tilde{e} , p), TL 99 (s , younger \tilde{a} , \tilde{e} , p , x), TL 108 (young n ,

¹³ See Wörrle 1991: 223–224.

younger *p*), TL 112 (young *s*, younger \tilde{a} and *p*), TL 119 (young *n* besides older *n*, younger \tilde{a}), TL 149 (young *n*, younger \tilde{a} , *x*); N 317 (young *n*, younger \tilde{a} , \tilde{e} , *x*), N 322 (young *n*, younger \tilde{a} , *x*) (**Fig. 6**).

The accusative ending in $-\tilde{a}$ is thus still to be found in inscriptions for which, on palaeographical and once also on contextual grounds, a late date of origin (probably the second half of the 4th century or the first half of the 3rd century) is likely. The assumptions of Jenniges and Swiggers (2000: 117), according to which the accusative ending $-\tilde{a}$ is no longer to be found after 340, is therefore not confirmed by the evidence.

2.2.1 Inscriptions showing both accusative endings

A total of 9 inscriptions have both the $-\tilde{a}$ and the $-u$ accusative. These are TL 26, 44, 57, 91, 93, 102, 124, 131; N 320. One of them, namely TL 44, dates according to its content from the time of Xeriga and Xerēi (end of 5th/beginning of 4th century BC). The parts composed in Lycian A mostly have the $-\tilde{a}$ accusative. There is, however, also one $-u$ accusative (cf. TL 44c.4 *ubu* accusative sg. of *uba-* ‘grant, offering’). Two inscriptions, namely TL 57 and TL 93, show variants of the letter *s* that indicate a rather late date of origin (possibly the second half of the 4th century). In addition, they show *b* with one loop and younger variants of the letters \tilde{a} , \tilde{e} , *p*, *x*.

The other six inscriptions (TL 26, 91, 102, 124, 131; N 320) show younger variants of \tilde{a} , \tilde{e} , *p* and/or *x* which for the first time are attested in inscriptions of Erbbina, but clearly become more frequent over time. N 320 can, on the basis of its content, be dated to the second half of the 4th century, whereas the others might already have been composed before the middle of the 4th century (**Fig. 7**).

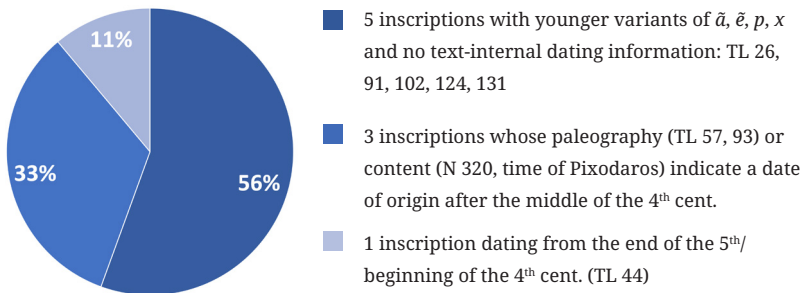


Fig. 7. Inscriptions with both \tilde{a} and *u* accusative (total number 9).

As this evidence shows, the majority of inscriptions with both accusative forms show letter variants which indicate a later date of origin. Most of them are, however, already attested in inscriptions of Erbbina. Moreover, already TL 44, which dates to the end of the 5th/beginning of the 4th century BC, has both accusative forms. Jenniges's and Swigger's hypothesis, according to which the inscriptions showing both accusative forms are to be dated between 360 and 330 (Jenniges/Swiggers 2000: 117), is therefore not tenable.

