

Melammu  
Workshops and  
Monographs

8



## Shaping Boundaries

Ethnicity  
and Geography  
in the Eastern  
Mediterranean Area  
(First Millennium BC)

Proceedings of the 15<sup>th</sup> Melammu Workshop,  
Verona, 19–21 January 2022

Edited by Simonetta Ponchia  
and Luisa Prandi

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# Melammu Workshops and Monographs

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Sebastian Fink and Robert Rollinger

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Melammu Workshops and Monographs 8

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Illustration on the cover: *An idea of border*. Monastery of Saint Simeon Stylites the  
Younger (Samandağ – Turkey) (photo S. Ponchia).

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To the Memory of Kurt Raaflaub  
(1941–2023)

## A Premise

This volume hosts the papers presented at the Conference *Shaping Boundaries. Ethnicity and geography in the Eastern Mediterranean area (First Millennium BC)*, held in Verona in January 2022. We initially planned the Conference as an in-presence event and then we turned it into a dual mode one on account of the travel restrictions imposed by Covid-19. Two-thirds of the speakers came to Verona and many friends and colleagues attended the sessions throughout *zoom*.

The theme of the Conference is the same of the *ShaBo* Project, which the University of Verona funded and we started developing in September 2019. *ShaBo* aimed to analyse a crucial period: the formation of Greek identity, the first one documented in the West, at the time of the contacts with the Near East during the First millennium BCE. More in detail, we examined the interactions between the Syro-Mesopotamian, Levantine and Aegean worlds that took place along the coastal region extending from Bosphorus to Syria and Lebanon.

We paid special attention to methodological issues and diverse approaches in the investigation of boundaries and borderlands. These can be interpreted as different kinds of geo-political, or socio-cultural lines of separation, but should also be interpreted by taking into account their fundamental functions of communication spaces, where new, mixed, or hybrid identities took shape over time. As such, we should investigate them by bearing in mind their specificities. This appears particularly important in consideration of the role that boundaries have in the perception of the past and the construction of memory.

The flow of data, which derive from recent and on-going researches, and the renewed methodological discussion, with special attention to comparative analysis, stimulate a reconsideration of these issues.

We also wanted to respond to an exhortation that scholars – especially Near Eastern scholars – have been expressing for a long time (albeit only intermittently due to the long-lasting separation between different disciplines and difficulties in mastering knowledge and skills belonging to different fields). That is to abandon one-sided perspectives, that are either Greek or Oriental, and undertake a truly comprehensive analysis and comparison of the documentation, focusing on the aspects connected to human presence and circulation, transmission of goods and ideas.

The members of the Project in Verona, Luisa Prandi and Simonetta Ponchia, together with the post-doc fellows Silvia Gabrieli and Fabrizio Gaetano, mainly focused on Anatolia. The first results of their research appeared as a *ShaBo* dossier on *Kaskal* 18 (2021), 297–391, dedicated to the memory of our external partner Federicomaria Muccioli (University of Bologna), who regrettably died in May 2020. Other external partners, Raija Mattila and Robert Rollinger, offered precious help in organising the Conference. Considering that topics such as contacts, interrelations, and cultural transmission are among the themes variously investigated by the Melammu Project, we are glad that our meeting could be included within that framework. We warmly thank Robert Rollinger and Sebastian Fink for hosting our Proceedings within the Melammu series.

The sequence of the papers in this volume mirrors the programme of the Conference. We suggested the friends and colleagues whom we invited as speakers to deal with the general topic by choosing one of the following perspectives:

- 1 Impact of empires on the definition and perception of boundaries
- 2 Construction of identity/ies (foundation myths, Literary and Artistic expressions *etc.*)
- 3 Archaeological sources in the Levant and southern Anatolia, and related methodological issues concerning the definition of identities.

We are glad that their proposals allowed us to shape a coherent programme, where an Achaemenid panel and a “Levantine” panel stand out. The first emphasises the crucial role played by the Persian Empire. The second partially fulfills the *ShaBo* project, by exploring an area that the members of its team had no time or energies to investigate in the first phase of the research. As many speakers share a focus on identity markers, we suggest the reader to assuming this perspective as the reading key of these Proceedings.

Without any ambition to draw definitive conclusions, but rather hoping to direct the reader’s attention and provide some useful suggestions for the future research, we would like to offer a few thoughts originated from attending the Conference and reading the articles submitted for the Proceedings.

- Regarding the formation of boundaries, we must start considering the existence of a basic difference between Near Eastern and Greek sources, as often experienced when adopting a comparative view. The first kind of sources mostly offer a more technical and/or concrete information, whereas the second one provides a more ideological and political interpretation of the events. Our sources are never specialistic treatises on boundaries formation (geographical or juridical), and quite often reveal a biased attitude. Moreover, Near Eastern sources show a variety of perspectives on different types of institutional and social systems, including statal and nomadic/gentilic polities, in which the definition and description of borders involve varying juridical and narrative points of view.

Yet this typological plurality and these differences should not limit a wide-ranging evaluation of the data, but rather stimulate a true methodological integration. Given the character of our sources, we did not privilege the terminological research, but rather more comprehensive interpretive schemes, taking into consideration more concrete elements such as toponyms, types of objects, or distance perceptions, which suggest a roughly illustrative idea of the world we want to better understand.

- Natural separators, like rivers, canyons and channels, lakes or mountains should not be taken as significant boundaries too easily. Likewise, the presence of different ethnic groups settled in the same territory should not always be considered a significant marker: applying ethnonyms to a country is a long-standing practice.
- Borderlands, *i.e.* dependent or semi-dependent polities at the borders of other states, subordinate regions, or buffer states are areas that developed their own characters, zones where communicating was easier or where identities merged. These situations make it difficult to define a clear-cut border line and alter the perception of a boundary. Furthermore, an uncertain separation line between different people may change because they have conflictual ambitions in the same area. For example, both the Persians and some Greek cities aimed to control the Straits and the North Aegean Sea. Before the age of the Persian wars, we can notice a long period of gradual and political/diplomatic appropriation.
- There were real boundaries and boundaries declared or claimed by a king or a city in their official propaganda. Greek sources recount many stories concerning migrations or displacements of people who have goals and duties, always according to an *interpretatio Graeca*. There is a strong connection between Greek identity and the formation of boundaries between Greek and non-Greek people in myths that were revised and reshaped over the centuries.
- Borderlands were the regions where Greek myths illustrating origins and connections englobe, combine and transform motifs of indigenous and oriental origin. Disentangling these threads can make us appreciate how they contributed to the transformation of cultures.
- The mythical cycle regarding Troy as well as almost all the other Greek epic cycles were instruments to reduce distances and to increase proximity between far-off communities. They represent cultural languages, working between Greek groups as well as between Greek and non-Greek populations.
- The role of the archaeological evidence appears pivotal in many case studies. However, what type of finds can be the best marker and improve our understanding of phenomena related to the shaping of boundaries?

In accordance with our goals, we have included different types of reflections and adopted various methodological approaches, also leaving space to some specula-

tions which may encourage further research. We hope that this volume can help to achieve a better understanding of the characteristics of the political/official or cultural/unofficial borders in the eastern Mediterranean regions, and also to identify the existence of other borders between Greeks and non-Greeks.

We also hope that the *ShaBo* project can highlight some of the (theoretical, practical, consequential) implications, typical of situations of conflict or balance between states/peoples. What is more, a better understanding of the past in such a complex area favours better interpretation of contemporary situations. These are the result of events similar to the ancient ones and are expected to give rise to similar circumstances. In this perspective, the correct comprehension of the historical “international” dynamics characterising the eastern Mediterranean basin, is also essential for correctly interpreting the current images and messages of cultural identity.

We thank again all the speakers as well as all the connected people in January 2022, also for their useful discussion after the presentations. The compliance with the deadlines by the contributors allowed us to have a suitable time for peer-reviewing and to succeed in publishing these Proceedings only a year and a half after the Conference.

Simonetta Ponchia  
Luisa Prandi

# **Border(s) between Polities of Unequal Power**

Assyria and Northwestern Iran from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE

Giovanni B. Lanfranchi

## **Abstract**

In the hilly and mountainous territories west of the Northern Mesopotamian plain, an often very rugged and difficult area, a great number of small-scale political entities insisted on territories extremely different for nature, landscape, extension, and human occupation – as the obvious social product of a fragmented natural landscape.

From the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE these territories were the object of numerous military campaigns and territorial annexations by part of the Assyrian and Urartian empires, due to their long-lasting and heavy political, territorial, social, and military competition. In order to curb and arrest the notable south-eastern expansion of Urartu, facilitated by its more favourable location in the highlands north of Mesopotamia, the Assyrian empire frequently attacked the mountain regions of the Zagros region in Northwestern Iran, in order first to submit and subjugate the local polities, and later attempting to expand the imperial territory there. Especially the region of Mannea, roughly corresponding to modern Eastern Kurdistan, together with the various small polities surrounding it, was a preferred target for the Assyrian diplomatic and military activity.

In the last quarter of the 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE, the Assyrian kings Tiglath-pileser and Sargon attempted to build a series of provincial unities in the Zagros region, annexing various small local polities whose *élites* were considered disloyal and prone to ally with the competing Urartian Empire. The borders between the imperial Assyrian territory and the small independent polities were thus moved on various occasions, marking the expansion of the territory of the Assyrian empire and the increasing limitation of the major independent power in the area, the kingdom of Mannea. This paper is aimed at describing some military, political and social phenomena following the spreading of the imperial border to the East and the compression of the autonomy of the local polities.

## **Text**

In the second half of the eighth century BCE, after a long period of territorial expansion with the annexation of several bordering states, the Urartian and the Assyrian empires clashed for supremacy. The conflict exploded especially in Syria and in Northwestern Iran, where the rulers of both empires conducted numerous military expeditions and fought important battles.

The annexation was mostly achieved through the formation of new provinces, which replaced the former independent states. The process was rather variegated: the original territory of the annexed states could be either maintained as it was, forming a single province, or split in smaller parts originating two or more provinces; in some occasions, it was simply added to existing provinces. Thus, after each annexation, the external boundaries of both empires were to be modified in order to envelop the new provinces, in order to protect them from the external states and to control their internal territory. According to the Assyrian Royal Inscriptions, texts of celebratory character and thus ideologically biased, the standard Assyrian process of the formation of provinces consisted in the elimination of the local sovereigns, and often of their family, court, and *élite*, in the deportation of a part of the population, and in the installation of an Assyrian governor, of Assyrian personnel and of deportees from other annexed countries. The ideology governing these texts has the territorial expansion as the main duty of the king: in the “Assyrian coronation hymn”, the national god of Assyria orders the new king to “expand the Assyrian boundaries”.<sup>1</sup> This must have certainly been true also for the Urartian royal ideology, notwithstanding the fact that the Urartian texts are almost mute in this regard. In both empires, thus, the very imperial boundary was considered a *movable* boundary, but obviously only in the outward direction.

Urartu and Assyria (like Turkey and Syria today) were separated by an uninterrupted series of rugged mountains, only partially inhabited, from the Euphrates in the West to Northwestern Iran in the East. In that area there were many states of various dimensions, forming what I would call a composite “belt of independent states” interposed between Urartu and Assyria.

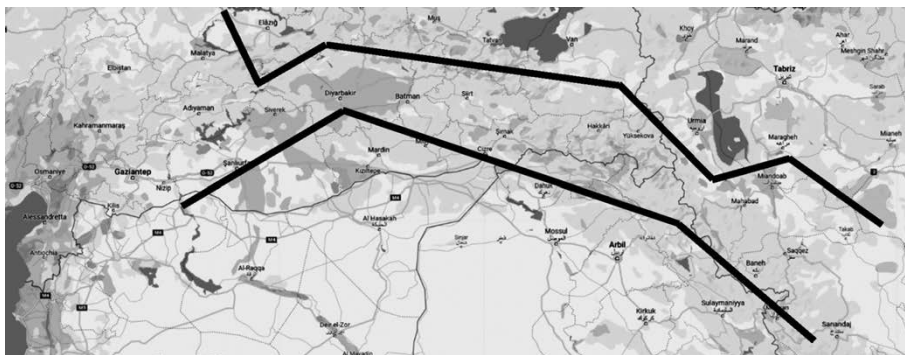


Fig. 1. The “belt of independent states” between Assyria and Urartu in the time of Rusa I and Sargon II.

<sup>1</sup> SAA 3 (Ashurbanipal’s Coronation Hymn), 11, 3 (“Spread your land wide at your feet”); 17 (“May they [*i.e.*, the great gods] give him [*i.e.*, to the Assyrian king] a straight sceptre to extend the land and its peoples!”). This text, to be dated to the enthronement year of King Ashurbanipal (669 BCE), echoes a similar text of the Middle Assyrian period.

In the course of the ninth and eighth centuries BCE, Urartu and Assyria annexed and turned into a province some states extending in the peripheral northern and southern sectors of the “belt”. After the establishment of a new province, the independent states originally bordering with the state which had been turned into a province were to come in direct contact with the very territories of Urartu and Assyria, and new boundaries were to be established between them and the empires. The imperial boundary, thus, was also *work in progress*. Nevertheless, a however narrow but uninterrupted “belt of independent states” continued to separate the two empires from West to East, although the distance between the empires tended to be shortened with the annexation of interposed independent states.

During these two centuries, Urartu and Assyria exerted an increasing diplomatic, political, and economic pressure upon these independent states. The pressure, albeit usual in the previous period, grew in proportion to the narrowing of the “belt”. As customary, the sovereigns of the independent states bordering with, or next to both empires, had to stipulate by force unbalanced international treaties. They were obliged to pay tribute, and to side one of the two empires, or even both, in foreign policy and especially in military assistance. Disloyalty to such agreements is heavily condemned in the Assyrian celebrative texts, and the punishment of disloyal rulers is insistently described using a very harsh and cruel terminology. With the progressive narrowing of the “belt”, any minimal shift in the foreign policy of the independent rulers could produce harsh military and economic difficulties to both empires, endangering especially the recently formed external provinces. The expansion of the empires, thus, implied a *tighter control* of the peripheral states, so that the imperial boundary must have acted as a factor which favoured and imposed an increasing degree of submission.

The conflict dramatically increased in the last quarter of the eighth century, under kings Rusa I of Urartu (r. from ca. 734–720 to after 714 BCE<sup>2</sup>) and Sargon II of Assyria (r. 721–705 BCE). In his first nine regnal years, Sargon intensively fought against Rusa, in order to stop the Urartian expansion especially in North-western Iran. In this region, Rusa’s predecessors and Rusa himself had already annexed several states and formed new provinces, involving all local rulers in their long-lasting anti-Assyrian policy.<sup>3</sup> Some states, however, maintained their independence. The harshness of the conflict turned these states into a crucial area for recruiting local troops to be added to the armies of both empires, for building local lines of resistance against a military attack coming from the rival empire, and for controlling the enemy through local loyal informants and espionage.

In this situation, both Sargon and Rusa must have considered the possibility *to annex* some, or even all the independent states interposed between their empires in Northwestern Iran. The positive experience of the recent past with the swift and

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<sup>2</sup> The dates for Rusa’s accession to the throne and death are not known from any extant text. See Mayer, 2013: 49–53.

<sup>3</sup> For an overview, see Mayer, 2013: 23–45.

rather easy annihilation of many bordering states might encourage them to take action in this direction. However, both kings had to take into account some additional, crucial difficulties. Both must have been aware that the available energies were not sufficient for a quick and stable annexation, since both were employing large parts of their troops in submitting and controlling the independent states south and north of the “belt” (Rusa east and south-east of Lake Urmiah, Sargon in Central Western Iran, classical Media). Further, the annexation required severe and expensive social measures like massive deportation of the local population, in order to secure the new territories. Annexation, however a final solution it may have been envisaged, was really to be a new experience. As such, it called for attentive strategic elaboration, and political and military preparation. The dramatic development of the conflict, however, urged to find a quick and energetic decision.

\* \* \*

A peculiar episode narrated in Sargon’s Royal Inscriptions, which represents a *unicum* in the Assyrian Royal Inscriptions, attests to an attempt to find a solution to this problem. The episode is dated to 715 BCE, Sargon’s seventh regnal year,<sup>4</sup> and is preserved in five texts. We can distinguish two narrations, a shorter, and a longer, more detailed one. The Short Narration presents two different versions (A and B); version A has two variants (1 and 2) bearing minor textual differences. The Long Narration presents two variants (1 and 2), differing only in one single point (a numerical indication).<sup>5</sup> The rough, general *résumé* of both narrations is that Rusa took control of several fortresses belonging to the kingdom of Mannea, and Sargon promptly re-took them.

In version A of the Short Narration, and in the Long Narration, Rusa takes the fortresses by force.

### Short Narration, Version A, Variant 1

RINAP 2, 1 (Khorsabad Palace, Room II, “Annals”), 101–103

<sup>101</sup> *i-na* 7 BALA-ia <sup>1</sup>ru(var.: ur)-sa-a KUR.ur-ar-ṭa-a-a it-ti <sup>1</sup>ul-lu-su-nu  
 KUR.man-na-a-a sar<sub>6</sub>-ra-a-ti id-<sup>1</sup>bu<sup>1</sup>-ub-ma 22 URU.bi-ra-a-te-šú e-kim-šú  
<sup>102</sup> *a-mat taš-qer-ti ta-píl-ti* <sup>1</sup>ul-lu-su-nu a-na <sup>1</sup>da-a-a-uk-ki LÚ.GAR.KUR  
 KUR.man-na-a-a id-bu-ub-ma DUMU-šú <sup>1</sup>a<sup>1</sup>-na li-i-ṭi im-ḥur-šú a-na <sup>d</sup>aš-  
 šur MAN [DINGIR.MEŠ] <sup>103</sup> *qa-a-ti áš-ši-ma* 22 URU.bi-ra-a-ti šá-a-ti-na al-

<sup>4</sup> In Sargon’s inscriptions, the king’s military campaigns were dated according to different systems, giving place to a difference of one year in the dates given in different groups of texts. The main dating system was according to the *palú*, a term which has not yet been assigned a satisfactory meaning, being generally understood as “regnal year” – not necessarily corresponding to the solar year. See Frame, 2021: 23–30.

<sup>5</sup> See fn. 6, below.



*me* KUR-*ud a-na mi-šir* <sup>1</sup>KUR<sup>1</sup>-[aš]-<sup>1</sup>šur<sup>1</sup> [ú<sup>2</sup>]-<sup>1</sup>ter-ra<sup>1</sup>

In my seventh regnal year, Rusa, the Urartian, spoke deceitfully with Ullusunu, the Mannean, took away from him twenty-two of his fortresses. He spoke treacherous words, libels against Ullusunu, to Dayukku, a governor of the land Mannea, and received his son as a hostage. I raised my hand(s) (in supplication) to the god Aššur, the king [of the gods], and (then) surrounded (and) conquered those twenty-two fortresses. [I ma]de (them part of) the territory of [Ass]yria.

Variant 2, preserved in RINAP 2, 2 (Khorsabad Palace, Room V, “Annals”), 95–98, only adds the adverb UD-*x-ti*-<sup>1</sup>iš<sup>1</sup> (meaning unclear) to the verb *e-kim-šú*, “took away” (“Rusa, the Urartian, spoke deceitfully with Ullusunu, the Mannean, took away ... from him twenty-two of his fortresses”).

### Long Narration, Variant 1

RINAP 2, 63 (Assur, clay prism from the Aššur Temple), 12'–25'

<sup>12'</sup> *i-na* 6 BALA-*ia* <sup>1</sup>*ur-sa-a* KUR.*ur-ar-ša-a-a* <sup>13'</sup> *la a-dir ma-mit* DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ *a-bi-ku de-en* <sup>d</sup>šā-maš <sup>14'</sup> <sup>1</sup>ša<sup>1</sup> *ina a-lak ger-ri-ia mah-ri-i a-na* <sup>1</sup>*ul-lu-su-ni* <sup>15'</sup> KUR.*ma-an-na-a-a a-na ni-ir* <sup>d</sup>aš-šur<sub>4</sub> *ú-šak-ni-šú-šú-ma* <sup>16'</sup> *e-mi-du-uš ab-šá<sup>1</sup>-a-nu* 12 URU.ḪAL.ŠU.MEŠ-šú *dan-na-a-ti* <sup>17'</sup> šá UGU KUR.*ur.ar.ši* KUR.*an-di-a* KUR.*na-i-i-ri* <sup>18'</sup> *a-na ka-a-di na-da-a e-<sup>1</sup>kim<sup>1</sup>-šú-ma* *ú-ša-hir* KUR-šú <sup>19'</sup> LÚ.*mun-dah-še* LÚ.ERIM.MEŠ *šu-lu-ti-šú qé-reb-šin* <sup>20'</sup> *ú-še-rib-ma ú-dan-ni-na rik<sup>2</sup>-si-šin a-na tu-ur gi-mil-<sup>1</sup>li<sup>1</sup>* <sup>21'</sup> <sup>1</sup>*ul-lu-su-<sup>1</sup>ni<sup>1</sup>* KUR.*ma-an-na-a-a um-ma-na-at* <sup>d</sup>a-šur<sub>4</sub> <sup>22'</sup> *gap-šá-a-ti ad-ke-e-ma a-na ka-šad* URU.ḪAL.ŠU.MEŠ *ša-ti-na* <sup>23'</sup> *áš-ta-kan pa-ni-ia* URU.ḪAL.ŠU.MEŠ *ša-ti-na* <sup>1</sup>ak<sup>1</sup>-šú-[ud] <sup>24'</sup> *áš-lu-la šal-la-si-<sup>1</sup>in<sup>1</sup>* LÚ.ERIM.MEŠ-<sup>1</sup>ia<sup>1</sup> *a-di ša* <sup>1</sup>*ul-lu-su-<sup>1</sup>ni<sup>21</sup>* <sup>25'</sup> KUR.*ma-an-na-a-a ú-še-ri-ba qé-reb-<sup>1</sup>šin<sup>1</sup>*

In my sixth regnal year, Ursa (Rusa), the Urartian – who did not respect the oath (sworn) by the great gods; who overturned the decision of the god Šamaš; whom, during the course of my previous campaign against Ullusunu, the Mannean, I had subjugated to the yoke of the god Aššur, (and) upon whom I had imposed my yoke – took away from him (Ullusunu) twelve of his strong fortresses that were situated as guard posts on (the border with) the lands Urartu, Andia, (and) Na'iri, and (thus) reduced (the size of) his land. He stationed fighting men inside them as his garrison troops and reinforced their defenses (lit. “structures”). In order to avenge Ullusunu, the Mannean, I mustered the numerous troops of the god Aššur and set out to conquer these forts. I conqu[er] these forts [(and)] carried off booty from them. I stationed inside th[em] my troops, together with those of Ullusunu, the Mannean.

Albeit offering a more detailed description of the events, and presenting a lower number of fortresses subject to Urartian conquest and Assyrian re-conquest,<sup>6</sup> the Long Narration substantially coincides with Version A of the Short Narration as regards the conduct of the Mannean king, who would have been deprived by force of his boundary fortresses by the Urartian king.

In Version B of the Short Narration, however, it is the very king of Mannea, Ullusunu, who gives Rusa the Mannean fortresses “as a gift”.