2.2.2 Inscriptions showing exclusively the accusative ending in -u

The accusative ending in *-u* is attested in 20 inscriptions. These are TL 23 (*ñtatu*), TL 25 (*atru, ladu, kbatru*), TL 28 (*ladu, kbatru, xahbu*), TL 29 (*ñtatu, θurttu, putu*), TL 38 (*prñnawu*), TL 39 (*prñnawu*), TL 45B (*Mali-ju*), TL 47 (*xupu*), TL 53 (*prñnawu*), TL 56 (*prñnawu*), TL 78 (*xahbu*), TL 105 (*xupu*), TL 124 (*xupu*), TL 143 (*ñtatu*), TL 144 (*xupu*); N 308 (*xupu*), N 315 (*xupu*), N 323 (*adru*), N 341 (*xupu*), N 344 (*xupu*). Two of them show no signs of a younger date of origin (TL 53 and N 323). N 323 is, however, a special case. It is a short inscription on ceramic with a few signs which partly differ from those of other inscriptions. Nevertheless, younger letter variants are not attested. 11 inscriptions show younger letter variants that are already known from inscriptions of Erbbina, but become more frequent over time. These are TL 23 (younger *ẽ*, younger *x*), TL 28 (younger *ã, p, x*), TL 45 (younger *ã* and *x*), TL 47 (younger *p* and *x*), TL 78 (younger *ã, p, x*), TL 105 (younger *p, x*), TL 124 (younger *ẽ, p* and *x*), TL 143 (younger *ã, ẽ, x*), TL 144 (younger *x, p*), N 315 (younger *ẽ*, once younger *x*); N 341 (younger *ẽ, p, ñ* without a vertical stroke), N 344 (young *x*, older *ẽ* and *p*). N 315 is to be dated on the basis of its content to the reign of Mizrppata (before 380), TL 45 to the reign of Pixodaros (337/336–336/335).

Seven inscriptions show letter forms which, among the inscriptions with text-internal dating criteria, appear only in inscriptions of the second half of the 4th century. One of these inscriptions, TL 29, which shows the young variant of *n*, and younger *ã, ẽ* and *x*, can be dated on the basis of its content to the time after Alexander's arrival in Lycia (post 339–334). The other inscriptions are TL 25 (young *n*, younger *ã, ẽ* and *x*), TL 38 (young *n*, younger *ẽ, p* and *x*), TL 39 (young *n, b* with one loop, younger *ã, p, x*), TL 56 (young *n*, younger *ã, ẽ, p* and *x*); N 308 (young *n, b* with a single loop, younger *ẽ* and *x*). 6 inscriptions are therefore likely

to be dated to the second half of the 4th century, whereas one, TL 45, can be dated to this period on the basis of its content (**Fig. 8**).

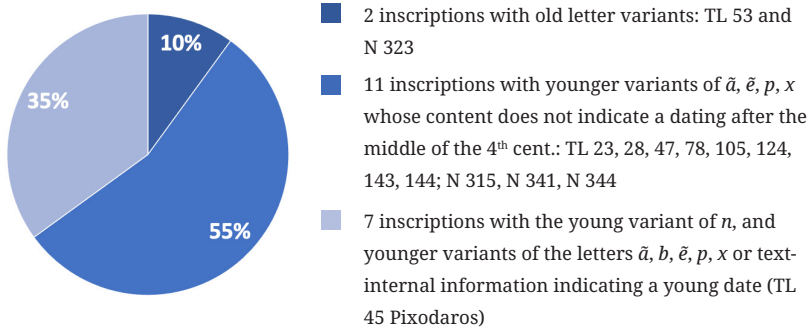


Fig. 8. Inscriptions with *-u* accusative (total number 20).

As a result of these observations, it can be concluded that the assumptions of Jenniges and Swiggers are not confirmed by any evidence. Thus, the accusative ending in *-u* is already attested in inscriptions dating from before 360. The accusative ending in *-u* probably becomes more frequent in the course of time. It is, however, not correct that after 340 only the forms ending in *-u* occur. The accusative forms in *-u* may therefore, together with other criteria, serve as indicators of a relatively late date of inscription. However, they are not *per se* a reliable dating criterion that allows us to determine whether an inscription was composed in the first half or the second half of the 4th century.

3 CHAMBER DESIGN AS AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATING CRITERION

According to Seyer (2009),¹⁴ the oldest type of chamber design among the rock-cut tombs is a quadrilateral stone bench at entrance level (or, rather, a recess in the middle of the floor; **Fig. 9**). A later type can be seen in stone benches on an elevated level (mostly trilateral benches; **Fig. 10**). In the most recent stage, the chambers show niches.

Among the chambers with niches we can differentiate between those having only niches and those showing niches in addition to a recess in

¹⁴ See also Seyer 2006a.



Fig. 9. Chamber of the rock-cut tomb with TL 106 (Limyra) showing a recess in the middle of the floor.



Fig. 10. Chamber of the rock-cut tomb with TL 1 (Tyberissos) showing a trilateral bench at an elevated level.



Fig. 11. Chamber of the rock-cut tomb with TL 139 (Limyra).

the middle of the floor (in Seyer's terminology: a quadrilateral bench at entrance level).