### Short Narration, Version B

RINAP 2, 7 (Khorsabad Palace, Rooms I, IV, VII, VIII, X, “Display Inscription”), 38–39, 44

<sup>38</sup> <sup>1</sup>*ul-lu-su-nu* <sup>39</sup> KUR.*man-na-a-a ša ina* GIŠ.GU.ZA AD-šú *ú-še-ši-bu a-na*  
<sup>1</sup>*ur-sa-a* KUR.*ur-ar-ṭa-a-a it-ta-kil-ma* 22 URU.HAL.ŠU.MEŠ-šú *ki-i ta-a'-tu-*  
*ú-ti id-din-šú* (40–43: long section dealing with events of Sargon’s 7<sup>th</sup> and  
8<sup>th</sup> regnal year, chronologically mixed in the “Summary Inscription” style)  
<sup>44</sup> 22 URU.HAL.ŠU.MEŠ *šá* <sup>1</sup>*ul-lu-su-nu* KUR.*man-na-a-a e-ki-ma-áš-šu-um-*  
*ma a-na mi-šir* KUR-*aš-šur*.KI *ú-ter-ra*)

Ullusunu, the Mannean, whom they had seated on the throne of his father (Azâ), put his trust in Ursa (Rusa) the Urartian, and gave him twenty-two of his fortresses as a gift. (...) I took away from him (Rusa) the twenty-two fortresses of Ullusunu, the Mannean, and made (them) part of the territory of Assyria.

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<sup>6</sup> The difference, duly noted in Frame, 2021: 268 note ad ii’ 16’, consists in the omission of a sign for “10” (a so-called *Winkelhaken*) in the writing of the number “22” which has two *Winkelhaken*. The number “12” appears in the fragmentary Assur prism VA 8424 (published in Weidner, 1941–44: 42 and 46, copy by F. E. Peiser; cf. comment in Fuchs, 1998: 28, and copy on Taf. 2). In the parallel, small prism fragment 79-7-8, 14 (published in Winckler, 1889: t45; cf. comment in Fuchs, 1998: 28, and copy on Taf. 4) the sentence about the fortresses is broken away. De Odorico, 1995: 53, classifies this variant as pertaining to his category “Omission of a digit” (p. 68). Both texts are commonly dated 711 BCE or slightly later (Fuchs, 1998: 3–4). Commenting the difference in number, Fuchs, 1998: 58 fn. 27, suggests the possibility of a simple scribal error. He also hypothesizes, however, that Sargon might have re-conquered 10 of the 22 fortresses lost to Rusa during his campaign against the Mannean “governor” Dayukku, which, according to the texts, was conducted *after* the re-conquest of the fortresses, so that the number of fortresses taken by Rusa and controlled by him at the end of that campaign was only 12. This hypothesis, however, seems hazardous since the text bearing the number “12” (VA 84824, see Fuchs, 1998: 5–6) was written at least four years after the events, and there is no reason for such a “telescoping” of the real situation in the field. Further, the texts composed later than VA 8424, which have the number “22”, would have corrected the older version without a valid reason. I would suggest that the correction bearing a higher number of fortresses depends on ideological reasons, *i.e.*, the will to magnify Sargon’s enterprise against Rusa.

As is clear, these contrasting narrations exhibit two completely different images of the Mannean king. Considering that in the previous year Sargon, after a long and harsh military campaign, installed him on the Mannean throne forcing him into a political alliance with Assyria,<sup>7</sup> the first narration depicts him as a loyal ally of Assyria who was attacked and defeated by the Urartian king; the second presents him as a disloyal traitor who betrayed the (albeit forced) alliance with the Assyrian king. Such apparently unexplainable contrast may depend on the development in the Assyrian *élite* of opposite political judgments about the Mannean ruler, in the context of the evolution of the military or political situation. This problem, however, is not the focus of the present research, although the changes in time of the political and ideological attitude and judgment upon persons and events during the reign of Sargon (and of any other Assyrian king) should be subject to specific study in the future.

In both narrations, Sargon is depicted as to have reacted promptly and harshly to the initiative of the king of Urartu: some time after the Urartian occupation of the 22 Mannean fortresses, he re-took them by force and finally added them “to the Assyrian territory”,<sup>8</sup> all texts adopting the stereotypical formula of territorial annexation regularly used throughout the Royal Inscriptions.<sup>9</sup> The Long Narration adds that Sargon, after the military success, installed his own troops in the reconquered fortresses together with troops of the Mannean king.<sup>10</sup> In all texts, Sargon is depicted as simply reacting to Rusa’s initiative; and in all texts both kings are presented according to the traditional *topos* of performing military conquest and territorial annexation.

In the Short Narration, there is no information about the location of the fortresses: thus, the reader is allowed to deduce that they were located along the boundary between Urartu and Mannea, *i.e.*, north of Mannea and south of Urartu.

According to the Long Narration, however, the fortresses were located “as guarding posts” along the boundaries of *three* countries: Urartu, Na’iri (an archaism for the mountainous state of Hubuškia), and Andia. There are still many uncertainties about the historical geography of Northwestern Iran; but in general we may take for granted that Hubuškia extended west of Mannea, probably in the north-south Sardasht valley, and Andia east, probably south-east of Lake Urmiah

<sup>7</sup> Narration, e.g. in RINAP 2, 1, 87–89.

<sup>8</sup> In all texts, the word used for “(Assyrian) territory” is *mišru*, which in Akkadian designates both the (official) border and the inner territory marked by (official) border(s). CAD M/2, pp. 113–115 s.v. “mišru A”, with meanings 1 and 2.

<sup>9</sup> Short Narration, Version A, Variants 1 and 2: RINAP 2 1, 103; 2, 98; Long Narration: RINAP 2, 63, ii’ 20’–25’.

<sup>10</sup> RINAP 2, 63, 24’–25’: LÚ.ERIM.MEŠ-<sup>1</sup>ia<sup>1</sup> a-di ša <sup>1</sup>ul-lu-su-<sup>1</sup>ni<sup>21</sup> / KUR.ma-an-na-a-a ú-še-ri-ba qé-reb-<sup>1</sup>šín<sup>1</sup>, “I stationed inside th[em] my troops, together with those of Ullusunu, the Mannean”.

and north-east of Mannea proper (in Sargon's texts it is presented as the farthest point reached by the Assyrian army in the East).<sup>11</sup>

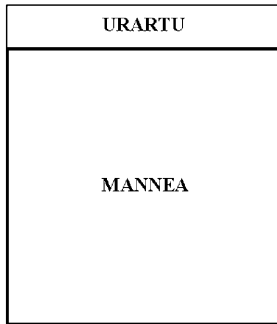


Fig. 2. The theoretical location of the border fortresses according to the Short Narration.

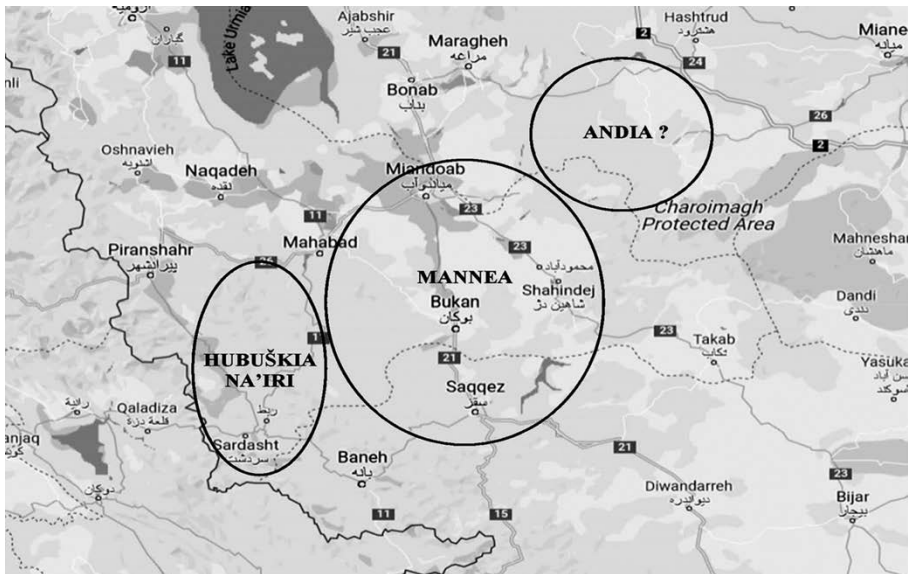


Fig. 3. The relative locations of Mannea, Na'iri-Hubuškia, and Andia.

Consequently, the reader is allowed to deduce that the fortresses were located along the western, northern, and eastern boundaries of Mannea. As is evident from the sketchy map in Fig. 3, other states other than Urartu and Assyria bordered with Mannea along its eastern and southeastern limits, although they are not mentioned in the texts dealing with the episode. Consequently, the reader can sketch two different schematic structures for representing the location of the border fortresses: the first considers only the three states mentioned in the texts (Urartu,

<sup>11</sup> E.g., in his "Letter to the God Aššur" recently re-edited by Mayer, 2013 (lines 14, 76, 154 and 162).

Na'iri, and Andia) (simple structure), the second considers a fourth sector, which may include one or many states (complex structure).

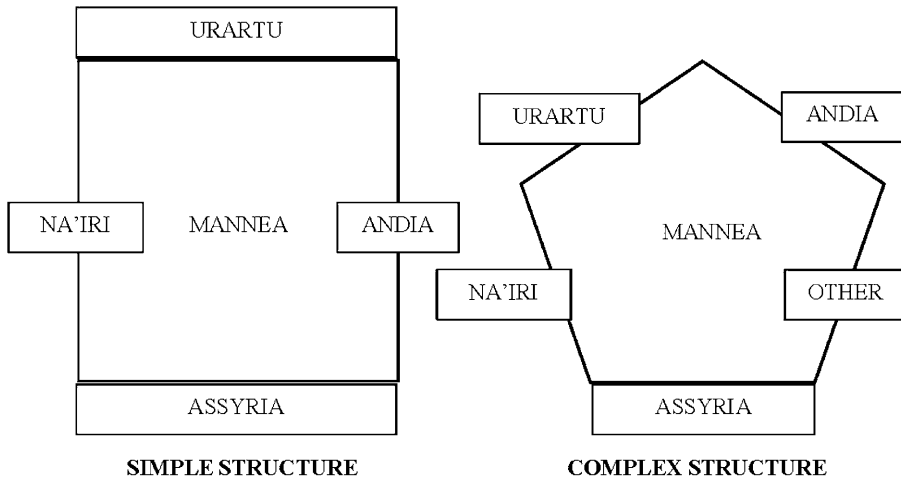


Fig. 4. Schematic representation of the location of the border fortresses according to the Long Narration.

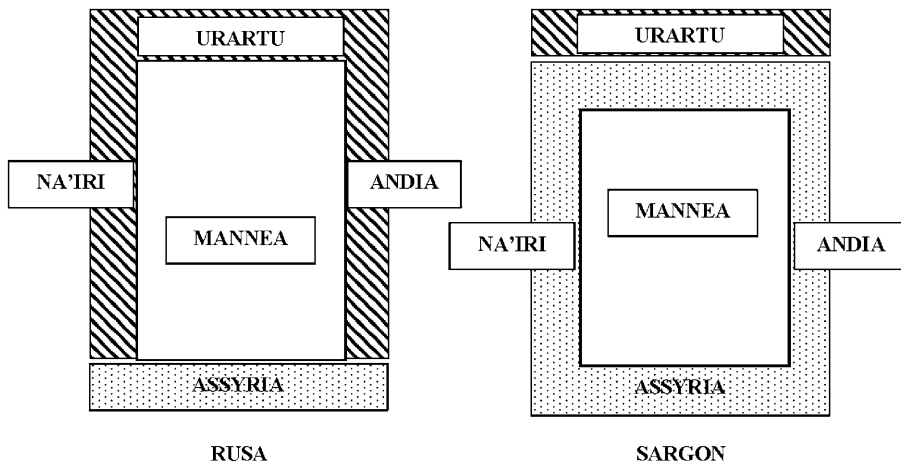


Fig. 5. The different situations of Urartian and Assyrian territories after Rusa's and Sargon's campaigns against the Mannean fortresses according to the Long Narration.

Considering these rough geographical data, in the Long Narration we can see a notable difference between Rusa's and Sargon's initiatives. As for Rusa, with the conquest and the occupation of the fortresses located along the boundary *between Urartu and Mannea* he would have taken full control of the Urartian boundary with Mannea, getting rid of the Mannean king, but would have left undisturbed

the Mannean fortresses guarding the boundary between Mannea and Assyria. As for Sargon, in the texts it is clearly stated that he took and occupied the fortresses along the boundary *between Mannea and Urartu*, suggesting that Sargon installed his troops in direct contact with the Urartian boundary system, albeit stationing them in formally Mannean territory, and that he completely encircled the Mannean territory.

From an ideological perspective, Sargon appears to be depicted as more courageous and efficacious than Rusa, since according to both narrations Rusa would have avoided (or would not have been able to perform) the occupation of the fortresses at the boundary between Mannea and Assyria.<sup>12</sup>

\* \* \*

The geographical indications of the Long Narration suggest that both Rusa and Sargon fundamentally aimed at taking full control of the external boundaries of Mannea. Their purpose was to secure their own land's territories bordering with Mannea, and to control all contacts between Mannea and its bordering countries, including the territory of the enemy king.

All this, obviously, had important economic implications. The occupation of the boundary fortresses granted the control of international trade, of transhumance, and of all human relations, including the movements of diplomats, messengers, informers, spies, etc. In the military, however, the advantages were crucial. The occupation of the boundary fortresses granted multiple accesses to Mannea for an attack against the rival empire, which could have been conducted crossing the very Mannean territory. In fact, after Rusa's enterprise, the Urartian army could attack the Assyrian territory entering Mannea from Urartian territory, from Hubuškia, or from Andia; and, *vice versa*, after re-taking the fortresses, Sargon could attack Urartu entering Mannea from his own territory, from Hubuškia or even from Andia (only if militarily submitted because of its constant hostility to Assyria and especially to Sargon). On the contrary, the occupied fortresses could be a decisive obstacle to an enemy attack against Mannea, and consequently protected the territories of both rival kings in case of an enemy attack conducted using the Mannean territory as a passageway.

In any case, with the occupation of its boundary fortresses, the kingdom of Mannea, albeit formally independent, was to be reduced to a *virtual external province*; accordingly, it would have functioned as a weakened buffer area to be easily crossed by the troops of both empires in case of necessity. Both narrations seem to allude to this new political and military situation. In the Long Narration, Rusa is accused to have "reduced" the territory of the Mannean kingdom; in the Short

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<sup>12</sup> We may note that in Sargon's inscriptions no space is dedicated to comments upon the boundaries between Assyria and Mannea: perhaps these were to be considered absolutely secure and undisturbed, due to the stipulation of the forced alliance between Ullusunu and Sargon.

Narration, Sargon's reaction is celebrated according to the well-established literary *topos* of "conquest-and-annexation", although annexation is not mentioned. In both cases, and with opposite aims, Mannea is fundamentally presented as a country suffering territorial reduction and political subjection.

Both Rusa and Sargon had to look for efficient solutions in order to organize, manage, and protect their military occupation of the boundary fortresses. Most probably, both kings considered the possibility to produce a *territorial continuity* between their own countries and the Mannean fortresses bordering Hubuškia and Andia. In fact, territorial continuity would have been the most fitting solution for the maintenance and supply of their troops guarding the fortresses. However, both had certainly to consider that territorial continuity would have been unaffordable or extremely difficult because of the hard physical landscape; and this assumption is confirmed by the fact that in both narrations Mannea is depicted as maintaining its formal independence.

Thus, both kings must have assumed that the Mannean fortresses along the boundaries with Hubuškia and Andia were to be supplied and protected through a kind of "corridor" crossing the Mannean territory, vital for a secure flow of information, personnel, food, and all other necessities. Both were certainly aware that they could not aim at controlling such "corridor" directly, because this would have required the deployment in Mannean territory of a large number of troops, with huge expenses. Thus, both had to accept that the control and the maintenance of the boundary fortresses were to be granted through the political loyalty of the Mannean king and of the Mannean army, who were expected to support the prompt supply of any necessity. An unfeasible territorial continuity, thus, required a firm subjugation of the Mannean kingdom.

After their successful occupation of the fortresses, probably both Rusa and Sargon envisaged the very annexation of Mannea. As I have already stated, the Urartian and the Assyrian kings had previously annexed several states in the region, and their officials had acquired a good experience in the organization and administration of mountain territories. Sargon, especially, had already annexed and turned into provinces many parts of Media south and southeast of Mannea.

In my opinion, after conquering the boundary fortresses, both Rusa and Sargon discarded that possibility. Both were certainly aware that the annexation of Mannea was much more difficult and expensive than the creation and the maintenance of the "corridor" for supplying the boundary fortresses. Further, they also envisaged that much greater difficulties could descend by the fact that Mannea had direct boundaries with their own states, without any interposed buffer area. Consequently, turning Mannea into a province would have necessarily implied the creation of a new, direct boundary between their territories – a new *inter-imperial boundary*. Due to the long lasting conflict, such direct boundary would have required a military control much more regular, much tighter, at the end much more expensive than that of the boundaries of Mannea with Hubuškia or Andia. In other

words, in that historical moment the establishment of a *direct boundary* between the conflicting empires was considered negatively by both kings, and consequently discarded.

In conclusion, I would suggest that Rusa's enterprise and Sargon's counteraction were prudent *military and political experiments*. In the whole Near East, from the Euphrates in the West to the Urmiah Lake in the East, there was no direct boundary between Assyria and Urartu. Everywhere they were separated by independent states or by almost unpassable mountain chains – the buffer “belt” I have mentioned. Discarding in principle the formation of a new direct boundary in Mannea, the occupation of the Mannean boundary fortresses might represent a first, rather prudent attempt to grasp some degree of *direct control* of a part of the inter-imperial buffer area. According to the Assyrian narration, Sargon seems to have been successful; however, he did not proceed along this way even after his clamorous victory over Rusa in the following year 714 BCE, which put an end to the conflict. Sargon did not annex Mannea and did not establish a true territorial boundary with Urartu in Northwestern Iran, nor anywhere.

A direct boundary was to be established only 40 years later in Northeastern Syria by King Esarhaddon, who annexed the mountainous state of Šupria, which bordered with Urartu in the north. This annexation factually cancelled the western sector of the buffer “belt” of interposed independent states. In this period, however, the situation had dramatically changed. Urartu seems to have been decisively weaker at least in the international scenario, and there was no conflict with Assyria. Thus, Esarhaddon could easily recur to the traditional method of “annexation and provincialization”, without the prudence which hindered Rusa and Sargon in 715 BCE.

In 715 BCE, notwithstanding Sargon's success in the field, time was not ripe for a new, direct inter-imperial boundary between empires.

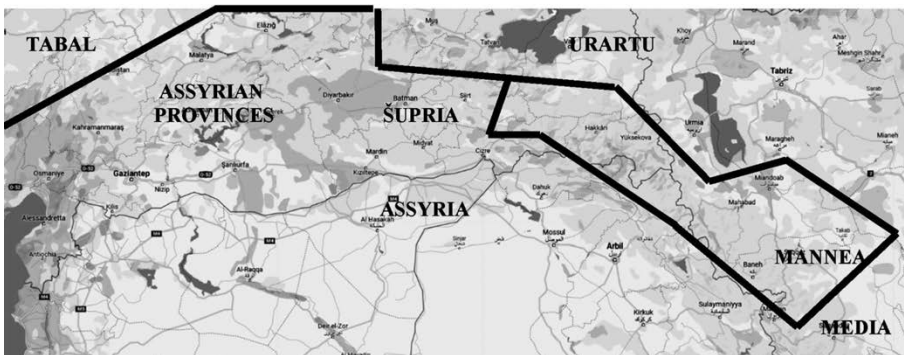


Fig. 6. The “belt of independent states” between Assyria and Urartu after Esarhaddon's conquest of Šupria.



### Abbreviations

- CAD: *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*. Chicago / Glückstadt, 1956–2010.
- RINAP 2: Frame, G., 2021: *The Royal Inscriptions of Sargon II, King of Assyria (721–705 BC)*. The Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period Vol. 2. University Park, Pennsylvania.
- SAA 3: Livingstone, A., 1989: *Court Poetry and Literary Miscellanea*. State Archives of Assyria 3. Helsinki.

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# Reporting from the Border

Evidence from Neo-Assyrian Letters

Raija Mattila

## Abstract

The Neo-Assyrian epistolary material offers rich evidence concerning the borders of Assyria. Reporting from the border areas was extensive and the authors of the letters report on guarding and protecting the border, on building and maintenance of fortresses, and on the movements on the other side of the border. The letters also reveal how the borders leaked despite the control. Trespassing, smuggling, and fugitives are among the topics of the correspondence.

The present paper discusses the evidence with the aim to understand borders from a practical rather than from an ideological point of view.

The Neo-Assyrian epistolary material is a particularly rich source concerning borders and border zones. This is especially true for the northern and north-eastern border where Assyria came in contact with another major power, Assyria's persisting rival Urartu. On the Assyrian side the heartland of Assyria was protected by a crescent of border provinces that were to a large extent governed by the highest officials of Assyria, the magnates. These border provinces ran counting from west to east: the province of the Commander-in-Chief,<sup>1</sup> of the Treasurer, of the Chief Cupbearer and of the Palace Herald. In Assyrian the titles of the office holders are: *turtānu*, *masennu*, *rab šāqê*, and *nāgir ekalli*. The provinces of the magnates date back to the 9<sup>th</sup> century BCE showing their long-term strategic importance.<sup>2</sup> Outside Assyria a series of buffer states constituted the next belt of protection towards the north and northeast.<sup>3</sup>

For the current study I found 33 letters that mention borders or border zones.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> After the establishment of the province of Kummuhu (class. Kommagene) in 708 BCE, there were two *turtānus*, the right and the left *turtānu*. This extended the area of the *turtānu* considerably to the west. The left *turtānu* was also called the *turtānu* of Kummuhu.

<sup>2</sup> For the location of the lands of the magnates and the Assyrian provinces mentioned below, see Radner, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> For four important buffer states: Šubria, Kumme, Ukku, and Mušāšir, see Radner, 2012.

<sup>4</sup> I collected the references first by searching the Akkadian glossaries of the State Archives of Assyria volumes containing letters (SAA 1, 5, 15, 17, 18, 19, 21) for the words I already knew from experience: *tahūmu*, *mišru*, and for the expression *pūt*. After that I checked the Assyrian-English-Assyrian dictionary (AEAD) for other words that have been translated as border / border zone / boundary. Of the words listed there I found one more word that is used in the SAA letter volumes, *qannu*. Finally, in order to double check, I searched through the English glossaries of the SAA-volumes for border and boundary.

Major part of the material, 27 letters, date to the reign of Sargon II, two to the reign of Tiglath-pileser III, three letters to the reign of Esarhaddon, one to the reign of Assurbanipal. Much of the royal correspondence deals with events connected to border zones of the Neo-Assyrian Empire but I have collected only those that actually refer to the border or border zone. In the following I will discuss some of the most interesting letters.<sup>5</sup>

The authors of the letters include the crown prince Sennacherib, several governors of the northern provinces: Ša-Aššur-dubbu, governor of Tušhan; Ašipâ, governor of Tidu; and Nashir-Bel, governor of Amedi; Aššur-dur-panija, governor of Til-Barsip/Kar-Šulmanu-ašared; Šamaš-bel-ušur, governor of Arzuhina; and Adad-issiya, governor of Mazamua;. The most prolific author is Aššur-rešuwa, a high ranking intelligence agent based in the buffer state of Kumme.<sup>6</sup> Bel-iqiša, prelate of the Esagil and Ezida temples wrote from Babylon. Most of the letters are addressed to the king of Assyria. Other recipients include the queen mother Naqia, and the Palace Herald.

### The words for border

The most usual expression for border/border zone in Neo-Assyrian is *tahūmu*. The word has a large semantic field, and it often refers to an area and can be translated as border area, border zone, area, or territory as in SAA 1 29, 31–32: the Urartian “entered the territory (*tahūmu*) of the Manneans”.

The word *tahūmu* can also stand for border in a more strict sense, as a dividing line between two areas. This is best demonstrated by a letter sent by the governor of Arzuhina to the king. The author discusses various landholdings of high officials in his province and states that the border between the estates of the *sartinnu* and the *sukkallu* runs along the king’s road: “The king, my lord, knows that the land of the *sukkallu*’s estate and the land of the *sartinnu*’s estate do not cross the Radanu river. The royal road that leads to the town of Azari is their border (*tahūmušunu*)”.<sup>7</sup>

In the letters written in Neo-Babylonian to the Assyrian king the word corresponding to *tahūmu* is *mišru*. “Perhaps the king, my lord, will say: ‘What is your land?’ The border lies in the Canal of the Delegates (*mišir ina muhhi harri*)”.<sup>8</sup>

The term *tahūmu ša šarri*, “king’s border,” is attested twice. Aššur-natkil writes to the Palace Herald because he has had an argument with somebody about the Ukkean, i.e the ruler of Ukku, and the king’s border, and asks: “Why do you remain inactive while the Urartian is capturing a fort on the kin[g]’s border? He said: if the Urartian either sends troops or comes (himself), I shall go and fight

<sup>5</sup> For the dating of the letters and their historical context, see the introductions of the SAA-volumes in question.

<sup>6</sup> For his position and correspondence, see PNA 1/I s.v. Aššur-rešuwa 2.

<sup>7</sup> SAA 19 89, 16–21.

<sup>8</sup> SAA 17 44, 9’–12.

against them”.<sup>9</sup> The term is also used by an unknown author from Tabal who writes asking for more troops: “[Th]is [*land*] is not mine. It belongs to the mighty king. Now we have clashed together on the king’s border.” (*ina muhhi tahūmi ša šarri*).<sup>10</sup> On the basis of these examples it seems that the term king’s border is used to differentiate the major royal border of an important power from local borders.

Other expressions that were used to refer to borders include the word *pūt*, “opposite”. It can be used for denoting the enemy’s position on the other side of the border or the frontline: “Three governors in Pulua and another three in Danibani are gathered with pack animals opposite us (*ina pūtūni*). We are keeping watch opposite them. All the people are inside fortified places; the oxen and the sheep are on this side of the river.”<sup>11</sup> This is also clear from the following example: “All the time I have encamped on the Mannean border, the son of the widow has been encamped opposite me on his side of the border” (*ipputtūja ... ina muhhi tahūmešu šakin*).<sup>12</sup>

*Pūt* can also refer to provinces that are situated on the opposite side: “The troops of Sunâ, the governor opposite Ukku, have also set out towards Mušašir.”<sup>13</sup> The example shows that *pūt* there refers to the permanent position of the governor’s province, and is used even when the troops of the province are on the move.

The word *qannu*, meaning “outside or near”, can also be used to refer to the border: “[fort]resses [situ]ated on the enemy border (*ša qanni nakari*, lit. outside/near the enemy) and abandoned. [If I] have revived one of them, is it a crime?”<sup>14</sup>

Although the above expressions can be translated as border, border zone, border area, it does not mean that the Assyrian border should be understood as a continuous line or area resembling modern borders.

## Reporting

The letters attest to the extensive reporting from the border areas. Reports were pooled together from several sources. This is demonstrated by crown prince Sennacherib’s letter to his father king Sargon:

“Nabû-le’i, the governor of Birtu has written to me: ‘I have written to the guards of the forts along the border concerning the news of the Urartian king and they (tell me this): His troops have been utterly defeated on his expedition against the Cimmerians.’ ... All the guards of the forts along the border (*ina muhhi tahūme*) have sent me similar reports.”<sup>15</sup>

<sup>9</sup> SAA 19 70, 15’–17’.

<sup>10</sup> SAA 1 250, 4’–7’.

<sup>11</sup> SAA 5 21, 11–19.

<sup>12</sup> SAA 5 217, r.6–10.

<sup>13</sup> SAA 5 88, 12–r.4.

<sup>14</sup> SAA 15 54, r.11–14.

<sup>15</sup> SAA 1 31, r.5–11 and 23–25.

Much of the reporting can be classified as military intelligence, and Tamás Deszö has studied the structure of the Assyrian military intelligence on the basis of letters from the reign of Sargon II.<sup>16</sup> Deszö recognizes six levels in the system: the king, the crown prince, the magnates, deputy of the Palace Herald, members of local government including governors, vassals and special intelligence officials, and spies. This allowed gathering information from several independent and parallel sources.<sup>17</sup>

A central figure on the local level was Aššur-rešuwa, an intelligence official reporting on Urartu from Kumme. Altogether 16 letters (SAA 5 88–103) can be ascribed to him. In one of his reports to the king, he wrote that the Mannean ruler has attacked cities in the Urartian district along the lakeshore, and that two Urartian governors have gone to the Mannean border (*tahūmu*) to guard it.<sup>18</sup> In another letter to the king, he reports: “3,000 *foot soldiers*, their prefects, and the commanders of the *kallāpu* troops of Setini, the governor opposite me, have set out for Mušašir and crossed the Black River.”<sup>19</sup>

Assyrian governors forwarded messages from the king across the border. Nashir-Bel, governor of Amedi, an Assyrian province situated directly on the border, sent his messenger across the border to the governor on the other side with a message from the king: “As to the news of the Urartians, the messenger of mine [wh]om I sent to the governor opposite me has come back; he spoke to him as the king, my lord, wrote me saying: ‘Why do you capture our forts, while we are at peace?’ He said: ‘What should I do? If I have trespassed on your territory or your forts, call me account.’”<sup>20</sup>

Messages could also be sent in written form, and even the enemy delivered letters to the border. Na’id-Marduk, governor of Sealand, assures the queen mother Naqia that he has not accepted the letters from the king of Elam but has returned them unopened and remained loyal to Assyria:

“By the gods of the king, my lord, the messenger of the king of Elam did bring letters but did not come into my presence. I did not see him and nobody opened his letter before he went back. On the second day of Ab, his messenger came to me on the border (*ana muhhi mišru*). I turned him back and sent my messenger to the palace.”<sup>21</sup>

### **Forts mark the border**

The importance of forts was recognized in the greeting formula of letters to the king: “The land of the king is well; the forts of the king are well. The king, my

<sup>16</sup> For the Neo-Assyrian military intelligence, see Dezsö, 2014.

<sup>17</sup> Deszö, 2014: 234 Table 2.

<sup>18</sup> SAA 5 84

<sup>19</sup> SAA 5 88, 4–9.

<sup>20</sup> SAA 5 2, 6–r.5.

<sup>21</sup> SAA 18 85, r.5’–13’.

lord, can be glad.”<sup>22</sup> Fortified borders were considered the mark of power: Bel-iqiša, prelate of the Esagil and Ezida temples in Babylon, wrote to the Assyrian king: “Should the king do this, the king could also say: ‘I have made the land great again and have built a powerful fortress on the border of the lands (*ina qa-an KUR.KUR*).’”<sup>23</sup>

Where forts were built,<sup>24</sup> they constituted the visible markers of the border. The letters discussed here make no reference to any other kind of border markers. Understandably, many borders followed natural boundaries like mountains or rivers, or man-made boundaries like roads or canals. From the royal inscriptions we know that stele could be set up to mark the border. The so-called Antakya stela was according to its inscription set up by Adad-nirari III, king of Assyria and Šamši-ilu, *turtānu*, between Zakur of the land of Hamat and Attar-šumki, son of Adramu.<sup>25</sup>

The word *kudurru*, border stone, is used only once in the discussed material in a very broken context in a letter written in Neo-Babylonian. The letter concerns restoring privileges of a town near Uruk, and thus refers to borders of property in Babylonia.<sup>26</sup> The word *kudurru* is not used in the Neo-Assyrian letters.<sup>27</sup> In Neo-Assyrian land and house purchase documents the property is defined by mentioning the neighbours, references to property markers are absent. In house purchases the plot is usually defined on four sides by listing the neighbouring properties and the street, in some cases the city wall or a road.<sup>28</sup> Limits of landed property is described by listing the neighbouring properties, roads, canals or wadis,<sup>29</sup> and in one case, an erected stone.<sup>30</sup>

### Fugitives and smugglers

Much of the material mentioning borders is connected with military matters, fortifications and movements of the enemy forces but the letters speaking of fugitives<sup>31</sup> and smugglers draw our attention to the administrative and economic aspects of the borders.

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<sup>22</sup> SAA 5 1, 4–6.

<sup>23</sup> Literally “next/outside the lands,” SAA 17 22, r.17–19.

<sup>24</sup> For the construction of fortresses, see Parker, 1997.

<sup>25</sup> RIMA 3 A.0.104.2.

<sup>26</sup> SAA 17 145, 11.

<sup>27</sup> In SAA 1 103, 10, r.6, *ku-du-bur-a-ni* that were suggested for marking off locust infested fields, should in fact be read *Zī.du-pur-a-ni*, juniper powder, not as an unusual form of the word *kudurru*, see Radner, 2003.

<sup>28</sup> The evidence has been collected and analyzed in Radner, 1997: 276–292.

<sup>29</sup> For a reconstruction of one village on the basis of private land purchase documents, see Fales, 1981.

<sup>30</sup> SAA 14 42, 11.

<sup>31</sup> For fugitives in Assyrian archival sources, see Hipp, 2015

The buffer state of Šubria had a long history of receiving fugitives from Assyria and granting them asylum since the reign of Adad-nirari II (911–891 BCE).<sup>32</sup> This may have been at least partly motivated by religious reasons, possibly due to the existence of a refuge sanctuary.<sup>33</sup> Assyrians are known to have chased fugitives in Šubrian territory in order to retrieve them while some fugitives were returned against ransom. This is known from a letter by Aššur-dur-panija, governor of Kar-Šulmanu-ašared/Til-Barsip,<sup>34</sup> where he reports to the king on the arrival of Šubrian emissaries. The Šubrians have come to Assyria and wish to bargain with a list of king’s men and people of the country who during past three years had run away from labour duty and military service. “Yet the *prime* men who now escape the king’s work and go there – he gives them fields, gardens and houses, settles them in his country, and there they stay.”<sup>35</sup> The letter shows that the Šubrians emissaries came to the negotiations with lists of the men that they were ready to hand over to the Assyrians against ransom. Other fugitives were not returned as the Šubrian ruler had settled them in his own country.

In one of his letters to the king, Aššur-rešuwa reports on smugglers. Six Kummeans, runaways from Kumme, buy Assyrian luxury goods in the Chief Cupbearer Province from local inhabitants who in turn have bought them in Calah and Nineveh. The Kummeans take the goods to a town called Aira and from there to Urartu. From Urartu they in turn bring luxury items to Kumme. Aššur-rešuwa recommends that the city lord (*bēl āli*) of Aira should arrest them and send them to the king to be questioned. The whole chain should be investigated: “The king, my lord, should ask them where they buy these valuables, where they sell them, who receives them from their hands, and who lets them pass.”<sup>36</sup>

This letter not only reveals the existence of smuggling – which in it self is of course not surprising especially in the mountainous regions – but also raises several interesting questions. The letter speaks specifically of luxury goods (*šahitāte*) possibly implying that the restrictions applied to luxury goods in particular and it was illegal to transport them over the border.<sup>37</sup> The letters SAA 5 101–103 describe the same smugglers but the texts are unfortunately very fragmentary. SAA 5 101 mentions bronze and leather objects, including bronze quivers. The offenders should be arrested by the local city lord, who should then hand them over to the Assyrian king. Finally, Aššur-rešuwa’s question “who lets them pass” – the verb used is *ebāru*, “to cross,”<sup>38</sup> in the causative stem – implies that some sort of

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<sup>32</sup> Deszö, 2006: 35.

<sup>33</sup> Deszö, 2006: 37.

<sup>34</sup> For this title, see Radner, 2006.

<sup>35</sup> SAA 5 52.

<sup>36</sup> SAA 5 100, r.9–13.

<sup>37</sup> For restrictions concerning timber and horses, see Lanfranchi’s introduction to SAA 5 xxiv–xxv.

<sup>38</sup> The verb is used when speaking of crossing the river in SAA 5 88, 4–9.



control should have been in place but the smugglers were allowed to pass.

Foreign trade was controlled by the state and operated by royal trade agents, *tamkārus*.<sup>39</sup> Trade posts, *kārus*,<sup>40</sup> were entrance points for foreign merchandise and for tribute brought to Assyria, and they formed the crescent of economic borders of the Assyrian empire.

### Abbreviations

AEAD: Parpola, S. *et al.*, 2007: *Assyrian-English-Assyrian Dictionary*.

PNA: Radner, K. / Baker, H.D., 1998–: *The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire*.

RIMA 3: Grayson, K.A., 1996: *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC, II (858–745 BC)*. Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia 3.

SAA 1: Parpola, S., 1987: *The Correspondence of Sargon II. Part I. Letters from Assyria and the West*. State Archives of Assyria 1.

SAA 5: Lanfranchi, G.B. / Parpola, S., 1990: *The Correspondence of Sargon II. Part II. Letters from Northern and Northeastern Provinces*. State Archives of Assyria 5.

SAA 14: Mattila, R., 2002: *Legal Transactions of the Royal Court of Nineveh, Part II. Assurbanipal through Sin-šarru-iškun*. State Archives of Assyria 14.

SAA 15: Fuchs, A. / Parpola, S., 2001: *The Correspondence of Sargon II. Part III. Letters from Babylonia and the Eastern Provinces*. State Archives of Assyria 15.

SAA 17: Dietrich, M., 2003: *The Babylonian Correspondence of Sargon and Sennacherib*. State Archives of Assyria 17.

SAA 18: Reynolds, F., 2003: *The Babylonian Correspondence of Esarhaddon*. State Archives of Assyria 18.

SAA 19: Luukko, M., 2012: *The Correspondence of Tiglath-pileser III and Sargon II from Calah/Nimrud*. State Archives of Assyria 19.

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<sup>39</sup> For Assyrian trade policy, see Radner, 2004. For *tamkāru*, the royal trade agent, see Radner, 1999: 101–109.

<sup>40</sup> For *kārus*, see Yamada, 2005.

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# Identities in the Making

Cultural Frontiers in Central Anatolia in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Millennium BCE

Alvise Matessi

## Abstract

The Hittite Laws draw a separation of the Hittite domain into seemingly discrete socio-geographical entities: Hatti, Luwiya, and Pala. This distinction has inspired a long-lasting debate among Hittitologists, chiefly oriented to the definition of different ethno-linguistic spheres in Anatolia. The present paper moves on from this debate and takes the Hatti-Luwiya-Pala opposition to signify a permeable divide between Hatti and other spheres of the early Hittite administration, based on a core-periphery organisation. I propose that this divide did not emerge as an abstract feature of the Hittite administrative map, but was determined by a cultural frontier having its traceable roots in the Old Assyrian period of the early 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BCE, when the term Hatti (attested in the form Hattum) already indicated a geographic entity clearly distinct from the rest of Anatolia. In conclusion, I propose that both Hatti and Luwiya originally derived from ethno-linguistic designations for the “Hattian” and the “Luwian” lands respectively, but these meanings were already altered by the time the Hittite kingdom emerged.<sup>1</sup>

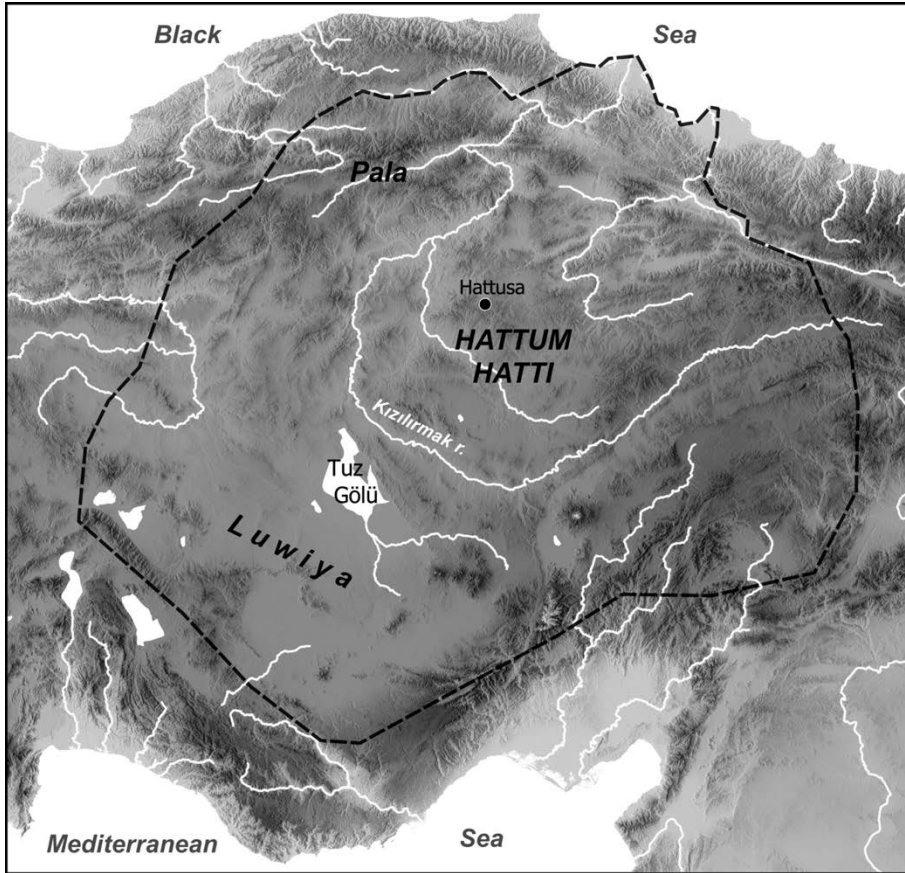
## 1. Introduction

A recurrent tendency in attempts to reconstruct the cultural map of Central Anatolia during the period of Hittite domination (ca. 1650–1200 BCE) has been to look for a precise correlation between attested territorial entities and language areas, in turn identified with the homeland of different ethnic milieus. Within this perspective, the formation of the Hittite kingdom has been often described as the political domination of one Indo-European group, identified with Hittite speakers, over native non-Indo-European populations speaking Hattian.<sup>2</sup> The Hittites would have moved from the land of Neša/Kaneš (near modern Kayseri), after which they named their own vernacular, *nešili* or *nešumnili*, while Hattians, speaking *hattili*, were at home in the “land of Hatti,” lying within the Kızılırmak River bend.

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<sup>1</sup> In this article, I revisit and further expand arguments I have elaborated in Chapters IV (“Society, culture and early language contact in Middle Bronze Age Anatolia”) and V (“History, society and culture in Anatolia and neighboring regions during the Hittite period”) of Giusfredi, Matessi, and Pisaniello, in press. This paper is a result of the project PALaC, that has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme (Grant Agreement n° 757299).

<sup>2</sup> Among the latest works employing this model, see Singer, 2007; McMahon, 2010.



Map of Central Anatolia, with the maximum extent of the Old Hittite Kingdom (dashed line) and the main geographical entities treated in this paper.

Further clues for a match between geo-linguistic and socio-political boundaries within the Hittite domain are considered to derive from some passages of a collection of legal cases called the “Hittite Laws” (CTH 291), which apparently outline a distinction between the lands of Hatti, Luwiya, and Pala: Luwiya would be the homeland of Luwians, speaking *luwili*, and Pala the homeland of Palaecans, speaking *palaumnili*. In most current interpretations, this broad subdivision in linguistic areas also defines an ethno-cultural map of Hittite Central Anatolia, that in turn overlapped with social, political, and/or administrative boundaries.

While not denying the basic geo-linguistic scenario, in this paper I will challenge its direct association with the Hittite political geography. As I will show, the divide between Hatti, Luwiya, and Pala does not bear witness to ethno-linguistic boundaries informing Hittite society nor to a political repartition of the Hittite kingdom. Rather, it is the political/administrative readaptation of a per-

meable cultural frontier between Hatti and the rest of Central Anatolia, shedding traceable roots in the early 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BCE.

## 2. Core-periphery interactions in the Old Hittite period (ca. 1650–1400 BCE)

The Hittite state, centred at Hattuša in the Kızılırmak basin, came to incorporate large parts of Central Anatolia at a very early stage of its history.<sup>3</sup> The first well-documented Hittite king, Hattušili I, could claim conquests in Upper Mesopotamia and Syria after consolidating his power in territories closer to home. The Old Hittite “Palace chronicles” (CTH 8), one of the earliest products of Hittite literature, narrate several anecdotes involving Hittite officers based in cities situated all around the Kızılırmak basin.<sup>4</sup> Notwithstanding this early expansion, extensive portions of Central Anatolia were still considered somehow foreign to Hittite political identities until quite an advanced stage of Hittite history.

The historical prologue of a famous edict issued by King Telipinu (CTH 19), ruling in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century BCE, starts by narrating the deeds of the founder of the Hittite dynasty, Labarna, who lived almost two centuries before, in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century BCE. Although dealing with past events, this passage can be read as a very instructive source about the worldviews that Telipinu still retained in the 16<sup>th</sup> century BCE, a phase when Hittite sovereignty in Central Anatolia was well consolidated in many respects.<sup>5</sup> The text reads as follows (my emphasis in italics):

*The land was small but wherever he (i.e. Labarna) went on campaign, he held the enemy country subdued by (his) might. He kept devastating countries, he disempowered countries, he made them the boundaries of the Sea. When he came back from campaign, however, each (of) his sons went somewhere to a (conquered) country: the cities of Hupišna, Tuwanuwa, Nenašša, Landa, Zallara, Purušhanda and Lušna. These countries they each governed and the great cities made progress.*<sup>6</sup> (Edict of Telipinu – CTH 19, I 5–12)

The image of the Sea as a symbolic ultimate frontier, an idea certainly borrowed from Mesopotamian cosmological perceptions, serves to embed Labarna’s actions in a sort of imperial, almost universalistic dimension, further emphasised by the

<sup>3</sup> On Hittite history in general, see Bryce, 2005 and Klengel, 1999.

<sup>4</sup> See the textual edition by Dardano, 1997. For a historical interpretation of the early Hittite expansion based on a cultic list, see Forlanini, 2007.

<sup>5</sup> The 16<sup>th</sup> century BCE is now well understood as a period of major development and expansion of Hittite economic infrastructures in Anatolia: see Schachner, 2009. For the reading of the prologue of the Edict of Telipinu as a historical source for Telipinu’s own times, see Liverani, 1977.