According to Seyer (2009: 66–71), niches in tombs with a quadrilateral bench were very likely added at a later stage. He assumes that the reason for the reconstruction lies in the fact that tombs with quadrilateral benches at entrance level did not provide enough protection for the dead. He further states that since the graves were used for multiple burials, the undertakers had to step on the dead bodies at each new burial – a severe disturbance of the eternal peace of the departed.¹⁵ For this reason the burial chambers were, according to Seyer, subsequently equipped with niches that were then used as the only burial places. Seyer thus rejects Borchhardt's assumption that the niches were installed to create additional space (Borchhardt 1975: 110).

Although it is undoubtedly important to consider the placement and handling of corpses when investigating the design of the tomb chambers, Seyer's hypothesis is in my view not conclusive. If the corpses were only placed on the left and right side and not behind the door, as is very likely and apparently assumed by Seyer too, one did not necessarily have to step on them when entering the grave.¹⁶ There are, however,

15 See Seyer 2006a: 723–724 with n. 33; Seyer 2009: 64.

16 See Seyer 2009: 53–54.

some chambers in which the space between the door and the recess is very narrow. An example is the rock-cut tomb with TL 139 in Limyra, whose chamber shows a bench at an elevated level in addition to a recess (**Fig. 11**). As in most Lycian epitaphs, the inscription mentions wife and children as beneficiaries.

Burial on raised benches or in niches would certainly provide a stronger separation between the dead and the living who visit the tomb, and give the impression of greater protection and deference. However, such separation can also be achieved by other means, such as burial in shrouds, coffins or other repositories. It might also be that in some of the tombs with a recess in the middle of the floor, rather than the side parts, the recess served as a burial place. One case might be the tomb bearing TL 106. The inscription mentions only one person as the occupant of the tomb, a certain Sbi δ aza, the *thurta* and head of the *mindis*. Since the recess in the middle of the tomb chamber, which covers an area of approx. 2 × 2 m, is ca. 0.70 m wide and 1.20 m long (**Fig. 9**), it seems conceivable that Sbi δ aza's corpse was placed in a repository in the middle of the tomb and not on the surrounding floor.

It is also largely unclear which areas and which installations in the tombs were used to accommodate new burials, and which were used to place the remains of older burials or grave goods. It might very well be that the mortal remains of earlier burials were moved to the niches, while recently deceased persons were buried on the floor, in its recess, or in coffins placed on it. Likewise, the reverse scenario is also feasible. Furthermore, we know that in Lycia, besides inhumation, cremation was also common.¹⁷ A comparison of the information in the inscriptions and the number of benches in the tombs shows that usually there is no 1:1 correlation between the number of benches and the beneficiaries mentioned in the inscription.

Moreover, it cannot be sufficiently proven that all or most niches were added at a later stage. And, even if this were the case, it remains uncertain when this should have taken place. According to Seyer (2009: 69), it probably happened before the end of the 4th century, since some of the tombs that have only niches bear inscriptions. Although such a scenario is certainly conceivable, a renovation of this kind would likely have been considered a great disturbance to the eternal rest of the dead buried there. Although any entry to the tomb may have been perceived as an interference, the penetration of the burial chamber with heavy

17 See, e.g., Hüllden (2006: 280–287) with further literature.

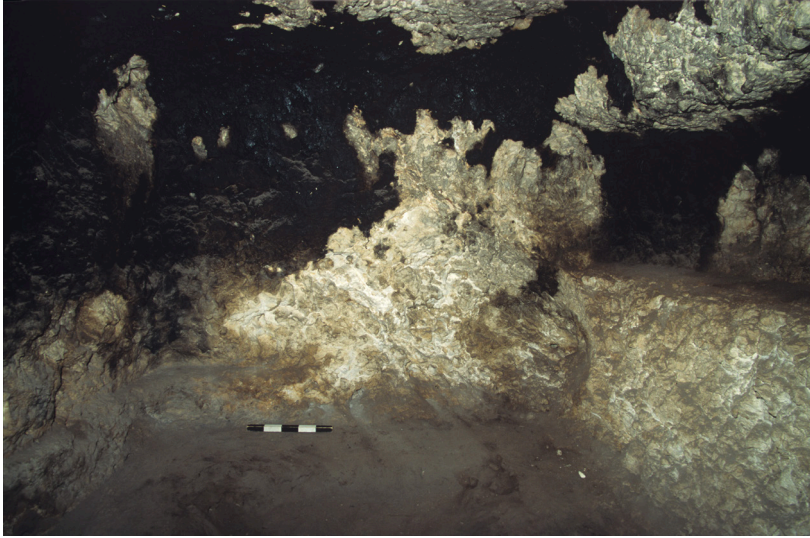


Fig. 12. Recess in the middle of the floor and support on the left side of the rock-cut tomb chamber bearing TL 75 (Tyberissos).