<sup>6</sup> Reference edition: Hoffmann, 1984. English translation mostly based on van den Hout, 2003.

contrast with the “small” extent of the land before the expansion. The text provides a list of countries subdued by Labarna and, eventually, handed to his sons. Tuwanuwa, likely continued as Tuwana in Iron Age inscriptions and Tyana in Hellenistic and Roman times, is agreed to correspond to the site of Kemerhisar, in the modern Niğde province. Hupišna, forming with Tuwanuwa a recurrent cluster in Hittite texts, is generally localised in the environs of modern Ereğli. Nenašša is known from other texts to have lain close to the southern or southwestern shores of the Kızılırmak River.<sup>7</sup> Puruṣhanda worked as an important *kārum* (“trade colony”) in the Old Assyrian commercial network in Anatolia, and is mentioned in later Hittite texts as belonging to the Lower Land, a region located between the Tuz Gölü Lake and the Taurus mountains.<sup>8</sup> Zallara should be probably sought around the Taurus piedmont, not far from the Lower Land, as suggested by the Annals of Hattušili III (CTH 82).<sup>9</sup> Hittite texts offer fewer clear clues about the geography of Landa and Lušna, but scholars agree on their localisation south of the Tuz Gölü.<sup>10</sup>

There is a general agreement, therefore, that all the cities mentioned in the Edict of Telipinu as conquered by Labarna lay in the plateau south and southwest of the Kızılırmak basin. It is also important to note that Labarna’s conquests are among the few deeds whose geographical scope is explicitly detailed in the long historical prologue of Telipinu’s edict. Significantly, the only other similar cases are Telipinu’s own campaigns (CTH 19, II 16–22) and Muršili I’s raids on Aleppo and Babylon (I 28–31). Moreover, the positive model of Labarna’s expansion in the southern plateau is contrasted with the belt of external enemies unsuccessfully faced by Telipinu’s predecessor, Ammuna (II 1–4). These circumstances suggest that, as of the late 16<sup>th</sup> century BCE, Telipinu still imagined the southern plateau as a foreign territory or as a land transcending the natural limits of Hittite sovereignty. Successful campaigns against this region were an event worth commemorating on a par with raids aiming for more distant places such as Aleppo and Babylon. We may therefore imagine that some kind of frontier was perceived between Labarna’s power base and the southern plateau.

The existence of such frontier in Telipinu’s worldview is confirmed in some of the normative passages of his Edict that outline an administrative reorganisa-

<sup>7</sup> Most recently, Kryzseń, 2016: 371–376, with reference to previous literature.

<sup>8</sup> The exact position of Puruṣhanda has been the object of some disagreement in the last decade, after Barjamovic, 2011: 357–378 contested its traditional identification with the site Acemhöyük in the Aksaray region, to propose a more westerly localisation, in the current area of Afyonkarahisar. Forlanini, initially more conservative (2008; 2012), has recently proposed an alternative hypothesis, tentatively identifying the ancient toponym with the newly discovered site of Türkmen Karahöyük, in the Konya plain (Forlanini, 2022).

<sup>9</sup> Gurney, 1997.

<sup>10</sup> Most recently, Forlanini, 2017: 243–244.

tion of the revenue system based on a network of storehouses (É<sup>NA4</sup>KIŠIB, lit. “house of the seal”) situated in various cities, sorted in two different lists (CTH 19, §§37–38: III 17–42). As argued by Singer (1984: 103–104), the main politico-geographic criterion informing these lists is a separation between Hatti and a fuzzy constellation of peripheral districts. The preserved portions of the lists in fact record only places located beyond the Kızılırmak river bend while well-known centres of the Hittite core region, such as Ankuwa, Katapa, or Hattena, are not included.

In the light of this separation between Hatti and the rest of Central Anatolia, we can perhaps better understand the passages that oppose Hatti to the lands of Luwiya and Pala in the Old Hittite version of the Hittite Laws (CTH 291, §§5, 19–21 and 23).<sup>11</sup> According to most scholars this opposition bears testimony to a sort of tripartition of Anatolia in the Hittite “mental map”, in turn depending on ethnolinguistic boundaries. Yakubovich, on the other hand, interpreted the opposition as the witness of a social boundary, based on the ethno-linguistic affiliation of the subjects.<sup>12</sup> Challenging both views, I have proposed another solution. In the purview of a purely ethno-linguistic distinction, be it geopolitical or social, the definition of Hatti would remain problematic. We know, in fact, that during the Hittite Old Kingdom this region was inhabited by both Hittites and Hattians:<sup>13</sup> which of the two components did the term Hatti refer to in the Laws? Yakubovich, initially opting for the Hittites (2010: 241), lately subscribed a more cautious view, considering Hatti in the Laws to be a reflection of the symbiosis between Hittite and Hattian milieus (2022: 8). In the latter understanding, which seems more appropriate, Hatti had more of a geographic rather than an ethnic meaning. If so, there is virtually no obstacle to extend this interpretation to the cases of Luwiya and Pala. However, considering that the Hittite Laws treat Luwiya and Pala as peers to one another, they can be understood together, as *partes pro toto* for the periphery of the Old Hittite domain, whereas the core was represented by Hatti.<sup>14</sup>

The most telling hint that the divide between Hatti and the rest of the Hittite kingdom as implied in the Laws was reflecting a spatial pattern of core-periphery interactions rather than a social or geographical boundary between different ethnic and/or linguistic components can be inferred from §§22–23. These provisions rank rewards for the restitution of fugitive slaves based on the distance of places of apprehension from an unnamed vantage point, arguably corresponding to

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<sup>11</sup> Hoffner, 1997: 19, 30–32.

<sup>12</sup> “The ‘men of Hatti’ and ‘men of Luwiya’ were contrasted as ethnic groups whose social status differed rather than inhabitants of distinct geographic areas.” Yakubovich, 2010: 240.

<sup>13</sup> Goedegebuure, 2008. For the blend between Hittite and Hattian cults, see Klinger, 1996: 16–24.

<sup>14</sup> Matessi, 2016: 138–139.

Hatti.<sup>15</sup> From this classification we understand that Luwiya was a vague land lying somewhere between the foreign territory and the “far side” (*edi*) of the river, presumably corresponding to the Kızılırmak (Hitt. *Marraššantiya*). The river can thus be interpreted as a threshold between the inner mainland, the “near side” (*ket*), that is the land of Hatti, and the peripheries of the Hittite domain, to which Luwiya belonged.<sup>16</sup>

It should be noted that this divide was not a neat boundary: Luwiya was not directly juxtaposed to the river and its near side, but located further away, beyond a liminal “far side”. This situation stands in contrast, for example, with later Hittite treaties where rivers are intended as fixed boundary markers between two or more polities.<sup>17</sup> I would thus suggest that the divide between Luwiya and Hatti was not conceived as a clear-cut political/administrative demarcation, but mapped onto a fuzzier frontier, of arguable cultural character. More arguments to this point will appear clear after dealing with the genesis of the term Hatti as a geographical concept.

### 3. The genesis of Hatti as a geographical concept

Due to its etymological connection with the Hittite designation for the Luwian language, *luwili*, the toponym Luwiya, plays a crucial role in attempts to define the main Luwian speaking area and has therefore attracted considerable scholarly attention.<sup>18</sup> However, the interpretation of Luwiya cannot be disentangled from an understanding of the meaning(s) that the term Hatti assumed through time. In light of recent developments in scholarship, this issue deserves some consideration that, albeit not exhaustive, can provide relevant clues to the questions examined in the preceding section.

Scholars now generally agree that in Hittite texts the term Hatti was just the Akkadian designation of the toponym Hattuša.<sup>19</sup> Either Hatti or Hattuša could be used interchangeably, to refer both to the city and the land of Hattuša. However, although sharing the same meaning in Hittite usage, Hatti and Hattuša were two distinct words with diverging histories. On one hand, Hattuša is the Hittite thematisation in *-a* of the Hattian toponym *Ḫattuš*, consistently preserved in this form in Hattian texts stored in Hittite archives.<sup>20</sup> Significantly, *Ḫattuš* is also the only

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<sup>15</sup> See Hoffner 1997:

<sup>16</sup> Following the same logic, Pala would also belong to the outer sphere as it is treated as a peer of Luwiya in §5.

<sup>17</sup> Gerçek, 2017: 131.

<sup>18</sup> E.g. Yakubovich, 2010: 239–248; Mouton / Yakubovich 2021.

<sup>19</sup> The form *ḪATTI* would have been the genitive of an Akkadian word, whose nominative *\*ḪATTU* and accusative *\*ḪATTA* are virtually never attested. See the systematic synthesis by Weeden, 2011: 244–250, with reference to previous literature.

<sup>20</sup> For a recent evaluation of the attestations of Hatti and *Ḫattuš(a)* in the Hittite archives, see Kryszewski 2017.



form of the city name known in the records of the Kārum period (ca. 1950–1750 BCE), documenting the Old Assyrian commercial network in Anatolia, based in Kaneš/Neša (modern Kültepe, in the Kayseri province).<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, the Akkadian word Hatti would be a later development of the Old Assyrian place-name Hat(tum), also involved in the Old Assyrian network. Therefore, the toponyms Hatti and Hattuša of the Hittite records had two distinct Old Assyrian predecessors in Hattum and Hattuš. The question, however, remains as to whether the two terms were synonymous in the Old Assyrian corpus as they were in Hittite texts. As it turns out, this question is crucial for understanding geographic and geo-linguistic developments in the Hittite core region.

To be sure, the Hattian-derived Old Assyrian toponym Hattuš also corresponds to Hattuša in geographic terms, because it indicated the city and *kārum* (Akkadian for “commercial colony”) occupying the same site of the later capital of the Hittite kingdom and empire, modern Boğazköy. During the Kārum period, Hattuš was one among several neighbouring city-states competing with one another, including among others Šinahuttum (Hittite Šanahuitta), Tawiniya, and Ankuwa (Hittite Ankuwa). By contrast, the meaning of Hattum is more elusive.<sup>22</sup> Also in this case, as well as being etymologically related, Hattum and the “land of Hatti” seem to have indicated the same approximate region.<sup>23</sup> The Old Assyrian evidence suggests that Hattum was only a geographic region (*mātum*), because no settlement (*ālum*) or a *kārum* of Hattum is known so far. Hattum would thus represent a significant exception in the Old Assyrian corpus. In fact, Old Assyrian merchants operating in Anatolia usually named the lands involved in their network after a city hosting the local ruler and/or a commercial station.

Influenced by the later Hittite evidence, scholars have often been tempted to search for specific political relationships between Hattum and Hattuš. In fact, the two toponyms have been interpreted as either a synonymic pair,<sup>24</sup> akin to Hattuša and Hatti in the Hittite period, or a dichotomy whereby Hattum indicated the

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<sup>21</sup> The only known pre-Hittite attestation of the form in *-a* (Hattuša) occurs at Mari, in a text dated to the reign of Zimri-Lim, ca. 1780–1760 BCE. See Charpin, 2008: 105, with fn. 44.

<sup>22</sup> For a recent extensive treatment, upon which the following is based, see Barjamovic, 2011: 154–164.

<sup>23</sup> The Old Assyrian evidence would place Hattum to the north of Kaneš, and exclude Kaneš, Wahšušana, Wašhaniya, and Purušhattum (Hitt. Purušhanda) from its southern and western limits. To the east, Hattum was certainly distinct from Luhuzattiya, Hurama, Tegarama, and the other places ranging east of Kaneš. The eastern and northern limits of Hattum are more elusive and therefore subject to differing scholarly interpretations. Discussing the various geographical hypotheses, Barjamovic (2011: 159) maintains that Hattum overlapped to a large extent with later Hatti, but also included areas to the east of the Kızılırmak.

<sup>24</sup> Lewy, 1950.

country and Hattuš its capital city.<sup>25</sup>

I would advise against retrojecting a hegemonic role that Hattuš(a) did not attain before the Hittite period. In fact, the few available references suggest that Hattuš was not a particularly prominent political actor during the Old Assyrian period, at least in the early phase (Kārum II; ca. 1950–1836 BCE) which is also the only phase in which Hattum is attested.<sup>26</sup> For this reason, I subscribe to recent reassessments that advocate an interpretation of Hattuš and Hattum as two independent geographic terms. If any correlation existed between the two places, one would also expect a close overlap between respective commercial interactions attested in Old Assyrian records. However, the systematic analysis of textual occurrences carried out by Barjamovic (2011: 155–156; 292–293) shows that there was no such overlap. For example, Šinahuttum features as the most prominent partner of Hattuš, but it is never attested in relation to Hattum. Conversely, connections with such major centres as Wahšušana, Hurama etc., figure prominently in relation to Hattum but do not appear at all among the commercial partners of Hattuš.

Overall, the name Hattum does not seem to have had any specific geopolitical meaning, but likely indicated a vague geographic region that comprised multiple political realities, including Hattuš as well as other city-states.<sup>27</sup> Yet Hattum also had a clearly distinct place in Old Assyrian representations of Anatolia. This is best illustrated by the verdict kt 87/k 275 that prohibited the sale of a female slave in (the land of) Kaneš, but not in either Hattum or the “Land”.<sup>28</sup> This document would thus make Hattum stand out, not only from Kaneš, the main hub of the Old Assyrian network, but also from “the Land” in general, meaning here “the rest of Anatolia”.<sup>29</sup>

The above discussion can thus be summarised as follows:

- 1) Hattum is the only Anatolian toponym in the Old Assyrian corpus indicating a land but not a corresponding city.
- 2) Hattum was not a territorial dependency of Hattuš, nor a term synonymous with it.

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<sup>25</sup> Dercksen, 2001, on noting the complementarity between Hattum, never attested as a “city” and Hattuš, which conversely is never attested as a “land”. Advocating a different perspective now generally discredited, Landsberger (1950a–b) proposed that Hattuš was only the city and Hattum indicated a larger regional unit, virtually corresponding to Anatolia as a whole.

<sup>26</sup> Barjamovic, 2011: 294–295.

<sup>27</sup> Barjamovic, 2011: 158–159.

<sup>28</sup> *šu-ma a-na Ḫa-tim lu a-na ma-tim am-tám ri-des-e i-na Kà-ni-iš ù ma-at Kà-ni-iš lá ta-da-an-ši* (“take the slave-girl to either Hattum or the Land, but do not sell her in Kaneš or in the land of Kaneš”). Hecker, 1997: 165–167; Veenhof, 2008: 18.

<sup>29</sup> Barjamovic, 2011: 161–162. *Contra* Landsberger 1950a–b: see footnote above.

- 3) Hattum was not a politically coherent territory, but nonetheless indicated a specific geographic region, distinct from the rest of Anatolia and likely corresponding to the Kızılırmak area.

These points raise a further question: if not a political territory on its own, what was the regional specificity of Hattum that made it stand out in the Old Assyrian “mental map” of Anatolia? This question induces us to consider the possible origins of the name Hattum/Hatti. A first hypothesis would suggest some connection with the semantic field of “silver”, due to the rebus spelling <sup>URU</sup>KÛ.BABBAR-*TI* by which the toponym Hatti is often rendered in Hittite texts. It has been proposed that the logogram KÛ.BABBAR, “silver”, reflected a putative Hattian stem with this meaning, which, however, is never attested.<sup>30</sup> The spelling <sup>URU</sup>KÛ.BABBAR-*TI* appears quite late, in the 14<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> century BCE.<sup>31</sup> At this point in time, Hattian as a spoken language was waning and with it any reliable memory of the etymology of the term Hatti. For the moment, therefore, the semantic connection Hattum/Hatti = “silver” should be left aside as a meaningful clue for explaining the origin of the term.

Another possibility is that the Old Assyrian term Hattum preserved the memory of a prehistoric regional polity that was already dissolved by the beginning of the Kārum period. If so, one might be tempted to see traces of such polity in the richly famous necropoleis of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BCE found at Alaca Höyük and numerous other locales of the Kızılırmak basin.<sup>32</sup> However, the settlements to which these wealthy burials were attached are quite modest and hardly the vestiges of regional or even local forms of early statehood.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, despite their oft-repeated epithet “royal”, the tombs of Alaca Höyük *vel sim.* are now generally interpreted as expressions of the prestige of local elites attached to individual centres cooperating and competing with each other.<sup>34</sup>

Generally speaking, the political situation we may picture for Central Anatolia in the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BCE was probably not dissimilar from the one documented by the Old Assyrian records: a fragmented landscape of conflicting polities based on nucleated settlements. The archaeological record of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BCE in fact bears no definite trace of regionally extensive political systems. It is true that a certain degree of cultural convergence coupled with the emergence complex urban societies reached an apex towards the late 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BCE.<sup>35</sup> Significantly, however, the Kızılırmak area seems to have played a marginal role in these developments. The region, for example, had only a minor and late involvement in

<sup>30</sup> Kammenhuber, 1969: 124.

<sup>31</sup> Weeden, 2011: 244; Kryzseń, 2017: 215, Table 3; Klinger, 1996: 88.

<sup>32</sup> For a recent synthetic evaluation of this evidence in the broader Anatolian context, see Bachhuber, 2015: 83–106.

<sup>33</sup> Düring, 2010: 292.

<sup>34</sup> Bachhuber, 2015: 97–106.

<sup>35</sup> Düring, 2010: 297–299; Ozdoğan, 2014: 1533–1540.

the diffusion of potter's wheel technology that, starting from the 25<sup>th</sup> century BCE, was spreading from south-east to north-west Anatolia.<sup>36</sup> On this basis, I would exclude the hypothesis of a prehistoric “kingdom of Hattum”.

The just-noted singularity of the Kızılırmak basin against the cultural makeup of late 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BCE Anatolia may incidentally provide clues for a more attractive possibility: that the toponym Hattum preserved a trace of a distinct cultural region. In support of this idea, there are hints that Hattum derived from an Anatolian ethnonym, later employed by the Old Assyrian merchants as a geographic denomination. It is agreed that the word Hattum/Hatti shares a root with the Hittite adverbial designation for the Hattian language, *ḫattili*, which could thus be interpreted as “in the language of Hatti”. Although not denying this etymological link, Klinger (1996: 90–91) raises the possibility that the word *ḫattili* was created at a late stage of Hittite history, as its earliest attestations do not predate the Hittite Empire period (14<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> century BCE). However, as Klinger admits, by this time Hattian was an ailing spoken language and certainly no longer a dominant vernacular in Hatti. If so, how could Hatti represent the root for a word designating a language no longer at home therein? With Weeden (2011: 246), one may also wonder “what other designation for ‘in Hattian’ might one have used in Hittite of the time before *ḫattili* is attested.” It is far more logical that the term *ḫattili*, even though appearing in late texts, was created in a period when Hattian was indeed clearly recognisable as a major component of the linguistic landscape of Hatti. In this light, I see no obstacle in considering the derivation of both Hattum/Hatti and *ḫattili* from an original ethnonym for “the Hattian people”, which came into use to designate the region inhabited by Hattians.<sup>37</sup> When borrowed by the Old Assyrian merchants, the term Hattum had probably already lost its ethnic connotation, maintaining only its geographic meaning.<sup>38</sup>

#### 4. Conclusion

The evidence examined in this article suggests that the region known as Hattum/Hatti in 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BCE sources, broadly corresponding to the Kızılırmak basin, already formed a distinct regional entity before its political unification

<sup>36</sup> Türkteki, 2014; Massa, 2016: 14–156.

<sup>37</sup> Kryszeń (2017: 219) argues that both Hattum/Hatti and *ḫattili* derived from a stem *\*hat(t)-*, shared by other toponyms of supposed Hattian origin, such as Hattuš and Hatten.

<sup>38</sup> As mentioned above, Hittite sources point to a strong symbiosis between Hittites and Hattians in linguistic and, if possible, broader cultural terms which likely predated by several centuries the formation of the Hittite tablets archives. Toponymic evidence further corroborates this picture. For example, the toponym Šuppiluliya, already attested in the Old Assyrian records, has an obvious Hittite etymology and designated a town situated not far from Hattuš (Barjamovic, 2011: 283–284). Am/nkuwa, also occurring in Old Assyrian sources, is the Hittite version of the Hattian toponym Hanikka, attached to a town located within the Kızılırmak bend and probably belonging to Hattum/Hatti (Kryszeń, 2016: 288–293).

under the Hittites. The basis for such distinction was probably cultural, and the Old Assyrian term *Hattum* likely derived from an ethnonym identifying the “land of the Hattians”. The term *Hattum*, and its usage in Old Assyrian sources, may thus reflect the existence of a sort of cultural frontier between the Kızılırmak basin and the rest of Anatolia, perhaps inherited from the cultural landscape of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BCE.

Between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE, the Kızılırmak basin became the land of Hatti/Hattuša, and formed the political core of the Hittite kingdom that hege-  
monised the rest of Central Anatolia. From this development emerged an administrative organisation based on a core-periphery dialectic, reflected in the Hittite Laws in the opposition between Hatti and the rest of Central Anatolia, indicated by the geographic terms *Luwiya* and *Pala*.

Yet, this core-periphery dichotomy was not just an abstract repartition of the Hittite domain but an adaptation to the new political scenario of the old cultural frontier between *Hattum* and the surrounding regions. This situation is especially evident in the case of *Luwiya*, whose intended “boundary” with Hatti was indeed a fuzzy frontier region including the river (Kızılırmak) and its shores. *Luwiya* likely had a vaguer meaning than *Pala*. In fact, while *Pala* and its related language (*palaumnili*) had a geographical reference in a well attested city, *i.e.* *Pala*, and its district, located in the western Pontus,<sup>39</sup> *Luwiya* is never attested outside the Laws. The use of *Luwiya* to indicate a region and its clear etymological relationship with the adverb *luwili*, “in Luwian”, would suggest developments typologically parallel to those inferred for *Hattum*: the term originated as a genuine ethno-geographical designation for the “Luwian lands” and was then generalised to become a geographic definition, not necessarily imbued with ethnic connotations.

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<sup>39</sup> Corti 2017: 232–234.

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# Boundary Definition in the Aramean Socio-political Context

Simonetta Ponchia

Pass ye unto Calneh, and see, and from thence go ye to Hamath the great;  
then go down to Gath of the Philistines; are they better than these kingdoms?  
Or is their border greater than your border?  
(Amos 6:2)

## Abstract

In the Aramean socio-political milieu identity is perceived and defined as shared kinship rather than, or besides political affiliation. This has consequences on the definition of boundaries, *i.e.* areas of competence and control of tribes and states. The history of Aramean kingdoms and confederations shows varying developments in relation to the weight of pastoralist components in their organization, as well as the outcome of interstate conflicts and alliances. The paper examines the cases in which documents explicitly refer to boundary definitions, such as in particular the stelae of Antakya and Sefire. It attempts to highlight different patterns and developments deriving from contacts and conflicts between the major powers of the time and their hegemonic ambitions.

After the great Late Bronze Age kingdoms lost their hegemonic power, the Arameans emerged among the protagonists of a new system of relations and as the engine of a new development, based on kinship organizations, more freely established relationships between tribal groups and between them and urban societies, non-palatial circuits of resource exploitation, together with powerful means of communication: Aramaic and alphabetic writing that progressively became widely established. There was a complex and variously organized world, that on historical, cultural and political grounds had various links with Hurrian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Luwian and other contexts. In spite of the plurality of tribes and polities, a widespread network substituted the palace-based network of the LBA with new relations, progressively occupying previously state controlled infrastructures.<sup>1</sup> It was probably a long process that had already begun before the end of that period. This development in due time favored new state formation, with the emergence of polities and kingdoms that occupied key positions. The process of Aramaization can be viewed as a general restructuring of Near Eastern boundaries, both culturally and geo-politically and seemingly also conceptually, due not

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<sup>1</sup> Schniedewind, 2002: 276; for a general economic perspective see Moreno García, 2016 with previous bibliography.

only to the mobility that characterized the pastoralist components of Aramean organizations, but also to changing alliances between polities and tribes. Over time, the designation Aram and Aramean acquired identitarian, contrastive and connoted values.<sup>2</sup> These terms however seemingly encompassed different cases, ranging from the “nomad” or “borderless” entities of the Suteans and Ahlamû, to the various territorial states whose boundaries formed the object of interstate relationships.