Fig. 13. Niche on the right side of the rock-cut tomb chamber bearing TL 75 (Tyberissos).

tools and the creation of niches is a very severe form of it. If the family was indeed concerned about the eternal rest of the dead buried in the tomb and wanted to protect them from disturbance, such a measure would be counterproductive.

Unfortunately, the majority of inscriptions are of little help in verifying or disproving Seyer's hypothesis, as they normally do not provide any information as to whether the niches belong to the original interior or were installed subsequently. An exception may be TL 75, which is engraved on a rock-cut tomb in Tyberissos, the chamber of which shows a recess in the middle of the floor (a quadrilateral bench at entrance level). In addition, there is a niche on the right side of the room, as well as two supports for a wooden board or stone slab in the two left corners (Fig. 12 and Fig. 13).

Seyer (2009: 70) emphasizes that it is not possible to determine whether the niche on the right side and the supports on the left were made at the same time. Since the two supports are only a few centimetres above the floor (original bench), he argues that the floor (bench) was no longer used for burials after the installation of the wooden board or stone slab. However, this argument already presupposes that the niche and perhaps also the supports were installed at a later stage. Furthermore, it presupposes that the floor (bench at entrance level) was originally used for burials. However, neither of these hypotheses can be proven.

The inscription rather indicates that the bench in the niche belonged to the original equipment and was reserved for the burial of the tomb builder and his wife. However, this only applies if the term *isbazi* in line 3 refers to the bench in the niche. Although this cannot be proven, given the context and other inscriptions it seems very likely. The text runs as follows:

- 1 ebēññē: xupā: m=ēneḡ pṛñnawatē tettñpe:
- 2 hñtihāmah; tid[ei]mi s=ene ñte: tāti tdi
- 3 iṣbazi: me=iḡe: ni hr[ppi] ṭāṭu: tike: ñmē: ladā: ti=(i)ḡe
- 4 [h]ṛ[pp]i: la[ti]¹⁸ hrppi[=(i)ḡe me=]i: tadi: ṭike: kbi[:?]¹⁹ m=ēne
- 5 ṭḡidi: q[ll]a[(j)]=ḡḡi [s]e malija: se ta[sa²]; miñtaha

18 The reading of the letter <l> is unsure. The traces allow also a reading as <e>, which, however, does not match the following <a>.

(1-2a) This tomb has built Tettṛṇpe, so[n] of Hñtihāma. (2b-3) And they will place him inside, where the *isbazi* is.¹⁹ (2b-4a) And they should not place anyone else except for the wife, whom(?) he will allow(?) therein/thereon in addition(?). (4b-5) [(if)] one places anyone else [therein/thereon] in addition(?), then thi[s] *q[l]a* will strike him – and Malija – and the oa[ths?] of the *miñti*.

As already said, it cannot be proven that the word *isbazi* refers to the bench in the niche. Instead, although less likely, it could designate the board which was once situated above it, or the stone floor (bench at entrance level). In TL 49 from Xanthos, however, the term *isbazi* designates with certainty a bench situated in a niche. It is the only inscription which is placed inside the burial chamber immediately above the bench (Fig. 14).

The text notes that the priest *Padrñma* lies on ‘this *isbazi*’ and that he does not allow anyone else to be placed there in addition:

ebehi: isbazi: mi=ije=sijēni: padrñma: kumaza: me=ije ne pemati
tike: kbi hrppi=ttāne:

“On this *isbazi* lies *Padrñma*, the priest. And he does not allow(?) anyone else to be placed on top/in addition(?).”