These various relations, therefore, represent an appropriate case for considering the questions recently posed, especially in archaeological research of “how territorial control interfaces with other modalities of social power, including networks”,<sup>3</sup> and “the ways in which territorial practices and rhetoric might overlap with exchange networks, trade diasporas, and other forms of long-distance interaction.”<sup>4</sup>

On the other hand, both the conceptualization and the actual and practical definition of boundaries went through a further dynamic of change, which in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> cent. BCE was affected by the imperial expansion, especially in the Syro-Levantine area.

### **The stela of Antakya and territorial borders**

An exemplary document of this phase is the boundary definition imposed or guaranteed by the Assyrians, which was engraved on a stela found in the vicinity of Antakya and can be dated to the timespan between 796 BCE and the last years of Adad-nirari III’s reign (810–783 BCE), more probably after 787/86 BCE.<sup>5</sup> It establishes the borders between the Aramean kingdoms of Hamath, with king Zakkur, and Arpad, with ‘Attarsumki, and more specifically decrees that the city of Nahlasi now belongs to Arpad.<sup>6</sup> It is not only written in the name of the Assyrian king Adad-nirari III, in cuneiform and Akkadian, but employs the technical jargon that is also used in other Assyrian documents and procedures, such as the definition of interstate boundaries in the historical account of the Synchronistic Chron-

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<sup>2</sup> On the difficulty of determining the origin and etymology of the term Aram see Younger, 2016: 35–40, with previous bibliography.

<sup>3</sup> VanValkenburgh / Osborne, 2013: 2.

<sup>4</sup> VanValkenburgh / Osborne, 2013: 8.

<sup>5</sup> The chronology of this document has long been debated and various hypotheses put forward. Recent contributions to the discussion, with reviews of previous bibliography, are Siddal, 2013 (esp. p. 69), who favours a date in the last years of the Assyrian king, and Younger, 2016 (esp. p. 484), who focuses on the period after 796 BCE and mostly that after Šamši-ilu’s appointment as *turtānu*, seemingly dated to 787/786 BCE, since he is mentioned in the stela together with the king.

<sup>6</sup> Although warranting major benefits to Arpad, the stela established a boundary that allowed the two kingdoms shared control of the lower Orontes valley and thus perhaps limited the negative effects of Arpad’s military superiority over Hamath.

icle, and the granting of land property in royal deeds.<sup>7</sup> Thus it witnesses Assyrian imperialistic policy and the implementation of its juridical perspective and instruments. The terms employed, *tahūmu*, “boundary / boundary stone / border zone”, and the analogous *mišru*, of Babylonian tradition, clearly convey the meaning of territorial border.<sup>8</sup>

Events concerning Hamath and Arpad are related in other documents. A stela, engraved with the Aramaic inscription of Zakkur king of Hamath and Luḡath (KAI 202), commemorates the victory – announced by prophetic messages – of this king over an enemy coalition headed by the Damascene Bar-Hadad, thanks to the divine help of Baʿalšamayn, and the reconstruction of walls and buildings in ʿApis and Ḥaḍrak, that, located in the north-eastern part of the country, became the king’s base instead of Hamath, located on the bank of the Orontes. The coalition included nine kings of the Levant, from Damascus in the south to Gurgum and Melid in the north, plus another, cumulatively indicated, 7 kings. All seemingly took part in the conflict for the control of the Orontes valley, and the Beqaʿ corridor especially, that saw as main contestants Damascus and Hamath.<sup>9</sup> In his inscription, Zakkur – who was probably a usurper and had brought to an end the Luwian dynasty that had long reigned in the country, or had taken the power after the former dynasty was submitted by the Damascene Hazael<sup>10</sup> – presents himself as “a man of ʿAnah”, *i.e.* the capital of the kingdom of Suhu in the Middle Euphrates. Unfortunately, it is difficult to interpret the full consequences of the hostility with Damascus and the internal disorders that appear to have consistently changed the role and structure of the Hamath kingdom. The solution of the conflict, attributed in the stela to divine assistance, was instead largely due to the Assyrian intervention. However, the date of the inscription cannot be ascertained and it is debated whether the events could have been connected with the stela from Antakya and the fixation of the boundary with Arpad.<sup>11</sup> The hypothesis that for Hamath the price of peace and Assyrian support was considered worth the sacri-

<sup>7</sup> See Ponchia, 1991: 59–65.

<sup>8</sup> For these terms see Mattila in this volume. *Miṣru* is also used in the literary language of royal inscriptions (Standard Babylonian) and together with *kudurru*, “boundary stone” in Babylonian texts (see CAD s.v.).

<sup>9</sup> Damascus had expanded during the reign of Hazael (c. 844/843–803 BCE) and seemingly extended its hegemony over Hamath and its Luwian dynasty. Hamath already had links with the Middle Euphrates area in this phase, as attested by the letter written by Marduk-apla-uṣur of Anat to Uratami, king of Hamath (Parpola, 1990: 258–259).

<sup>10</sup> On this phase see recently Younger, 2016: 476–481.

<sup>11</sup> The dates of 805 and 796 BCE, *i.e.* those of two campaigns of Adad-nirari III attested by the eponyms chronicles, have been proposed and variously debated, as well as the possibility of a later intervention, as in the case of the Antakya stela, although not clearly documented by references to military campaigns in Adad-nirari III’s inscriptions or chronicles. See Bagg, 2011: 208–210; and Younger, 2016: 425–499, with previous bibliography, for a detailed chapter on the history of Hamath and Luḡath.

fice of some territorial control – according to the provisions of the Antakya stela – remains unproven, as well as the assumption that at a certain point Assyrian strategy consisted of breaking the enemy front by favouring Arpad and stipulating an alliance with its king.<sup>12</sup>

On the other hand, the arbitration of the Antakya stela and the role of the Assyrian king as an international authority is paralleled by another agreement stipulated some years earlier (805 BCE), and the erection of another stela with an Akkadian inscription, which was found in the site of Pazarcik, in the Gaziantep area.<sup>13</sup> In the latter case, the stela defines the borders between the northern Neo-Hittite kingdoms of Kummukh and Gurgum.<sup>14</sup>

Rivalries concerning the possession of border areas were probably enhanced by the institutional structure of the Syro-Levantine states, where the presence of internal subdivisions with local leaders is variously attested, for instance by the “river-lords” of the Luwian kingdoms, or the districts in the kingdom of Hamath mentioned in Tiglath-pileser III’s inscriptions. Assyria took advantage of this system, acting as guarantor of and supporting specific interests; she not only exercised her hegemony in tributary areas, but aimed to create conditions of order and security favourable to her interests of control and exploitation of local routes and resources. Through a strategy of alliance with the local leaders and fostering of conditions of peace, Assyria could profit from control, though indirect, of the north-south route that passed from the Taurus to the Orontes, via the ‘Amuq plain. This fundamental corridor had to be protected from disorders due to local rivalries and to the appetites both of local dynasties and of more powerful competitors such as Urartu in the north and Damascus in the south, that were active as well in pro-

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<sup>12</sup> The situation in Hamath remained complex also afterwards. Tiglath-pileser III records the subjugation of 19 districts of Hamath after the revolt of the tributary king Azri-Yau, and the following payment of tribute by a new king of Hamath, a certain Eni-il (e.g. RINAP 1 13–14). We might speculate that the latter was one of the previous district leaders who did not adhere to Azri-Yau’s revolt and took the Assyrian side. Assyrian kings were able to intervene in this context not only militarily, but also to take advantage of local divisions and the mechanism of alliances.

<sup>13</sup> RIMA 3 A.0.104.3. As attested by the inscription itself, the stela was removed and returned to its position following bellicose events in the area. It remains doubtful whether it was found in its original place.

<sup>14</sup> This system and the policy towards friends and adversaries might be confirmed by a later text of the same type. The Incirli trilingual inscription – of which only the Phoenician version is, at least partially, readable – marks the boundary (*gbl*) between Gurgum and the land of Warikas, king of the Danunians (*i.e.* Que, Cilicia), as was established by Tiglath-pileser III. The king of Que seems to have been rewarded for his loyalty during the hostility led by Mati’-’el of Arpad, perhaps in occasion of the vast anti-Assyrian front that Tiglath-pileser faced in 743 BCE when Urartu seriously imperilled Assyrian supremacy in Syria, in any case before 740 BCE when Arpad was annexed as a province (see Kaufmann, 2007 and Na’aman, 2019 for textual edition and historical interpretation).

moting alliances favourable to their own interests. In this context Arpad occupied a key position between the regions of the Euphrates and the Orontes, crucial for Assyrian interests in Syria and the Levant, and had therefore also to be kept under control by negotiation.

### **The Sefire treaty, territorial control and Aramean social structures**

That the situation and the application of juridical conventions were not as straightforward as it might seem from the Antakya stela is revealed by another well-known and much debated document: the treaty attested by three stelae from the town of Sefire and dated to around the middle of the 8<sup>th</sup> cent. BCE. Arpad is again protagonist, but these inscriptions differ from the Antakya stela first of all in language and style – and in fact they constitute, together with the stela of Zakkur, one of the most significant preserved documents in ancient Aramaic. The Assyrian role is also different, at least formally: the Assyrians are not mentioned, although they certainly played an important or determinant role, since gods venerated in Assyria are invoked in prominent position as guarantors of the agreement. The agreement presents us with various unsolved problems, the principal one being the identification of one of those who underwrote it: Bar-Ga'yah of KTK.<sup>15</sup> The other signatory, Mati'-el, king of Arpad, and son of 'Attarsumki, is better known, and mentioned in other sources, also including a treaty stipulated with the Assyrian king Aššur-nirari V (754–745 BCE).<sup>16</sup> The Sefire agreement establishes an alliance between Arpad and KTK, but is stipulated to the advantage of the latter, and specifies the inclusion of the territory of Tal'ayim in the kingdom of KTK. Unfortunately the location of Tal'ayim remains also unknown. A possible association has been suggested with the toponym of Talḥaya/Talḥayum known from the Mari texts, and localized in the Euphrates area, not far from Emar.<sup>17</sup> It was presumably a boundary area between the territory controlled by Arpad and KTK, and in the treaty it is significantly defined in terms of territorial and institutional structures.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> This constitutes the main issue of the debate in which the most discussed hypothesis is the identification with the Assyrian *turtānu* Šamši-ilu (see Lemaire / Durand, 1984: 37–58). For a synthesis of the various hypotheses see Kahn, 2007, Bagg, 2011: 51–52, and Younger, 2016: 538–543, who concludes: “Having surveyed these proposals, one can sum up this way. The identity of the mysterious BR-G'YH and the location of his polity KTK must remain open”, and favors the hypothesis of “a yet-unknown ‘philo-Assyrian’ Aramean monarch/governor”.

<sup>16</sup> On the reconstruction of the Arpadite kings' genealogy see Younger, 2016: 536.

<sup>17</sup> Lemaire / Durand, 1984: 66–67. Bibliographical references to the toponym's debated localization in Younger, 2016: 516.

<sup>18</sup> Sefire III 23 (Lemaire / Durand, 1984: 119): [wł'y]m wkpryh wb'lyh wgbłh, “Tal'ayim, et ses villages, et ses citoyens, et son territoire”. The toponym is usually interpreted as a town name and tentatively looked for in the area west of the Euphrates and is compared with the Talḥayum known from the Mari texts (Bagg, 2019: 18 for references). The ques-

In the present paper the question cannot be extensively reconsidered, and the review of the relevant debate is limited to the perspectives of analysis of two contributions that have recently addressed the topic of the definition of territorial control.<sup>19</sup>

In a recent miscellaneous volume devoted to Aramean borders J. Dušek (2019) discusses the evidence according to a well practiced method, *i.e.* the identification of the toponyms mentioned in the text as belonging to Arpad and their localization on a map, in order to define political boundaries, and updates the debate by means of comparison with recent archaeological evidence. Unfortunately, despite the author's thorough analysis, the majority of the localizations necessarily remains hypothetical or uncertain. Moreover, it must be considered that the list of cities belonging to Arpad is included in the section of curses invoked against the Arpadite king if he should not respect the oath (Stela I A 34–35). Although the list can be only indirectly used to define Arpad's external boundaries or internal divisions, Dušek's analysis is a valuable contribution to the study of historical geography. Among the variant solutions the scholar proposes, and which deserve further consideration, are in particular the hypotheses of identification of Sefire with Arpad,<sup>20</sup> thus moving farther south the kingdom's capital, and of Tell Rif'at with Muru, a toponym already mentioned in Shalmaneser III's inscriptions.<sup>21</sup>

Most important is the identification of the various parties involved in the agreement which is subscribed to by the kings of Arpad and KTK. Dušek maintains that the inscriptions from Sefire occasionally refer to an anonymous group named the "kings of Arpad"<sup>22</sup> and that Arpad or "the kingdom of Bīt-Agūsi was not a clearly delimited land, with fixed and stable boundaries" (p. 194).

It should be noted however that in stela A a clearer hierarchy is seemingly implied by the use of *mlk*, for Mati'-el and Bar-Ga'yah, the kings who signed the

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tion remains open however, and in any case it must be stressed that a settlement hierarchy is described (on this problem see also n. 20 below).

<sup>19</sup> For a detailed analysis of the sources, a wider review of previous literature, and history of Arpad/Bit-Guš, the reader is referred to Younger, 2016: chap. 8.

<sup>20</sup> Instead of with Tell Rif'at, where the ruins of a large palace have been discovered, and as is usually accepted. The author also bases his assumption on the consideration that "What location would be more appropriate for the Sfire treaties than the capital city and the seat of its king?" (p. 187). But this criterium could be reversed as well and Sefire considered the capital of KTK. Lemaire / Durand, 1984: 71 posed the question of a possible relation between the localization of the stelae and the role of Tl'ym in the treaty and suggested evaluating the conjectural identification of the latter with Tell Houdane, around 30 km north of Emar. For the site of Sefire see Del Fabbro, 2014.

<sup>21</sup> RIMA 3 A.0.102.14 (Black Obelisk): 130.

<sup>22</sup> "Apart from the family of the king, the preambles of the Sfire treaties I A and B mention 'the lords of Arpad,' 'Mišr and his sons,' 'those who enter the royal palace,' and the family of 'Bīt ŠLL.'. Apart from the 'king of Arpad,' the inscriptions from Sfire occasionally refer to an anonymous group named the 'kings of Arpad'." (p. 177).

agreement, the reference to Arpad and KTK – without further specifications – and the use of *b'ly* presumably for “the lords” of Arpad and KTK (Stele IA, line 4), whereas “those who enter the royal palace” can be variously identified as members of the Arpad “confederation”, or allies, emissaries of other kings and lords.<sup>23</sup>

This list bespeaks the complexity of the Arpad kingdom and its relations beyond its borders, as had already been pointed out in previous publications, also as far as the designation of Aram with the expressions: *'rm kllh* = “Aram all of it” and *kl 'ly 'rm wthth* = “all of Upper and Lower Aram” is concerned (Stela IA, lines 5-6). N. Na’aman (2016) proposes that Aram designates the kingdom of Arpad, on the basis of comparison with the stela of Melqart from Breidj, in the vicinity of Aleppo.<sup>24</sup> He further proposes an important, though tentative restoration of the fragmentary lines which complete the list of those for whom the oath is valid: *w'dy hb[r bny st]w' 'm 'rm kllh*, “and oath of the confederat[ion of the Sutean]s’ with all Aram” (l. 4). Moreover, he integrates the end of the following line as: *w[ 'm nsky' ]* (“the sheykhs”), or *w[ 'm mr'y' ]* (“the lords”), instead of *w[ 'm mlky ]* (“the kings”).

He therefore concludes that this section of the treaty concerns the tribal, pastoralist sectors of the kingdoms of Arpad and KTK respectively, *i.e.* Arameans and Suteans. The institutional importance of the clan is seemingly revealed by the statement of one of the inscriptions (stela B) where the oath is sworn between *byt šll* and *byt gš*, *i.e.* the most important families or clans of Arpad.

Combining the two interpretations we might hypothesize the organization of both polities, Arpad and KTK, into various districts including pastoralist groups whose appurtenance to either polity was probably contended and in need of definition.

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<sup>23</sup> Stela A lists: Bar-Ga’yah king (*mlk*) of KTK and Mati’-’el king (*mlk*) of Arpad, sons of Bar-Ga’yah and sons of Mati’-’el, descendants (*bny bny*), KTK and Arpad, people/lords (*b'ly*) of KTK and people/lords (*b'ly*) of Arpad and confederation(?) (*hb[r'...]*) [...] and Aram as a whole, with Mšr and descendants, with [...] Aram High and Low (*kl 'ly 'rm wthth*) and descendants. The meaning of *b'ly* can be interpreted as “citizens” (see translation in Lemaire / Durand, 1984: 120), on the basis of the value “owner, possessor” – as also attested in Bar-rakib 10–11: *b'lyh ksp wb'lyh zhb*, “possessors of silver and possessors of gold” – but it can as well be interpreted as “lords”, *i.e.* those that had authority over the kins that composed Aramean society, and therefore constitute a reference to a gentile social pattern or component.

<sup>24</sup> He proposes the following reading of lines 1–3 of the inscription: “The stele, which Bar-Hadad, son of ‘Attarsumki, son of Gūš, King of Aram, set up for his lord Melqart.” and discusses previous interpretations with literature (p. 81). On textual problems and possible interpretations see also Younger, 2016: 534–536. The scholar also maintains that the formula “all of Upper and Lower Aram” in Sefire I A describes the entity of Arpad at the time the treaty was stipulated and is paralleled by the border description given in stela I B 9–10 (pp. 507–508).

In the unstable political situation of the 8<sup>th</sup> cent. BCE, new relationships were seemingly created by Assyrian interventions and the support given to polities or parties that became tools of imperialistic penetration. We may speculate that Bar-Ga'yah was either a new leader, or one of the lords of Arpad who, thanks to Assyrian support, ascended to a position equal to and even more powerful than Mati'-'el's, a position that allowed him to negotiate greater authority and more extended territorial control. His acknowledgment as *mlk*, which changed the relations in a crucial crossroads as Arpad was, needed to be also recognized in a much wider context.

The stela of Zakkur and the hypotheses concerning the localization of Tal'ayim mentioned in the Sefire inscriptions suggest the possibility that the Assyrians trusted in Aramean chiefs originating from or connected with the middle Euphrates region to take control of the line between the Euphrates and the Orontes and prepare their attack on the Levant.

Two points seem worth stressing. Compared with the Antakya stela of a few decades before, the Sefire treaties document the implementation of Aramaic language and conventions; on the other hand the mention of Aššur and other Assyrian gods as guarantors of the treaty suggests that the support given to Bar-Ga'yah, either a local leader or even an Assyrian emissary or official, attests to the Assyrian capacity to intrude into the socio-political structures of the area for expansionistic purposes.

The situation was however seemingly quite fluid. Mati'-'el of Arpad signed a treaty with the Assyrian king Aššur-nirari V. Although the absolute and relative chronology of this latter treaty and the Sefire treaties cannot be established, it appears that diplomatic means were variously implemented by the Assyrians to control the Arpad kingdom and its complex society.<sup>25</sup>

### **Aramean society and boundary definition: some further considerations**

Is it possible to better clarify the meaning of this particular social and institutional structure in relation to boundary definition and the dynamics of political change?

We might briefly consider a group of roughly contemporary texts which often concern the institution of the *bītu*, the Akkadian equivalent of Aramaic *byt*.<sup>26</sup> The mid-8<sup>th</sup> cent. BCE letters from Nippur are written in Babylonian, but largely refer to the Aramaic world. In this period, also for climatic and environmental reasons, the town occupied a border position between the Babylonian ancient urban centers

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<sup>25</sup> For the pastoral component of Arpad when the region was included in the Assyrian provincial administration see e.g. SAA 16 48 concerning a *rab šibti ša māt Arpadda*, “sheep-tax master of Arpad”. In this later phase they might have been part of the management of textile production, which also involved other components such as artisans and workforce differently organized (see Gaspa, 2018: chap. 2).

<sup>26</sup> On the definition of the *bītu* and the “Arameans’ socially constructed groups” see recently Younger, 2016: 43–63, with previous bibliography.



and the pastoralists' area and was part of "a patchwork of politically autonomous regions and peoples",<sup>27</sup> over which the central government of Babylonia had loose authority. Object of the correspondence are the relationships between the state organization, with its hubs in the urban centres, and the *bītu* institutions – *i.e.* households or clans, that at various levels formed the social fabric – or the relationships between individual *bītus* themselves. The term *bītu* seemingly covers various levels of organization, from a basic cell such as a commercial household, to tribal groups and even larger confederations.<sup>28</sup> From these letters it appears that treaties and mutual acknowledgments of leaders and their *bītus* warranted the development of regulated relationships and the implementation of legal procedures, fundamental in long distance trade. In these cases it is the *bītu* that appears the term of reference, rather than the territory. The *adê*, the sworn agreement, provides a protocol of behaviour for all the *bītus* that are affiliated to the subscribers to the agreement, in hierarchical order of appurtenance from the smaller cells to the major *bītu* that incorporates them.<sup>29</sup>

Letter no. 12 of Cole's (1996a) edition provides an example of the oath stipulations and erection of stelae to regulate the use of territory, although the interpretation of the text is quite difficult. The letter informs that the stela on which the agreement concerning a territory, or a safe-conduct through it was inscribed, is now damaged.<sup>30</sup> Reference is made to a ceremony of the reading of the stela, which had taken place in the presence of various actors, presumably with the aim of making explicit and manifest the accorded rights. These likely included dwelling and circulation in the territory that were probably permitted, as suggested by Cole, in connection with transhumance or other particular activities. In this case, the procedure of reading in the presence of the parties (and probably of witnesses) points to the tutelage of rights at the local level in the context of a mobile society, and may be considered an interesting parallel, as far as procedure is concerned, of the documents analysed above.

Social organization and the specific role of the Arameans is exemplified by other, again quite difficult, letters, such as nos. 18 and 27 of Cole's edition. The

<sup>27</sup> Cole, 1996b: 17. Babylonia was not yet subjected to the attacks of the Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser III (745–727 BCE).

<sup>28</sup> See also Ponchia, 2002–2005.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. the Biblical entreaty: "Let there be an alliance between us, as well as an alliance between our fathers" (1 Kgs 15:18–20), commented by Lemaire, 2007 in the light of the Aramaic context as referring to the "maison paternelle" even with the ellipsis of the term ܡܢܚ.

<sup>30</sup> The sender (a certain Bēl-usātī) appears to go together with Iqīša to the *bītu* of Nabû-ušallim, who is a "man" of Iqīša, perhaps in the framework of, or to check the respect of the agreement that had been written on a stela. Iqīša, Šumā (the addressee of the letter, who is said to have read the stela, and is identified as a brother of the sender), the sender, and Nabû-ušallim, were present at the ceremony or reading (*atta ša eli asummitti ina pāniya tamnū*, "you, who recited in my presence what was on the stela").

former text reports raids conducted by people, or bands,<sup>31</sup> of Bit-Yakin against the Nippur region, seemingly in the context of commercial traffic. In this case the ethnonym LÚ.A-*ram* seems to be used to designate an element that is outside of the control of the state administration. In letter no. 27, the Aramean tribe of the Puqudu is expected to be in Nippur for celebrating a festivity and that is considered an occasion for regulating accounts with the Arameans, *i.e.* the LÚ.A-*ram gab-bi*, “all the Arameans”, as they are designated in the letter.