The inscription engraved on the tomb’s façade, to the right of the door, states that the tomb was built by *Padrāma* for his nephews and nieces (TL 48a). From this, it can be concluded that the other benches inside the tomb were intended for the burial of these beneficiaries. A second inscription on the façade apparently mentioning the sale of the tomb was likely added at a later stage (TL 48b).²⁰

Also in TL 84 (Sura), the term *isbazi* obviously designates a bench situated at an elevated level (Fig. 15). Lines 2–3 of the inscription refer to this bench as the ‘upper *ispazi*’ (*hrzzē ṣpazijē*),²¹ which the tomb build-

19 The translation of this sentence is erroneously omitted in Christiansen 2020: 232.

20 For a detailed description of the tomb and its chamber see Seyer 2006b.

21 Due to weathering the reading of the passage is unsure. However, the photographs and paper squeezes make the reading *hrzzē ṣpazijē* suggested by Kalinka (1901: 68) appear likely. Yet, the alternative reading *hrzzēñ: srazijē* or rather *hrzzēñ: ṣpazijē* proposed by Schürr (2001: 149) cannot be ruled out, although it is less probable. For the alteration from to <p> cf. also *ebetehi* > *ebttehi* > *epttehi*.



Fig. 14. Chamber of the rock-cut tomb bearing TL 49 (Xanthos).

er Mizretije made for himself, and on which they should lay him (*hātā* ‘the deceased one?’), or, ‘the holder(?)’²² and his wife:

^(2b)s=ed=adē: atli: hrzzē ɣspazijē: me=te: ŋta tāti ^(3a)ebññē: hātā: se
ladā:

“and he made the upper *ispazi* for himself and they will place this deceased(?)/holder(?) and the wife therein”.

The wording implies that in addition to the upper *isbazi*, there was also a lower one, which was intended for other family members. In fact, on the left side of the burial chamber there are two benches situated on top of each other in a niche. The lower bench is below the entrance level, but higher than the rest of the floor.²³ The situation in this grave can thus be compared with that of the tombs bearing TL 75 and TL 49 (Fig. 16). As TL 84 clearly shows, both benches belonged to the original

22 The word *hāta-* probably derives from *ha-* ‘let, let go, release’. Its meaning in the present context remains, however, unsure. According to Melchert (2004: 22), it might be translated as ‘deceased’, whereas Schürr (2006: 119–120) suggested the meaning ‘holder, tenant’.

23 See Borchhardt 2002: 35–36 with Fig. 19 for a description of the chamber. Seyer (2009: 56, 60), however, mentions only the quadrilateral bench at entrance level.



Fig. 15. Chamber of the tomb bearing TL 84 (Sura).

equipment of the tomb chamber and were obviously used for burials at the same time.

This evidence does not prove that the niches in the graves with a recess in the middle of the ground generally belonged to the original equipment. However, like TL 75, TL 84 casts doubt on Seyer's assumptions.²⁴

Another attestation of the term *isbazi* can be found in TL 128. The inscription is engraved on a one-storied rock-cut tomb, the chamber of which shows a recess in the middle (quadrilateral stone bench at entrance level; Fig. 17). The fragmentary inscription refers to an *isbazi* reserved for the burial of the tomb builder Krustti and his wife (... *isbazi amu şijani teli: se [l]ada*, "the *isbazi* on which I and the [w]ife will lie"). The term likely refers to one of the two benches which are located on the left and right sides and are about 0.34 m higher than the entrance level. The floor between them is lower than the entrance level, on the rear side is a platform located at approximately the same level as the

24 Seyer (2009: 56, 60–61) mentions this tomb (TL 84) in his list of tombs whose chambers show a quadrilateral bench, but does not discuss the inscription. Neither does he mention the bench located at an elevated level.



Fig. 16. Chamber of the tomb bearing TL 48 and 49.



Fig. 17. Chamber of the rock-cut tomb bearing TL 128 (Limyra).

benches, but rising to the rear. Unlike TL 84, the inscription does not mention any other beneficiaries apart from the tomb owner and his wife.

From the evidence we can conclude that the term *isbazi* refers to benches used for burial, which are sometimes, but not always, placed in niches. Whether the niche inside the tomb bearing TL 75 was added at a later stage or was part of the original design remains unclear, although the latter is, in my opinion, more likely. Although the inscriptions discussed above raise doubts about at least some of Seyer's hypotheses, it seems appropriate to confront the chronological development of the burial chambers assumed by Seyer with the written and, in particular, the palaeographic evidence.

The results of this comparison are as follows: of the 16 tombs listed by Seyer (2009: 56–58) as tombs with a quadrilateral bench, 7 show no indication of further installations. These tombs bear the following inscriptions: TL 52 (Saribelen/Sidek Yayla), 85, 86, 89, 90; N 309 (all Myra); TL 106 (Limyra) and TL 149 (Rhodiapolis). Among them is only one inscription, TL 149, which has the alleged young variant of *n* and the younger variants of \tilde{a} and *x* (see above). TL 52 and TL 85 have the younger version of \tilde{e} , which, however, is already attested in inscriptions of Erbbina. The other inscriptions show exclusively letter variants that are already attested in inscriptions from the second half of the 5th and the beginning of the 4th century (**Fig. 18**).

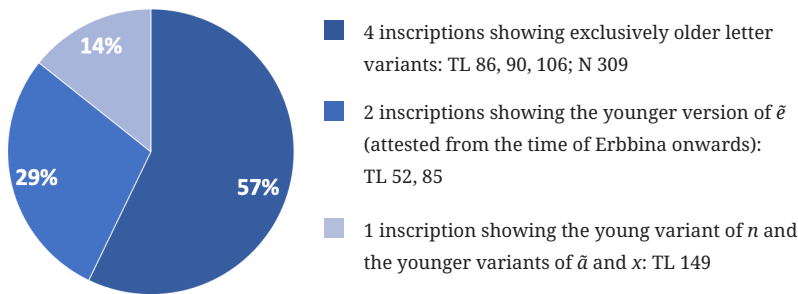


Fig. 18. Inscriptions on tombs with a recess in the middle of the floor and no further installations.

The tombs which show, in addition to the quadrilateral bench (recess in the middle of the floor), one or more benches in niches bear the following six inscriptions: TL 75 and TL 76 (Tyberissos), TL 83 (Arneai), TL

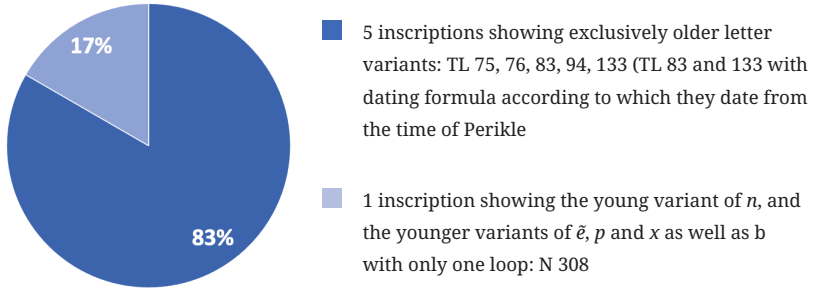


Fig. 19. Inscriptions on tombs whose chamber shows a recess in the middle of the floor and one or more niches.

94 (Myra),²⁵ TL 133 (Limyra) and N 308 (Myra). Most of them show exclusively letter variants that are already attested in inscriptions which, according to their content, date from the period between the second half of the 5th (reign of Harpagos) and the first decades of the 4th century (reign of Erbbina). N 308 from Myra, however, has the young form of *n*, the younger variants of *ē*, *p* and *x* as well as *b* with only one loop. While the other inscriptions were probably written already in the first half of the 4th century, the palaeography of N 308 suggests a date from the second half of the 4th century. By means of their dating formulae, TL 83 and TL 133 can be dated more precisely to the reign of Perikle. In addition, the grave with TL 84 (Sura) should also be mentioned here. As discussed above, its chamber shows two benches on the left side situated on top of each other in a niche. The lower bench is below the

25 The burial monument bearing TL 94 is a tomb complex consisting of two tombs situated one above the other (tomb 9 and 10) and a further tomb (tomb 11) situated on the right side of tomb 10. All tomb chambers show a different interior. Chamber 11 has no installations at all, whereas chamber 10 shows a recess in the middle of the floor (quadrilateral bench at entrance level). The design of the niche on the back of the chamber indicates that it was not created until Byzantine times and can therefore be neglected in the present study (see Seyer 2008: 344–345). The original design of chamber 9 remains unclear. According to Seyer (2008: 353–358), it initially consisted of a three-sided or quadrilateral bench and was later extended to the rear, although the extension remained unfinished. In addition, at a later stage the benches were made narrower. Seyer also considers it probable that the niche on the right side was not part of the original interior but added later. This, however, remains hypothetical, as Seyer himself notes. According to the inscription engraved on the upper cross-beam of tomb 10, the upper building (tomb 9) was intended solely for the burial of Hurttuweti, his wife and a person named Hakāna. Thus tomb 10 and tomb 11 were presumably intended for the burial of further family members.

entrance level, but is elevated compared to the surrounding floor. Since the inscription refers to the upper bench with the term ‘upper *isbazi*’, it obviously belonged to the original interior, as did the lower bench. Neither the content nor the palaeography of the inscription indicate a younger date of origin (Fig. 19).