Thus, these sources too suggest that the term Aram may have a general and contrastive meaning, and that the juridical instrument of the *adê*, the sworn agreement, was an acknowledged means to regulate relationships with the kinship-based and partly mobile society that lay beyond the urban institutional system. It could however be used at various levels and even have wide-ranging validity. This appears to have been the case in the Sefire treaty. The definition of a new equilibrium between Arpad and KTK and the new affiliations deriving from the inclusion of Tal’ayim in the latter, had to be acknowledged as valid throughout Aram (Stela I A) and “from Qarqar as far as Ya’udy and Baz, from Lebanon as far as Ybrd and [...], from ’Umq as far as ‘Arro and Manṣuate, from Bq’t as far as KTK”, *i.e.* in a clearly international context, as stated in Stela I B.

When considered as a whole these sources attest to the contemporaneous existence and integration of two orders of boundaries: the first defined in terms of territoriality, the second in terms of movements and affiliations, which guaranteed the development of economic activities, pastoral and commercial, and were the basis for inter-group relations and the construction of networks that extended well beyond individual borders.<sup>32</sup> The narratives of the Assyrian kings’ strenuous fight against the Arameans reveal that they were able to progressively transform the diversified, often locally fragmented leadership or the loosely controlled tribes into the elements of an administrative system. This emanated from the monarchic institution and consisted of a hierarchy of officials which depended on and cooperated with the royal dynasty, even in the remote provinces. Thus, the problematic and largely unsolved points we have briefly considered so far lead us to a final general question: whether the turbulent, fragmented and often hostile Aramean milieu with its particular socio-economic and political system did anyway contribute to the construction of a new order – the imperial one with its programmatic borderless dimension and inner interconnections. It is difficult to determine to what extent the Assyrians took advantage of the transformation of Aramean social structures and conventions into institutionalized corps and procedures, as is evi-

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<sup>31</sup> Defined by the term LÚ *gudūdu*, a loanword from Aramaic, see Cole, 1996a: 73. It seems that the term has a meaning comparable with that of the Biblical word from the same root, *gdwd*, in the description of the troops of the Damascene Rezon in 1 Kgs 11:23–24 and 1 Sam 22:2, see Younger, 2016: 570. See also the inscription from Karatepe which mentions *b’l ’gddm*, “lords of gangs” (line 15 of the Phoenician text).

<sup>32</sup> For the general dynamics of these relations see Szuchman, 2009.

dent in the cases of the Itu'u and the *adê*, and as the spreading of Aramaic also shows. It seems however that they succeeded in combining the Aramean network and system of extended relationships with a centralized administration to provide the basis for the institutional innovation of imperial power.

### Abbreviations

- CAD: *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*. Chicago / Glückstadt, 1956–2010.
- KAI: H. Donner / W. Röllig, 1962–1964: *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften* 3 vols. Wiesbaden.
- RIMA 3: Grayson, A. K., 1996: *Assyrian Rulers of Early First Millennium BC. II (858–745BC)*. The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian Periods, Volume 3. Toronto / Buffalo / London.
- RINAP 1: Tadmor, H. / Yamada, Sh., 2011: *The Royal Inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III (744–727 BC) and Shalmaneser V (726–722 BC), Kings of Assyria*. The Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period, Volume 1. Winona Lake, IN.
- SAA 2: Parpola, S. / Watanabe, K., 1988: *Neo-Assyrian Treaties and Loyalty Oaths*. State Archive of Assyria 2. Helsinki.
- SAA 16: Luukko, M. / Van Buylaere, G., 2002: *The Political Correspondence of Esarhaddon*. State Archives of Assyria 16. Helsinki.

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# Tarsus Foundation Myth

Assyrian Propaganda and Hellenistic Fascination

Silvia Gabrieli

## Abstract

This paper aims to study the pre-Greek foundation myth of the city of Tarsus in Cilicia.

In particular, the Hellenistic sources on the so-called Sardanapalus Epitaph report that the cities of Tarsus and Anchiæ were built in only one day by the Assyrian king Sardanapalus. Yet, the Mesopotamian sources – specifically Berossos’ *Babyloniaca* and Sennacherib’s inscriptions – narrate a different account of the facts. According to the fragments attributed to Berossos, Sennacherib built the city of Tarsus as a replica of Babylon after a campaign against Greek invaders in Cilicia, preparing the ideal background for the future Greek (re-)founding of the settlement. On the contrary, Sennacherib’s Annals describe the looting of the city as the aftermath of a local revolt, never mentioning any Aegean invaders or any specific building activities that could effectively link Tarsus to Babylonia. The report of the archaeological excavations at Tarsus will help shed some light on the events happening to this site between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE and if this city could be considered a new Cilician Babylon.

In this paper, I would like to explore the pre-Greek foundation tale of the city of Tarsus in Cilicia.

According to Hellenistic sources regarding the so-called “Sardanapalus’ Epitaph”,<sup>1</sup> the cities of Tarsus and Anchiæ were built in only one day by the Assyrian king Sardanapalus (whose name is usually identified with Assurbanipal, reign 668–626 BCE)<sup>2</sup>, yet Berossos’ (ca. 350–270 BCE) *Babyloniaca* and Sennacherib’s (reign 705–681 BCE) inscriptions report different accounts of the facts. According to the surviving fragments of Book 3 of the *Babyloniaca*, Sennacherib built the city of Tarsus as a replica of Babylon after a campaign against Greek

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<sup>1</sup> Aristobulus, in Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae*, XII, 39, 530b (FGrHist 139 F 9a); Arrian, *Anabasis*, II, 5, 4; Strabo, XIV 5, 9; Amynta (FGrHist 122 F 2) in Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae*, XII 39, 529, e–f; Callisthenes/Hellanicus in Suda (Adler n: Sigma, 122).

<sup>2</sup> The most complete comment on all the classical sources citing Sardanapalus is still Weissbach, 1920: 2436–2475. According to Ctesias, *apud* Diodorus Siculus = Diodorus Siculus II, 23–27 (= Ctesias, FGrHist 688 F1), Sardanapalus was the last king of Assyria, although the last Assyrian king recorded in the archaeological sources is Aššur-uballit II. The description of Sardanapalus’ character does not match at all the inscriptions left by Assurbanipal, yet the two figures were equated, probably because of the similarity of sound between the name Aššur-bāni-apli and the Greek Σαρδανάπαλλος.

invaders in Cilicia, thus paving the way for the future Greek founding of the settlement. On the contrary, in Sennacherib's Annals recorded on Prism BM 103000 there is no mention of Greek invaders, nor of such building activities, since the city was looted by the Assyrian troops intent on suppressing the revolt of a local ruler.

Because of the notable conflict between the various textual sources, it is hoped that archaeological finds at Tarsus will help to answer the question of what happened to this site between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE and whether the city was really meant to mirror the sacred scape of Babylon.

### Setting the scene

In the late summer of 333 BCE, after the well-known episode of the Gordian knot, Alexander the Great marched towards Cilicia *pedias* passing through the Cilician Gates (Gülek Boğkazi, 1290 m a.s.l.), north of Tarsus. At that time, the city was under Persian rule, and the Cilician governor was Arsames. After hearing of the distress of the citizens of Tarsus concerning the imminent escape of Arsames, Alexander led the cavalry and the lightest-armed of his troops at full speed towards that city to prevent its destruction.<sup>3</sup>

In Tarsus, Alexander fell ill for unknown reasons<sup>4</sup> and was nursed back to health by Philip of Acarnania, a close associate of his. When he recovered, he travelled in just one day from Tarsus to Anchialus/Anchiale (Ἀγχιάλος/Ἀγχιάλη – in the area of modern Mersin), where he set up camp, and here he was told the story of the so-called Sardanapalus' epitaph.

Three different authors, one of whom explicitly cites Aristobulus as the original source for this story, preserve this episode.

Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae*, XII 39, 530b

Aristobulus (*FGrHist* 139 F 9a) says: "As Alexander was moving inland against the Persians, he set up camp in Anchiale, which was built by Sardanapalus. Not far from there was Sardanapalus' tomb, on top of which stood a carving made of stone, which had the fingers of its right hand pressed together, as if it were snapping them, and inscribed on it in Assyrian letters was 'Sardanapallus the son of Anacyndaraxes built Anchiale and Tarsus in a single day. Eat, drink, and enjoy yourself; since the rest isn't

<sup>3</sup> Arrian, *Anabasis* II, 4, 5–6. According to Curtius Rufus, III, 4, 3–5, 14–15, Arsames set fire to all of Cilicia and intended to do the same to Tarsus, but the arrival of Alexander's troops impeded the disaster.

<sup>4</sup> Arrian, *Anabasis*, II, 4, 7–11. Arrian relates that, according to Aristobulus, Alexander fell ill from exhaustion, while unspecified "others" blame a swim in the Cydnus River (Tarsus Çayı) for his illness. This episode is related by several other sources; Diodorus XVII 31, 4–6; Curtius Rufus III 5–6; Justinus, *Epitome* XI 8; Lucian, *De Domo* I; Seneca, *De ira* II 23, 2; Fragm. Sabb., *FGrHist* 151 F1, 6; Valerius Maximus III 8, ext. 6; Iulius Valerius II 8.

worth this much,' seemingly referring to a snap of one's fingers." (Transl.: Olson, 2010: 95–97)

Strabo, XIV 5, 9

Then, a little above the sea, is Anchiale, which, Aristobulus says, was a foundation of Sardanapallos. The memorial of Sardanapallos is there, a stone relief with the fingers of the right hand coming together as if snapping, and the following inscription in Assyrian letters: Sardanapallos the son of Anakyndaraxes built Anchiale and Tarsos in one day. Eat, drink, and play, for everything else is not worth this, meaning the snapping. Choerilus also records it, and these words are generally known: I love most what I have eaten, what I have indulged, and the delights of love that I have experienced. I have left behind all the blessings. (Transl.: Roller, 2014: 633)

Arrian, *Anabasis*, 5, 2–4

Somewhat later he himself set out from Tarsus, and on the first day reached the city of Anchiale, which legend tells was founded by Sardanapalus the Assyrian. The circuit and groundwork of the walls speak of a city founded on a large scale and developed to great strength. Sardanapalus' tomb was close by the walls of Anchiale, topped by the figure of Sardanapalus himself with his hands held together as if about to clap them, and inscribed with an epitaph in Assyrian script, which the Assyrians said was in verse. However that may be, the meaning expressed by the words of the inscription was this: "Sardanapalus the son of Anacyndaraxes built Anchiale and Tarsus in one day: but you, stranger, should eat, drink, and be merry, as all other human concerns are not worth – this" ('this' being a riddling reference to the noise of a hand-clap). They also said that "be merry" was a euphemism for a cruder Assyrian word in the inscription. (Transl.: Hammond, 2013: 43)

While these three sources seem to agree on the location of the monument, although with some differences regarding its iconography, the story is different in the narration of the same monument made by Amynta (in Athenaeus) and Callisthenes (in Photius and Suda).

Athenaeus XII 39, 529, e–f

Amynta in Book III of the *Stages* (*FGrHist* 122 F 2) claims that there was a high mound in Ninevah, which was demolished by Cyrus when he was erecting a mound to counter the city's wall during his siege. And (he says that) this mound allegedly belonged to Sardanapallus, the king of Ninevah, and that a stone stele on top of it bore an inscription in Chaldean letters which Choerilus translated and put into metrical form. It ran as follows: "I was a king, and for as long as I saw the light of the sun, I drank, ate, and had sex, since I knew that human beings live for only a short time, in the

course of which there are many reverses and troubles, and that others will enjoy whatever goods I leave behind. I therefore did not let a single day pass without behaving this way.” (Transl.: Olson, 2010: 95)

Suda (Adler n: Sigma, 122)

Callisthenes<sup>5</sup> in [book] 2 of Persian Histories says that there were two men [named] Sardanapalos, one active and well-born but the other a fop. In Nineveh this is written on his memorial: “The son of Anacyndaraxes built Tarsus and Anchiale in one day. Eat, drink, copulate, for other things are not worth this.” That is, a snap of the fingers: for he made and set up a statue in his remembrance which had its hands over its head, so that it was snapping with its fingers.[2] The same thing was written, too, in Anchiale, near Tarsus, which is now called Zephyrion. [This first part is identical also in Photius, *Σαρδαναπάλλουος* – Σ 80] And [there is] a proverb: “may you grow old more profound than Tithonos, more rich than Kinyras, and more fastidious than Sardanapalos, so that what the proverb says can be fulfilled in you: the old are twice children. In reference to the very old. For Tithonos, by prayer, put off old age and changed into a cicada. Kinyras, descended from Pharnakes a king of [the] Cypriots, excelled in wealth. Sardanapalos, king of [the] Assyrians, living in luxury and intemperance, lost his own kingdom. This Sardanapalos was the son of Anakyndaraxes, a king of Nineveh, a Persian territory; he founded Tarsus and Anchiale in a single day. It is said that he prided himself shamefully not to be seen by his servants, unless by eunuchs and maidens. Ruined by wine, he was found dead indoors. It was written on his tomb in Assyrian letters: “Sardanapalos, son of Anakyndaraxes, etc.” (Transl.: J. Benedict, Suda On-Line <http://www.cs.uky.edu/~raphael/sol/sol-entries/sigma/122>)

According to Aristobulus, the monument was in Anchiale and a carving made of stone representing Sardanapalus snapping the fingers of his right hand surmounted it. In Amynta’s tale, in Nineveh, there was a stone stele on a high mound that was destroyed by Cyrus; the inscription of Sardanapalus was written in “Chaldean letters” and it contained an exhortation to seize the moment. According to Callisthenes<sup>6</sup>, there were two identical inscriptions, one in Nineveh and one in Anchiale.

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<sup>5</sup> For a discussion of Callisthenes’ excerpt, see Prandi, 1985: 148–151 and Lanfranchi, 2003: 80–81.

<sup>6</sup> Callisthenes’ description was probably very similar to the one made by Hellanicus. See Lanfranchi, 2003: 80–81.



### Who was Sardanapalus and why was this monument important?

According to a popular tradition that was well known in classical times<sup>7</sup>, Sardanapalus was the last king of Assyria and was considered the epitome of the inept, corrupt, and immoral ruler. Ctesias, transmitted by Diodorus Siculus' *Bibliotheca Historica*, described his infamous portrait. For ancient authors, the focus had always been on Sardanapalus' immoral behavior and death, rather than on his other accomplishments. His name is probably derived from Assurbanipal (Aššur-bāni-apli, with the change of the consonant /b/ in /d/), although the Greek forms sounds closer to the Assyrian name Aššur-danin-aplu, which was born for example by the son of Shalmaneser III. His character, however, seems to derive from the combination of several Assyrian rulers (e.g. Sennacherib and Šamaš-šuma-ukīn).<sup>8</sup>

While albeit interesting, we will not discuss Sardanapalus' life here, or the differences in the iconography of the monument,<sup>9</sup> nor the formulation of Sardanapalus' "Carpe Diem" *ante litteram*, but rather instead we will focus on the foundation story.

Since there is no record at all from Assyrian textual or archaeological sources of any Assyrian royal tombs in Cilicia, and considering that the association of the name Sardanapalus with that of Assurbanipal, one wonders how this peculiar tradition might have been born. The Assyrian king Sargon II (reign 722–705 BCE), father of Sennacherib, died in the battlefield in Tabal (a Neo-Hittite kingdom north/north-east of Cilicia) in 705 BCE, where his body was lost to the enemy, but there was no reason whatsoever to link his death to this funerary monument in Anchiale. As we will see below, Sargon's shocking (and unholy) death had repercussions on Sennacherib's actions, who interpreted the loss as divine punishment for his father's deeds.<sup>10</sup>

A voice completely against the aforementioned tradition of the Sardanapalus' epitaph comes from the Babylonian writer Berossos.

In fact, according to a textual fragment attributed to Berossos<sup>11</sup> (350–270 BCE

<sup>7</sup> First mentioned by Herodotus, II 150, 3 for his wealth, while his portrait is described by Ctesias / Diodorus Siculus = Diodorus Siculus II, 23–27 (= Ctesias, *FGrHist* 688 F1). Hellenicus knew about his personality, Aristophanes mocked him; moreover, Aristotle (cfr. *Politica*. V 10 1312a; *ENI* 1095b 22; *EE* I 1216b 16) and Cicero (*Tusculanae disputationes* V, 35), among many others, mentioned him. Athenaeus' description of his death (XII, 39, 528f–529a) is even more detailed than Diodorus' one.

<sup>8</sup> Renger, 2006. See also Weissbach, 1920; De Breucker, 2011: 646.

<sup>9</sup> Another ancient author describing the king's gesture was Clearchus, preserved in the already cited passage by Athenaeus (*Deipnosophistae*, XII, 39, 529 d–e). See Prandi, 1985: 150. For a thorough discussion of the possible iconography of the *ubāna tarāšu* on these monuments see Lanfranchi, 2003.

<sup>10</sup> Dalley, 1999: 74.

<sup>11</sup> De Breucker, 2010a; Haubold, 2022: 35–36. Not much is known regarding Berossos personal life. His original Akkadian name is still debated, with scholars either supporting *Bēl-rē'ūšu* (Stevens, 2019: 117–119) or *Bēl-rē'ūšunu* (Bach, 2013: 157–162). The second

ca.?) and bequeathed by Eusebius<sup>12</sup> through the recensions of Alexander Polyhistor and Abydenus<sup>13</sup>, Sennacherib built the city of Tarsus, in Cilicia, as a replica of Babylon, after a military campaign in this area against “the Greeks”. Here, Sennacherib inscribed his feats on a statue that he erected on the battlefield.<sup>14</sup>

Berosos, as quoted by Alexander Polyhistor, *FGrHist* 680 F 7c (31) [Senakheirimos = Sennacherib] When he was informed that Greeks were marching against Cilicia, he hurried against them, confronted them, and, after many of his troops had been struck down, he won the battle. As a memorial of his victory, he had a statue of himself erected on the battlefield and inscribed it in Chaldean script as a remembrance of his bravery and heroic deeds as a memorial for the future. He founded the city of Tarsus, as he records, on the plan of Babylon, and he called the city Tharsis. (Transl.: Verbrugge / Wickersham, 1996: 54)

Berosos as quoted by Abydenus, *FGrHist* 685 F 5 Finally at that time there was Senecherib, the twenty-fifth of the rulers who compelled Babylon to submit to his domination. On the coast of Cilicia he defeated a group of Ionian warships and drove them into flight. He also built the temple of Sandes who is Heracles, erected bronze pillars and caused, he said, his great deeds to be inscribed truthfully. He also built Tarson according to the plan and model of Babylon so that the River Cydnus flows through just as the Euphrates flows through Babylon. (Transl: Burstein, 1978: 24, 2b)

Berosos, here, was trying to raise interest from his Hellenistic Greek public,<sup>15</sup> by

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name is attested as *šatammu* (chief temple administrator, see CAD, vol. Š/2, s.v. *šatammu* 3a, 3', p. 190) of the Esagila Temple in Babylon, thus seemingly to corroborate a piece of information preserved by Tatian (Tatian, *Oratio ad Graecos* 36) according to which Berosos was a priest of Bēl. Not only Berosos' name is debated, but also the years during which he was active are discussed, as they probably spanned from Alexander the Great's conquest of Mesopotamia to the reign of Antiochos II.

<sup>12</sup> Verbrugge / Wickersham, 1996: 54, fragment F8b. The fragment survived in Alexander Polyhistor (*FGrHist* 680 F 7c) and Abydenus (*FGrHist* 685 F 5) thanks to the Armenian translation of Eusebius.

<sup>13</sup> See De Breucker, 2010b for a commentary on the fragments attributed to Abydenus.

<sup>14</sup> Dalley, 1999.

<sup>15</sup> De Breucker, 2013: 24. According to Stevens, 2019: 102–108 (with discussion and bibliography), some of the fragments, especially those concerning Nebuchadnezzar, show a strict parallel with this king's inscription and with the Babylonian Chronicles. On the other hand, other fragments, such as his autobiographical statement at the beginning of *Babyloniaca* I seem to refer to a different tradition than the cuneiform one, in fact it was “typical of Greek historians who regularly stated their credentials, sources and methodology towards the beginning of their work”. According to Tuplin, 2013: 186–188, however, it is impossible to determine how much Greek historiography Berosos knew and what his ex-

both involving them in this tale, and to correct the contemporary Greek tradition<sup>16</sup> regarding Tarsus, by demonstrating that its foundation was to be historically attributed to Sennacherib, rather than mythically to Sardanapalus.<sup>17</sup> However, the original Assyrian sources demonstrate that the truth was, again, somewhat different.<sup>18</sup>

The Assyrian Annals report that Sennacherib indeed made a military campaign against Cilicia and Tarsus in 696 BCE, while his father, Sargon II, had most probably fought against the Ionians around 715 BCE.<sup>19</sup>

In the so-called “King Prism”, there is the report of Sennacherib’s campaign against Cilicia (696 BCE): RINAP 3/1 17: IV 61–91 (King Prism, BM 102996 + BM 103000 + GMII 1502 + IM 056578 + Rm 0026)

(IV 61) In the eponymy of Šulmu-Bēli, governor of the city Talmusu (696 BCE), Kirūa – the city ruler of Illubru, a servant who belonged to me, whom his gods had abandoned – (iv 65) incited the population of Ḫilakku to rebel and prepare for battle. The people living in the cities Ingirā and Tarzu aligned themselves with him, then seized the road through the land Que (and) blocked (its) passage.

(IV 69) I sent against them archers, shield and lance bearers, chariots, (and) horses of my royal contingent. In rugged mountain terrain, they defeated the population of Ḫilakku, who had aligned themselves with him. (iv 75) They conquered and plundered the cities Ingirā (and) Tarzu.

(IV 77) As for him (Kirūa), they besieged him in the city Illubru, his fortified city, and cut off his escape route. They defeated him by means of bringing up battering rams, siege machines (lit. “*nimgallus* of the wall”), (iv 80) and siege engines, (and) the assault of foot soldiers, and they took possession of the city.

(IV 82) They brought Kirūa, the city ruler, together with booty from his cities and the inhabitants of Ḫilakku who had aligned themselves with him, as well as donkeys, oxen, and sheep and goats to Nineveh, before me. I flayed Kirūa.

(IV 87) Once again, I reorganized the city Illubru (and) settled therein the people of the lands that I had conquered. I installed the weapon of the god Aššur, my lord, inside it. (iv 90) I had a stele of alabaster made and I erected (it) in front of it.

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act purpose as a writer was.

<sup>16</sup> Stevens, 2019: 102.

<sup>17</sup> Lanfranchi, 2013: 67. Tuplin, 2013: 187.

<sup>18</sup> Burstein, 1978: 25, fn. 80.

<sup>19</sup> Frame, 2021 = RINAP 2, Sarg. II, 1, 117b–119. See Lanfranchi, 2000; Rollinger, 2001: 240–242 and Kopanias, 2018: 82–83 (all with bibliography) for a possible Greek involvement in Mita/Midas’ conquest of two Cilician cities and in the Cilician revolt of 696 BCE.

According to this inscription, in 696 Sennacherib went against Kirūa of Illubru, defeated him and his coalition, and erected a stele (*narû*) of alabaster in the city of Illubru.

Let us focus now on some details of Berossos' narration in relation to Sennacherib's inscription.

1. Battle. Alexander's fragment seems to mention a land battle, while Abydenus' one mentions a sea battle against "the Greeks" or "Ionian warships": in both cases, this is a detail that is only supplied by Berossos and, although historically possible, it is not recorded in the extant Assyrian documentation, nor by any Greek author.<sup>20</sup> It is possible that here, Berossos has conflated two different traditions: Sargon's naval battle against the Ionians/Greeks with Sennacherib's campaign in Cilicia.<sup>21</sup> Regardless, Sennacherib's inscription mentions a coalition of people of Ḫilakku (Rough Cilicia), led by Kirūa, city ruler of Illubru. It is impossible to determine with certainty whether Greek/Ionian people were part of this coalition.