Among the tomb chambers having only niches, but no quadrilateral benches, the majority do not bear an inscription. Among the tombs listed by Seyer, there is only one which has a Lycian inscription, namely the rock-cut tomb bearing TL 39, located in Xanthos. The text shows the young variant of *n* and the younger variants of *ã*, *x* and *p*. As is the case with N 308 from Myra, the letter *b* is attested with only one loop.

These results do not necessarily contradict Seyer’s hypothesis that the burial chambers with a recess in the middle of the floor are the oldest chamber type. However, if this were indeed the case, the inscriptions on such tombs showing young letter variants would prove that this chamber design was still in use in the second half of the 4th century. Moreover, the inscriptions that can be dated on the basis of their content show that various chamber designs were already common in the first half of the 4th century (Fig. 18 and Fig. 19). The most frequent chambers are those with a trilateral bench at an elevated level.²⁶ But as shown by TL 83 and TL 133, according to which their respective tombs were built in the time of Perikle, chambers with a recess in the middle of the floor are also known from this period. If the niches in these tombs either belonged to the original design or were still being installed in the first half of the 4th century, then this chamber type would also be attested for this time.

4 CONCLUSION

The re-examination of the *atli ehbi* formula as a dating criterion has shown that it is attested both in inscriptions where the palaeography indicates a more recent date of origin (possibly the second half of the 4th century) and inscriptions for which this is not the case. Although the formula might have become more frequent over time, it is not a suitable criterion for deciding whether an inscription is to be dated to the first half of the 4th century or to the subsequent period. Concerning

²⁶ See also Seyer 2009: 63–64.

Ruler	Chamber design			
	rock-cut tomb with recess in the middle of the floor	rock-cut tomb with trilateral bench on an elevated level	rock-cut tomb with bench(es) or stone boards & niches	pillar
			rock-cut tomb with recess and stone boards	sarcophagus
				(partly) unclear
Harpagos (middle or last quarter of 5 th cent.)	TL 77			N 310
Xeriga & Xerēi (5 th /4 th cent.)				TL 43
				TL 44
Mizrppata (until ca. 380)	TL 64		N 315 (recess, 1 board, 1 niche)	
Trbbēnīmi (ca. 430–380)	TL 128		TL 135 (recess & 2 boards, dating in the time of Trbbēnīmi unsure)	
Arttuṃpara (until ca. 370)				TL 11
Perikle (ca. 380–360/350)	TL 133	TL 103 & 104, N 314		TL 67, 83, 132 (132: two boards, rest unclear)
Autphradates (ca. 360/350)			TL 61 (1 bench & niches)	TL 40
Purihimeti (after 350?)				TL 99 (2 boards, rest unclear)

Fig. 20. Chamber design of the tombs engraved with inscriptions with text-internal dating information.

the accusative forms, it can be seen that the use of the *-u* accusative increases over time. However, since it is already attested in inscriptions where content and/or palaeography do not indicate a late date of origin, and since the *-ā* form is still to be found in inscriptions dating from the second half of the 4th century, the accusative forms are not a reliable dating criterion either. The same holds true for the chamber design of rock-cut tombs.

As was shown in the discussion of the term *isbazi*, Seyer's (2006a and 2009) assumption that the niches in graves which show also a quadrilateral bench located at entrance level were added at a later stage is doubtful. But even if his hypotheses were in general correct, they are of little value for the dating of the inscriptions. Since the palaeographic evidence suggests that the chamber type showing a recess in the middle of the floor (quadrilateral bench at entrance level) was still in use in the second half of the 4th century, it cannot be used as a criterion to decide whether an inscription dates from the time before the middle of the 4th century or the subsequent period. Similarly, the hypothesis that the chamber equipped exclusively with niches is the youngest type is of little use for dating the inscriptions, because so far there is only one known inscription engraved on such a tomb, namely TL 39. Consequently, neither the linguistic nor the archaeological criteria discussed here are reliable for dating Lycian inscriptions. Using a cumulative approach that takes into account palaeographic, linguistic, and archaeological criteria, we can at best make a rough estimation. It should be noted, however, that none of the criteria is in itself reliable.

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