2. Foundation. Both Alexander and Abydenus' recensions state that Sennacherib built Tarsus according to the plan of Babylon. In Abydenus there is also what seems to be an explanatory gloss: "[...] so that the River Cydnus flows through just as the Euphrates flows through Babylon". According to Dalley,<sup>22</sup> this explanation is not particularly useful for a Mesopotamian public, because it is a feature encountered in several major Mesopotamian cities. On the contrary, a Greek audience may have found it strange, and seen it as a strategical weakness against enemies (cfr. e.g. Herodotus, I 191 on Cyrus and Babylon). Another important point to stress is the concept itself of the foundation of a city. According to Sennacherib's inscription,

IV 87: URU *Illubru ana eššūte ašbat*<sup>23</sup>

I reorganized (the administration of) the city Illubru.

The verb used, *šabātu*, here in the CAD meaning 3.f "to take over a province or city for administrative purposes" is usually followed by a list of things done to reorganize that city, e.g. "rebuilding of walls, temples, palaces, resettling", as is exactly the case here (resettling). Following the description of the siege of Illubru in the previous lines, Sennacherib implicitly refers to the building activities that his men carried out to repair the damages done to the city. He does not claim to have founded the city again, and it is quite clear from the text that the city existed before him and will continue to exist under Assyrian rule. Regarding Tarsus (*Tarzu*) and Anchiāle (*Ingira*), Sennacherib declares that his troops "conquered

<sup>20</sup> Lanfranchi, 2000: 26, Lanfranchi, 2013: 67.

<sup>21</sup> Lanfranchi, 2013: 68. Lanfranchi, 2017.

<sup>22</sup> Dalley, 1999: 76.

<sup>23</sup> CAD, vol. E, s.v. *eššūtu*, 377 and CAD, vol. Š, s.v. *šabātu* 3f, 16–17.

and plundered” (*ikšudūma išlulū šallassun*) them, but it is possible that parallel building activities could have taken place that remain undocumented. In any case, both cities existed before and after his passage.

If this is the case, why did Berossos attribute the building of Tarsus to Sennacherib? According to Dalley,<sup>24</sup> it is possible here that Berossos’ original source, perhaps another inscription or a lost chronicle, used the verb *epēšu* in the CAD meaning 2b “to build or rebuild (a house, a temple or palace, or part of it)”<sup>25</sup>. Therefore, his literal understanding of the term may have brought other authors to assume that the city of Tarsus did not exist before him, which is a false statement.

3. Name. According to the recension of Alexander that was probably closer to Berossos’ original text than the one by Abydenus, Sennacherib changed the name of Tarsus (Tarzu in Assyrian, perfectly similar to the Hittite Tarša) in Tharsis after his (re)building activities. It is not fundamental to this discussion to know whether this happened in reality or not,<sup>26</sup> because this change is to be understood in the light of Berossos’ attempt at captivating his Greek audience’s interest by giving them historical material that could be used to change the Hellenistic idea of the Mesopotamian cultural world for the better. In this case, the supposed Greek etymology of Tharsis (probably from *ταρσός*, “flat of the foot”, “foot”, “hoof”)<sup>27</sup> could be easily explained in the light of the mythical Greek traditions regarding the foundation of a city (such as those of Bellerophon or Perseus, who were alternatively considered responsible for the foundation of Tarsus)<sup>28</sup>. Nevertheless, Berossos is not interested in disputing this mythical past,<sup>29</sup> only in setting the records straight regarding the role of the corrupt Sardanapalus at Tarsus.

4. Inscription. Another difference in the tale can be found in the inscription made by Sennacherib. In his Annals the king states he had the inscription sculptured on

<sup>24</sup> Dalley, 1999: 73.

<sup>25</sup> CAD, vol. E, s.v. *epēšu* 2b, 197–201.

<sup>26</sup> See Desideri / Jasink, 1990: 157–158 on the word in RINAP 4, Esar. 60, 10b’ translated by Leichty as KUR.tar-si-si = Tarsus. Rollinger, 2008: 73–80 and Rollinger, 2017: 279 is against this interpretation and rather support an identification with the classical Tartessos in southern Spain.

<sup>27</sup> Garstad, 2014: 174–175. Eratosthenes considered Tarsus a corruption of the name of Zeus Tersios, a god of ripening crops (from *τεσάινο* or *τέρσω*, “to dry”). For Stephanus Byzantius, *apud* *Ταρσός*; Eustathius, *Commentarii in Dionysium Periegetam* 861; and Nonnus of Panopolis, *Dionysiaca*, XLI, 357, the name derived from the attribute *Tersia Polis*, because Cilicia was considered to be one of the first lands to emerge after the Flood. According to John Malalas, *Chronographia*, II.11, the etymology was again linked to the word *ταρσός*, the flat of Perseus’ foot. Stephanus Byzantius, *apud* *Ταρσός*, preserves also the origin of Tarsus name according to Dionysius Thrax (after Bellerophon’s foot) and Alexander Polyhistor (after Pegasus’ hoof).

<sup>28</sup> Garstad, 2014: 174–180.

<sup>29</sup> Lanfranchi, 2000: 27, fn. 81, 30. Burstein, 1978: 24, fn. 82.

an alabaster stele he erected near Illubru. According to Alexander, the inscription was on a statue that the king erected in the battlefield; according to Abydenus, instead, the inscription was on the bronze pillars of a newly built temple of Sandes in Tarsus.<sup>30</sup> Sandes (or Šanda, Sand/ta) was the patron god of Tarsus and was a god worshipped in Cilicia at least from the Old Assyrian period (ca. 2000–1600 BCE). At a certain point, he was equated with Marduk and later also with Heracles.<sup>31</sup>

### Why Babylon?

According to Dalley,<sup>32</sup> Tarsus was the ideal place to build a cultic center based on the “sacred” plan of Babylon because of the equation Sandes = Marduk. I cannot argue if this place was truly an ideal one from a geographical point of view, but, in my opinion, Dalley is misled by the idea that Sennacherib had a cautious and pious attitude towards Babylonia because of a series of facts that supposedly linked him to that city and to Tarsus. The circumstances on which the presumed king’s connection to Tarsus is based were the death of his father, Sargon II, on the battlefield in Tabal (upper Cilicia), the will to avoid incurring the same fate (as reflected by the content of a problematic text called “The Sin of Sargon”<sup>33</sup>), and the marriage of his sister Aḫāt-abīša to the ruler of Tabal<sup>34</sup>.

According to Weaver, on the contrary,<sup>35</sup> Sennacherib had a personal problem with Babylon. A problem that escalated quickly because of the frequent rebellions to his domination and that culminated in the destruction of the city in 689 BCE.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> There are some issues regarding this specific passage. Burstein, 1978: fn 82 amends “of the Athenians” with the equation “Sandes who is Heracles”. See Lanfranchi, 2000: 24, fn. 72 and Desideri / Jasink, 1991: 156–157. Dalley, 1999 strongly supports this change.

<sup>31</sup> Dalley, 1999: 74 and RIA 07, s.v. *Marduk* A.II., 371. Burstein, 1978: 24, fn.82. Garstad, 2014: 178.

<sup>32</sup> Dalley, 1999: 73–74.

<sup>33</sup> Livingstone, 1989: 77–79. This text is known only from a single, damaged, copy, probably composed in the late years of Esarhaddon’s reign (likely between 671 or 670 BCE). Weaver, 2004: 63–65: “This text is written in the voice of Sennacherib, and not only includes no mention whatsoever of Babylon’s destruction [...] but, in its place, paints the picture of a pious Sennacherib, interested principally in determining the divine will through divination. This is a Sennacherib whose greatest goal is to create two new cult statues, one of Anšar and one of Marduk.” This Sennacherib is a fictitious one, because there are no evidence that Sargon II performed any specific actions that could warrant him a disgraceful death. Instead, this Sargon II could be “Sennacherib himself, the monarch who does not go to Babylon to claim its kingship, the ruler who destroys Babylon and Esagila, the king of Assyria who, for his first fifteen years of reign, does not even mention Marduk in his royal inscriptions.”

<sup>34</sup> Dalley, 1997: 74, fn. 7, based on Frahm, 1997: 1.

<sup>35</sup> Weaver, 2004.

<sup>36</sup> Or, in the words of Machinist, 1984–85: 362 “[...] it was precisely the fact that the

He may have had a positive attitude towards Babylon in the first part of his reign, but in the second part, he did anything necessary to erase the city and borrow its sacred traditions. Here is just a partial list of the deeds that could prove Sennacherib's troubled relationship with Babylon<sup>37</sup>: he condoned extensive destruction of the city by his troops, deported the Statue of Marduk, affirmed the preeminence of Assyrian cities over Babylon for theological reasons, equated Assur (city) with Baltil, one of the sacred toponyms of Babylon. Moreover, it was most probably during his reign that the Assyrian recension of the Enūma Eliš with the equation Aššur/Anšar for Marduk was composed.

What must also be kept in mind here is that Berossos probably hated Sennacherib because he destroyed Babylonia, and the memory of this destruction had been kept alive for centuries.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, in the Babylonian theological tradition expressed by the Enūma Eliš (Tablet VI: 57–77), Babylon was the first city built by the hands of the Great Gods and, therefore, a sacred place par excellence. After what the king had permitted to happen to Marduk's dwelling, the idea that he could build a copy or even “move” Babylonia to another place – Cilicia, of all the possible regions – was a blasphemous act. Since it was considered to have been designed by Marduk himself, no place could ever replicate the sacred landscape of Babylonia. Moreover, there are a couple of references in the Chronicles according to which the choice of building a city in the “likeness of Babylon” was a taboo.<sup>39</sup>

With the attribution to Sennacherib of a battle against the Greeks/Ionians (his supposed public!) and the construction of a replica of Babylon in Cilicia, Berossos was thus accusing Sennacherib of committing *hybris* that (in his eyes) brought the Assyrian king a perfectly tragic death at the hands of a murderer.

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Babylonian problem was not merely a technical, administrative one, but challenged on so many levels, going straight to the heart of the self-understanding of the Assyrian elites, that made it so pressing and so intractable”.

<sup>37</sup> Brinkman, 1973.

<sup>38</sup> Lanfranchi, 2013: 68–69.

<sup>39</sup> Haubold, 2013: 172, fn. 152. Glassner, 2004: Chronicle 38, lines 60–61, “He took earth out of the ground and, facing Akkade, made a city and named it Babylon. Because of the [sacrilege] he had committed, Enlil changed the word he had said and, from the East to the West, there was a revolt against him, and he was afflicted with restlessness”. Chronicle 39, lines 18–23 “He took earth away from the clay pit of Babylon and built, near Akkade, a replica of Babylon. Because of (this) fault that he had committed, the great lord Marduk, overcome with rage, diminished his people by famine. From the East to the West there was a revolt against him, and he was afflicted with restlessness”. Moreover, according to the theological worldview expressed in the Enūma Eliš, Babylon had been designed by Marduk himself and was the result of the collective building effort of all the gods together, thus giving this city an unmatched preeminence and prestige above all other cities. See Lambert, 2013: 199–201.

### The Archaeology of Tarsus

The excavations at the mound of Tarsus-Gözlükule, led by Hetty Goldman (1935–1938; 1947) and Theresa Goell (1948) for Bryn Mawr and Harvard University, and Aslı Özyar of the Boğaziçi University (2001–2019), have thus far unearthed only a part of the ancient settlement of Tarsus.

“The double-peaked mound of Gözlükule was located on the banks of the Berdan or Tarsus Çayı (gr. Kydnos). Today the site rises in the southern periphery of modern Tarsus. The occupation levels reach to ca. 37 m above sea level of which at least 10 m is buried in the alluvial plain. The Goldman team worked in two areas: Section A located on the highest part of the mound and Section B in the saddle area between the peaks.”<sup>40</sup>

The recent excavations at Tarsus (2007–2019), carried out by a joint project between the Bryn Mawr College and University Boğaziçi, have focused on Goldman Mound A, where no Assyrian phases have been unearthed so far. Therefore, all the information regarding the Assyrian occupation of Tarsus is still limited to the findings of the archaeological campaigns directed by Goldman and Goell between 1935 and 1948.

In these, according to Goldman, a level of destruction was identified and dated to Sennacherib’s campaign in Cilicia in 696 BCE, followed by the construction of a fortification wall that seemed to imply that the settlement “had shrunk into smaller confines”.<sup>41</sup> Boardman, however, challenged these conclusions, by stressing the fact that the excavated section (S. B) was not large enough to be representative of the whole settlement. Moreover, the so-called “destruction fill” (following destruction by fire)<sup>42</sup> contained little to no evidence of burnt material, and he argued that also the floors of the surrounding building did not sustain this interpretation. In addition to this, the material from the “destruction fill” may have been brought from other areas and over a long period, not necessarily immediately after Sennacherib’s conquest.

Finally, to explain the clarification made by Abydenus regarding the similarities between Babylon and Tarsus, one must suppose that Sennacherib did not build or re-build “his” settlement on Gözlükule, where it had been since Neolithic times, but on its north-east side, where the classical and modern Tarsus lay. Sennacherib’s building activities in another part of the ancient settlement would have produced a new occupied area divided in two parts by the river (hence the likeness of Babylon). The newly built area would later become the city that we know today, while the older part would subsequently develop as a suburb to the new city center. In Boardman’s words: “This is very much what the rather unimpressive Assyrian occupation of Gözlükule in the area excavated might suggest and would

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<sup>40</sup> Cilicia Chronology Group, 2017: 162.

<sup>41</sup> Goldman, 1963: 8.

<sup>42</sup> Boardman, 1965.



go some way to explain the ‘enigmatic lacuna of two centuries (520–320 B.C.)’ there.”<sup>43</sup>

### Conclusions

The excavations at Tarsus do not particularly support the claim that Tarsus was built according to the sacred plan of Babylon, but only that the city sustained some destruction probably during Sennacherib’s campaign in Cilicia in 696 BCE. Moreover, probably under the Assyrian domination, the site experienced an internal subdivision, with building activities concentrated in a new part of the settlement.

The sources analyzed here seem to hint that Berossos used this claim in a subtle way to emphasize Sennacherib’s misdeeds: of the many facts happening during his reign, Berossos decided to cite only this one, for the possible connections with his Greek/Ionian audience. Even if his supposed Greek public was not aware of the taboo surrounding the so-called “likeness of Babylon”, it seems that he inserted this detail to justify Sennacherib’s violent death as the fitting punishment for destroying Babylon, fighting the Greeks/Ionians and daring to build a replica of his own beloved city. It has been supposed that Berossos “not only engaged with earlier Greek literature and philosophy, but also with the Greek political discourse of his time”<sup>44</sup>, so in trying to draw connections between the Babylonians and the Greeks, what could be considered more Hellenic than the concept of *hybris*?

In this scenario, the reason for setting the scene in Tarsus could be that he used the expedient of the Sardanapalus’ epitaph to engage with Greek history and to place the blame for the only Greek-Assyrian battle ever recorded during the Cilician campaign of the “evil” Sennacherib.

### Abbreviations

BCE: Before Common Era

BM: Museum siglum of the British Museum, London

CAD: *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*. Chicago 1956 ff.

Esar.: Esarhaddon

FGrHist: Jacoby, F., 1923–1958: *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*. Berlin / Leiden.

GMII: Museum siglum of the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow.

m a.s.l.: meters above sea level

RINAP: The Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period

RIA: *Reallexikon der Assyriologie (und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie)*. Berlin 1928 ff.

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<sup>43</sup> Boardman, 1965: 12.

<sup>44</sup> Stevens, 2019: 104.

Rm: Museum siglum of the British Museum (Rassam)

Sarg. II: Sargon II

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# Pots and People again?

Changing Boundaries in the Levant between the Canaanites and Phoenicians

Marco Iamoni

## Abstract

This work concerns the presence of pottery boundaries in the Levant, and in particular their variations between the last centuries of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium (Late Bronze Age II) and the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium (Iron Age I and II). The goal is to demonstrate the significant continuity that characterises two ceramic traditions that, although rather different at first sight, on closer analysis show several traits in common. At the same time this analysis explores the occurrence of local pottery traditions that may help to understand in more detail the genesis of the “Phoenician phenomenon”. A further aim of this study is to demonstrate the indissoluble links between Phoenician societies and their preceding LB Canaanite counterparts. This gives a more detailed picture of the origin of Phoenician culture, as well as the dynamics that shaped its development during the first three centuries of the first millennium BCE.

## Introduction

Pottery has been traditionally considered one of the most suitable archaeological indicators with which to conduct reliable regional investigations, *i.e.* studies that permit the identification of areas which have specific cultural traits in common – such as, in the case of pottery, the occurrence of similar ceramic types. Although the utilitarian character of some pottery forms can occasionally make them rather conservative, the chronological and spatial variability of ceramic types is a well-known trait that allows investigations to be conducted regarding their distribution over both small and large regions.<sup>1</sup> Definitions such as “ceramic provinces”<sup>2</sup> have, therefore, now become part of the common archaeological language and point to pottery’s importance as a crucial indicator for understanding the many dynamics shaping the cultural changes characterising regions throughout different epochs. Among the many implications derived from the use of a regional approach in the study of pottery, the “ethnic side” is probably one of the most straightforward, as well as controversial.<sup>3</sup> The possibility that ceramics might reflect ethnic traits initially raised enthusiasm, especially when archaeological investigations followed a cultural-historical approach;<sup>4</sup> for this reason, it has been sometimes been right-

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<sup>1</sup> Wood, 1990: 84–85.

<sup>2</sup> Kühne, 1976; Mazzoni, 1985; 2000a.

<sup>3</sup> Mazzoni, 2000a.

<sup>4</sup> Jones, 1997: 15–16.

fully blamed as a deterministic approach that is based on historical preconceptions, and in this respect has few links with solid archaeological evidence. This resulted in overestimation of the relationship between ceramic traditions and “ethnic groups”: harsh criticism rapidly questioned the real significance of pottery as an ethnic marker<sup>5</sup> and as a consequence any study based on this approach.

More recently, this position has been contested by major anthropological works following Barth’s seminal study<sup>6</sup>, which might be considered a milestone in the study of ethnicity. These works<sup>7</sup> demonstrated the usefulness of the ethnic approach in ceramic studies, especially on the basis of the following considerations:

- pottery is the most ubiquitous class of artefact found in archaeological contexts and consequently provides one of the most useful bodies of data for the establishment of regional correlations at any level (e.g. social, economic, political).
- Second, it is undeniable that there is a relationship between users, makers and artefacts and this relationship cannot be forgotten when we work on the finds. That does not necessarily mean that pottery’s significance is mainly “ethnic” (whatever meaning we may give to this term). It is a researcher’s duty to verify which type of interpretation would be correct to give and which model to adopt in the study of pottery evidence.

So, on the basis of this short preamble (by means of which I have tried to briefly synthesise decades of discussion, criticisms and furious quarrels among experts), we can safely say that, although the equation pots = people may still raise many doubts, an exploration of the body of pottery data in this sense (and guided by a cautious approach) is acceptable. This holds particularly true when it permits the study of the nature of a specific ceramic tradition under investigation. Denying this possibility would mean deleting *a priori* one of the many sources of data that characterise pottery.<sup>8</sup>

A further consideration concerns the two social-ethnic groups and their “related” pottery traditions that characterise the Late Bronze and the Iron Age in the Levant.

Canaanites are traditionally considered to have been the predominant group, especially in the Central and Southern coastal area of the Levant, during the second half of the second millennium BC.<sup>9</sup> The Iron Age, on the other hand, saw the emergence of Phoenicians as the dominant group in the region.<sup>10</sup> Both assump-

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<sup>5</sup> Kramer / Buccellati, 1977.

<sup>6</sup> Barth, 1969.

<sup>7</sup> See for example Dever, 1995, and the contributions (in particular the introduction) in Skibo / Feinman (eds.), 1999.

<sup>8</sup> Emberling, 1997; Jasmin, 2006:196

<sup>9</sup> Greenberg, 2019: 188; Jasmin, 2006: 197.

<sup>10</sup> Aubet, 1993: 26–54; Sader, 2019.

tions have raised doubts and criticisms concerning the occurrence of real ethnicities/ethnic groups dominating the socio-political world of the Levant. The Canaanite definition may have a connection with ancient textual sources – where the word seems to derive from a regional name whose attestations may go back as early as the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BCE, with continuous use until the first millennium BCE.<sup>11</sup> Cuneiform texts from Nuzi dating to the 15<sup>th</sup> century provided a term, *Kinakku*, that might refer to the Canaanites.<sup>12</sup> Noticeably, the echo of the Canaanite ethnic group remained in historical accounts of the Classical epoch that mention *Chnaan* as the area of origin of ancient Phoenicians.<sup>13</sup>

Archaeological investigations have provided evidence supporting this interpretation: data from studies focussed on architectural evidence as well as on pottery production especially suggest the occurrence of a cultural homogeneity that might have mirrored Canaanite society.<sup>14</sup>

Defining Phoenicians, on the other hand, seems to be more problematic. “Phoenician identity” has attracted a number of studies with contrasting positions deriving mostly from the absence of the self-definition (and consequently self-consciousness) of inhabitants of Tyre, Sidon etc. as Phoenicians.<sup>15</sup> Although this has led to questioning of the significance and truthfulness of this concept, current studies converge towards the existence of a “Phoenician cultural entity” which, albeit still in need of further corrections, justifies its methodological use.<sup>16</sup>

### **Settlements, cities and material culture**

From the point of view of settlement pattern, Canaanite and Phoenician cities are located in the central Levant, which mostly corresponds to modern Lebanon, south western Syria and northern Israel/Palestine (fig. 1). Although a clear and sharp definition of Canaanite and Phoenician geographical boundaries is hard to produce, an initial reading of the archaeological data placed with some confidence the major Canaanite centres between Ashkelon and Sidon, therefore in a region extending between southern Palestine/Israel and southern Lebanon. Main Phoenician settlements occur also in this latter region (i.e. southern Lebanon), with other important centres such as Gubla/Byblos and Aradu/Arwad located further north, in areas reaching the coast of modern-day Syria. “Recent” investigations suggest extending the “Phoenician” border further south, in the region of Galilee and along the northern coast of present-day Israel. Substantial archaeological evidence interpreted as “Phoenician” has been found in sites such as Tell Keisan and

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<sup>11</sup> Edrey, 2019: 5–6.

<sup>12</sup> Aubet, 1993: 11.

<sup>13</sup> Quinn, 2018: 37; Sader, 2019: 2–3.

<sup>14</sup> Ilan, 1995: 300–301; Panitz-Cohen, 2014: 550–552.

<sup>15</sup> Edrey, 2019; Bondi, 2009.

<sup>16</sup> Quinn, 2018: 201–202.

Tell Dor on the coast near Mount Carmel<sup>17</sup>. A more or less general consensus has been now reached that Arwad and the area of Keisan/Dor might be taken as the northern and southern borders of the Phoenician “region”, whatever meaning we may want to give to this term.<sup>18</sup> The two ethnic groups (Canaanites and Phoenicians) therefore spread over areas that did not coincide completely, but certainly overlapped to a significant extent, especially around sites such as Hazor, Megiddo, Tyre/Sur and Sidon/Saida, thus further strengthening the correlation between the two ethnic/cultural groups.

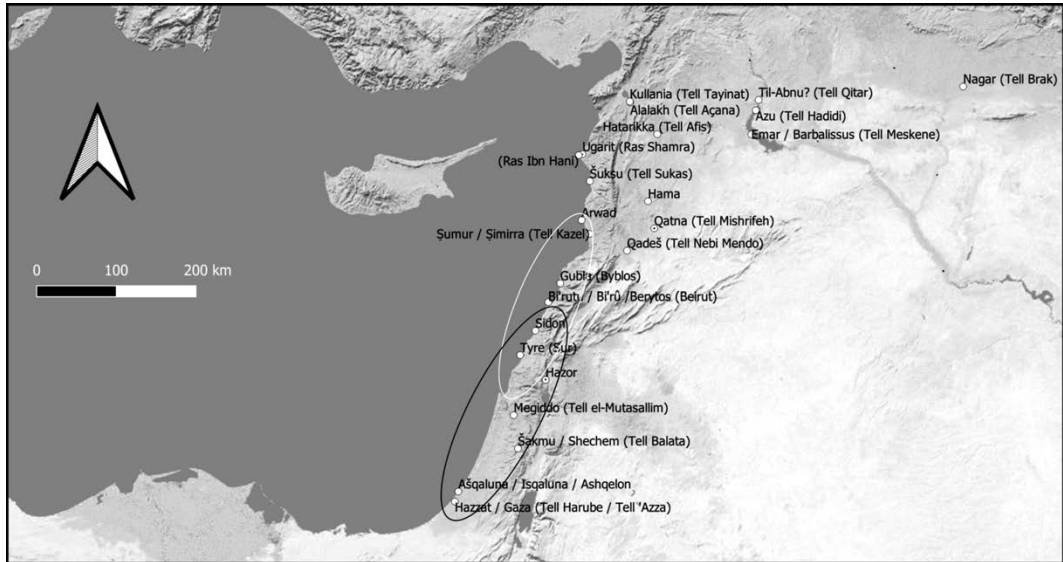


Figure 1: map of the Levant with approximate extension of the Canaanite (black) and Phoenician (white) regions (basemap ESRI Terrain)

The goal of this paper is therefore to verify whether the pottery traditions mirror the presence of such borders and, if so (or if not), whether they tell us anything that might usefully shed light on the origin of these borders.

The first body of data concerns therefore the Late Bronze Age, *i.e.* an epoch during which the Levant was characterised by several urban polities controlling small local kingdoms that were under the dominion of the great empires of the epoch, *i.e.* New Kingdom Egypt in the Southern Levant and Mittani and later the Hittite empire in the Northern Levant.<sup>19</sup>

To carry out this analysis I relied on two studies conducted on the LBA ce-

<sup>17</sup> Briend / Humbert, 1980; Gilboa / Ilan, 2008.

<sup>18</sup> Sader, 2019: 8–15.

<sup>19</sup> Grandet, 2022; von Dassow, 2022; Weeden, 2022.



ramic corpus of Qatna, a major urban centre of the MB and LBA, which has provided substantial evidence pertinent to the definition of the regional pottery provinces that characterised the Levant (especially the inner regions) during the 14<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE. The first of these studies I conducted myself<sup>20</sup>: I analysed a body of data composed of 9085 diagnostic potsherds (that is, pieces with recognisable traits such as rims, bases and decorated bodies). More than 5000 dated to the LBA. Via a combination of statistical analyses (descriptive, inferential and multivariate, see fig. 2) it was possible to provide a seriation of the ceramic types which enabled the highlighting of similarities with assemblages from other sites located in proximity to Qatna and in neighbouring regions.

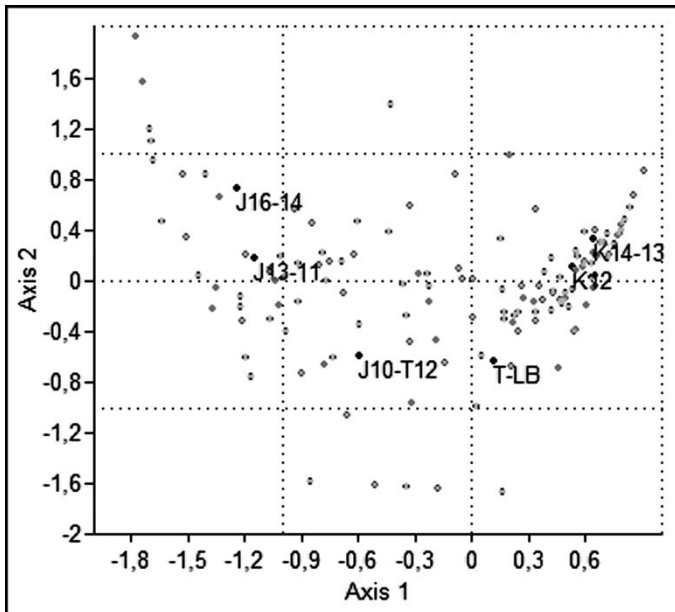


Figure 2: Correspondence Analysis of the ceramic assemblages of Qatna (Iamoni, 2012: 166); the dots indicate the pottery types whereas the codes show the position of each group of archaeological phases. The chart provides a visual seriation with a general chronological trend: the earliest MB II phases and pottery types are located on the left side of the chart whereas the later, corresponding to the LB II, are on the right side. The results of this analysis provided the ceramic seriation that formed the basis of regional considerations concerning the LBA.

As far as the LBA is concerned, the picture obtained was rather clear (fig. 3): it showed the presence of an extensive zone in which pottery types were shared over a significant portion of what might be called the inner Levant (extending as

<sup>20</sup> Iamoni, 2012.

far as the upper Euphrates area). Regions with significant sets of traits in common were recognised as well and are bordered in black; these indicate a degree of similarity which, although considerable, is not sufficient to include them within a single pottery region.

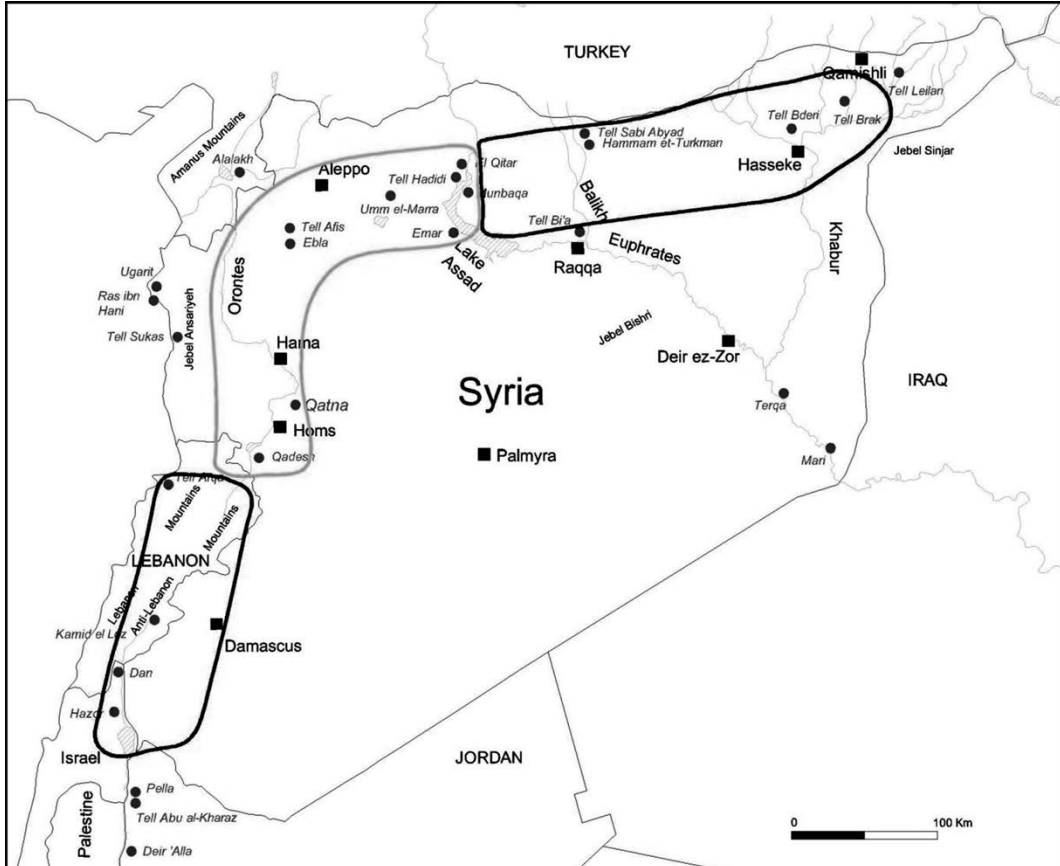


Figure 3: the LBA ceramic regions in Inner Syria and the Levant (Iamoni 2012: 83, Fig. VI-2.).

The second study was carried out by S. Döpper, who focussed her research on the LBA ceramic assemblages of Mishrifeh/Qatna excavated in the sectors of the Royal Palace excavated by the joint Syrian-German mission – namely areas G, DK, BU and the so-called “Tombeau II”, a hypogeum discovered by the French mission that began the first investigations at the site during the 1930s.<sup>21</sup> Her study took into consideration a very large number of sites ranging from the Southern Levant to the Upper Euphrates area: in total 58 different sites were examined and

<sup>21</sup> Döpper, 2019; Du Mesnil du Buisson, 1935.

18,956 sherds considered.<sup>22</sup> The investigation method was quite similar and relied on the exploration of the data via statistics, including Correspondence Analysis (fig. 4), a multivariate statistical technique that permits exploration of the nature/type of relationships between different corpora of data.<sup>23</sup>

Although mostly focussed on the functional and chronological aspect of the pottery assemblages, the results achieved also permitted some considerations regarding the regional distribution of the different traditions. These showed a similar pattern to that described above, with the emergence of discrete regions among which the coastal Levant seems to be rather independent from inner Syria. The latter, in fact, shows significant points of contact with the Upper Euphrates area. Both regions (coastal Levant and inner Syria) have some traits in common, but the number of types in common is not sufficient to consider them as a single region.

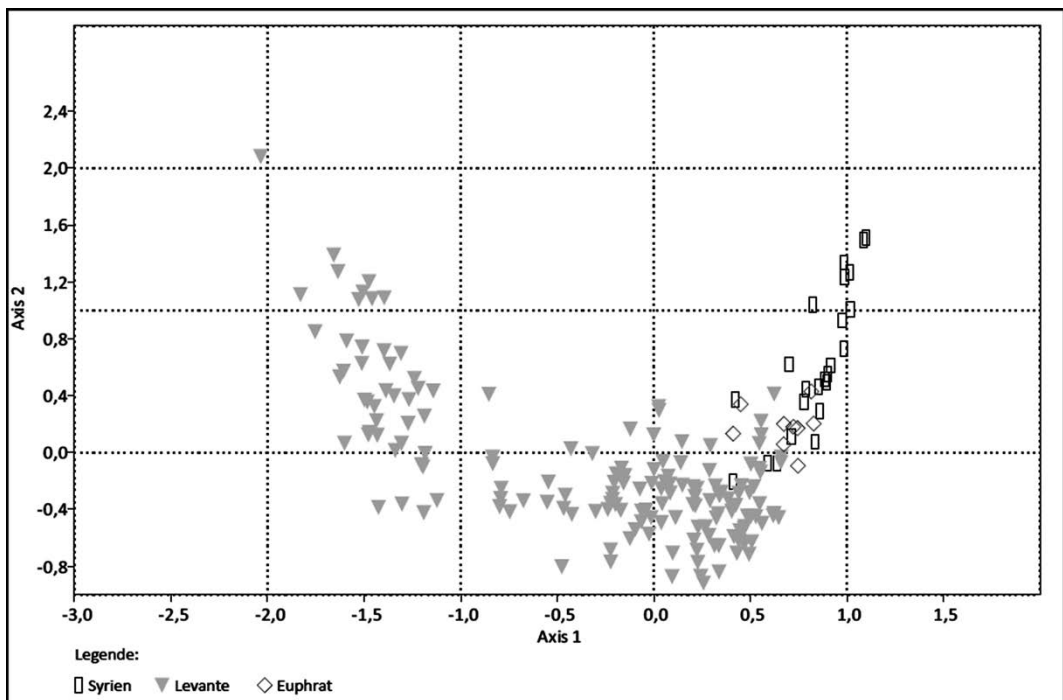


Figure 4: Correspondence analysis of the ceramic assemblages analysed by S. Döpper in her monograph, showing the substantial independence of the Levantine sites from the inner regions (after Döpper, 2019: 211, fig. 113)

<sup>22</sup> Döpper, 2019: 155.

<sup>23</sup> Baxter, 2003; Greenacre, 2007.

Both studies provided crucial insights into the definition of ceramic regions characterising both coastal and inner Levant (fig. 5). The first of these concerns the existence of “borders” in the internal region: the analysis of the pottery assemblages demonstrated the existence of a major ceramic border, *i.e.* a limit to the distribution of types characterising a specific ceramic tradition, that separated an area roughly located in modern inner western Syria from the southern inner region located in the Beqa’a and the Jordan valley. The position of this border corresponded approximately to Tell Nebi Mend / Qadesh, which thus functioned as a “frontier site”. Beyond that point the pottery assemblages show blurred traits in common with inner Syria. This may be interpreted as a consequence of intense contacts between urban sites in Syria (e.g. Hama and Qatna) and those located further south, such as Kamid el Loz, ancient Kumidi. The nature of these ceramic traditions and their relevance to understanding the social communities living in the Levant are discussed below.

The second is the presence of another region located along the coast, that, although characterised by types shared with inland areas, has a definitely diverse ceramic “profile” (especially with regard to form types) that makes it original and somehow independent from the inner area. The position of the boundary dividing the coastal region from the inner areas can be easily placed along the mountain chains – *i.e.* the Lebanon mountains and further north the Jebel Ansarye – that form a natural barrier. With the exception of a few passages, the most important being the “Homs Gap”, these reliefs have hampered contacts between settlements, bringing about a significant differentiation of the local/regional pottery traditions. Further breaks in this coastal ceramic province are difficult to assess due to the lack of consistent data; it is however possible to propose another border, again in correspondence with the plain of Akkar, in the light of a significant difference between the local LB pottery assemblages and those of Mishrifeh/Qatna.<sup>24</sup> Noticeably, this border continues along the same line that joins Tell Nebi Mend / Qadesh, thus forming a hypothetical single ceramic frontier.

As far as the central and southern Levantine regions these seem to continue to show this same differentiation, with an inner region that diverges sometimes from the coastal area. Specific studies focussed on the identification of LB ceramic provinces have not been carried out, yet a generic distinction between Israel/Palestine and Jordan – which emerges clearly in a rather differentiated chronological scheme – has been proposed.<sup>25</sup> Hopefully, future studies will address this topic and provide more precise insights on the nature of the ceramic traditions characterising the region.<sup>26</sup> The natural southern border of this area might be fixed approximately around the modern city of Gaza.

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<sup>24</sup> Iamoni, 2012: 185–186.

<sup>25</sup> Fischer, 2014: 563; Panitz-Cohen, 2014: 542.

<sup>26</sup> Sherrat, 2014.

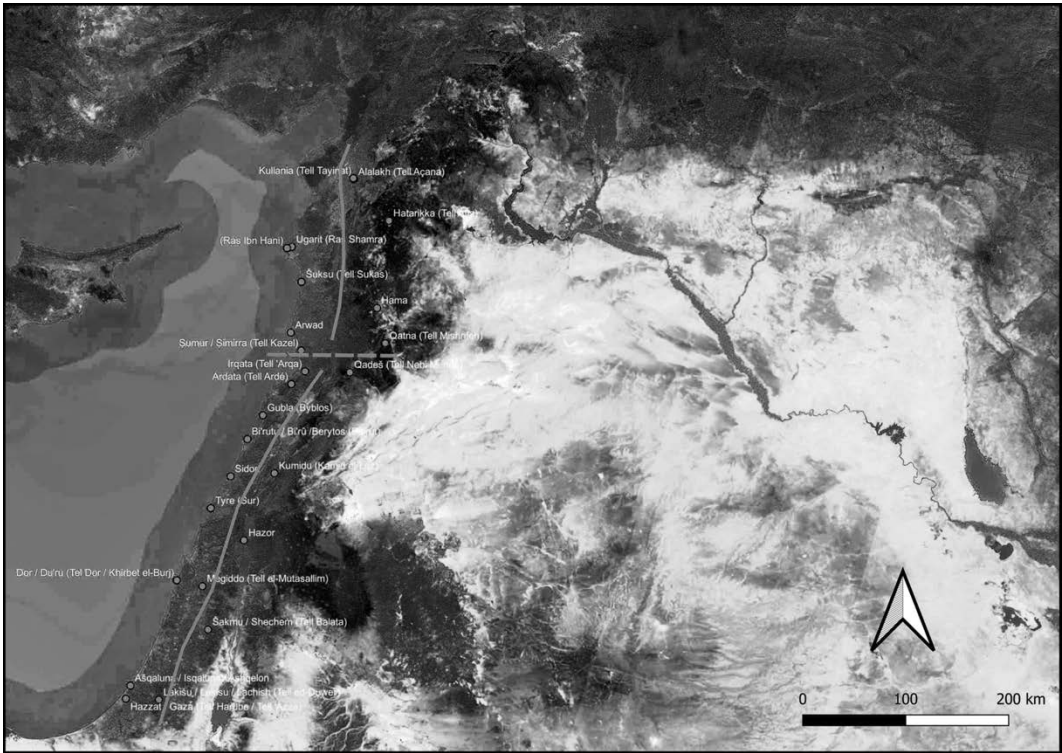


Figure 5: hypothetical definition of the LB ceramic regions

The study of the following epoch is based on two major works that have investigated the Iron Age ceramics of the Levant. The first is Lehmann's "*Untersuchungen zur späten Eisenzeit in Syrien und Libanon*"<sup>27</sup> and the second is Whincop's investigation of the role of pottery in the Northern Levant which appeared in the book "Pots, People, and Politics: A Reconsideration of the Role of Ceramics in Reconstructions of the Iron Age Northern Levant" and was followed by two other studies that further explored the various ceramic provinces in the Levant area.<sup>28</sup>

Both works provide extensive re-analyses of the distribution of ceramic traditions in the Levant; above all, they are based on the application of techniques similar to those used in the previous investigation of the LBA, *i.e.* they rely on statistical tools that permit a more detailed exploration of the similarities and dissimilarities between the different ceramic corpora. They therefore provide data that, within the limits of such an extensive investigation, are comparable to a considerable extent.

<sup>27</sup> Lehmann, 1996.

<sup>28</sup> Whincop, 2006; 2009; 2010.

Lehmann's work furnishes the most extensive results: his ambitious analysis is based on the identification of 9 distinct ceramic assemblages, which cover the entire Levant. However, his work deals mostly with the more recent phases of the Iron Age, e.g. Iron II and III, and hence offers a perspective that somehow reflects the end of processes that occurred between the late Iron I and early Iron II.

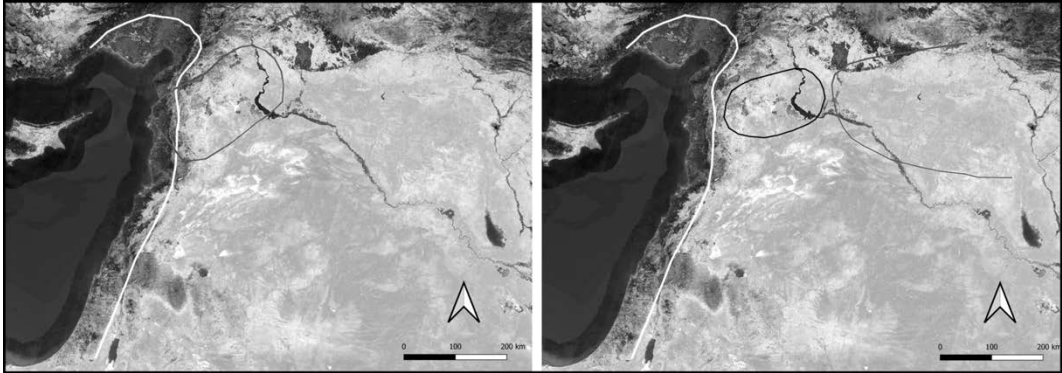


Figure 6: Lehmann's ceramic assemblages 1–2 (left) and 3–4 (right), re-drawn by the author in Qgis (basemap Sentinel 2 Image; after Lehman, 1996: figs. 4.4–4.7).

Fig. 6 shows the most interesting results of Lehmann's study, *i.e.* those concerning the analysis of Assemblage 1–2 which date to the Iron II B–C, corresponding mostly to the mid-late 8<sup>th</sup>–7<sup>th</sup> century BCE, and Assemblage 3–4, which date to the very end of Iron II C (7<sup>th</sup>–early 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE). As we can see there was an overwhelming standardization of the pottery tradition that initially embraced the entire Levant and in a second phase extended towards the inner region, in particular the Euphrates area. This suggests that during the mid-late Iron Age epoch the entire Levant was characterised by an extensive degree of homogeneity with regard to its ceramic culture.

It is noteworthy that this homogeneity was already well established during the Iron II, suggesting that its occurrence was a phenomenon already well rooted in the region.

A clearer view in this respect may be offered by Whincop's work, which includes the earlier phases, *i.e.* the Iron I, with a particular focus on the central Northern Levant. However, it must be stressed that Whincop's work lacks a chronological periodization: his original study<sup>29</sup> did not provide clear evidence suitable for chronological correlation between pottery assemblages and Iron Age phases, hence he focussed more on the regional significance of the ceramic traditions characterising each site taken into consideration.

<sup>29</sup> Whincop, 2009: 199–200.

Table 1: the relative and absolute chronology of Lehmann's ceramic assemblages (re-drawn by the author after Lehmann, 1996: 87)

Period	Assemblage	Absolute chronology
Iron Age IIC	1	Until c. 720 BC
	2	c. 720–700 BC
	3	c. 700–650 BC
	4	c. 650–580 BC
Iron Age III	5	c. 580–540 BC
	6	c. 540–440 BC
	7	c. 440–360 BC
	8	c. 360–330 BC

His analysis included 54 different sites characterised by a substantial corpus of ceramic data. One of the goals was to verify the existence of generic regional boundaries within the Northern Levant. This permitted him to single out a distinction between the coastal settlements – and their related pottery tradition – and the inner region of the Levant (fig. 7); in a following step he carried out a further investigation of distinct ceramic corpora in order to explore the existence of specific relationships between local traditions. As a result, Whincop proposed a correlation between the area of the Beqa'a and the Jezreel Valley but – somewhat surprisingly – not with the Orontes.

As far as the Levant coast is concerned, he suggested the existence of only a very marginal connection between the Southern Levant (Palestine) and central and northern Levant (fig. 8). The area broadly corresponding to the Akkar plain and the Gap of Homs therefore constituted a boundary separating the Iron Age ceramic regions; noticeably this border coincides with regions and limits already existent during the Late Bronze Age and described above.

These two lines of evidence point to the occurrence of local internal dynamics during the first millennium that may have significantly affected the general picture proposed above. In other words, the existence of a generally homogeneous ceramic culture in the Levant during the Iron Age characterised by two main traditions located in the coastal and the inner region, might in fact be much more complex. At a lower/local level it might be much more fragmented due to the occurrence of socio-economic dynamics that constantly re-shaped the picture of the ceramic traditions characterising the Levant during the Iron Age. In the southern Levant such fragmentation has been suggested especially for the early Iron Age, in contrast with the preceding LBA which was characterised by smoother borders.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Jasmin, 2006: 212–213; 227–228; Mazar, 2015: 8–9; Mullins / Yannai, 2019: 152–153.

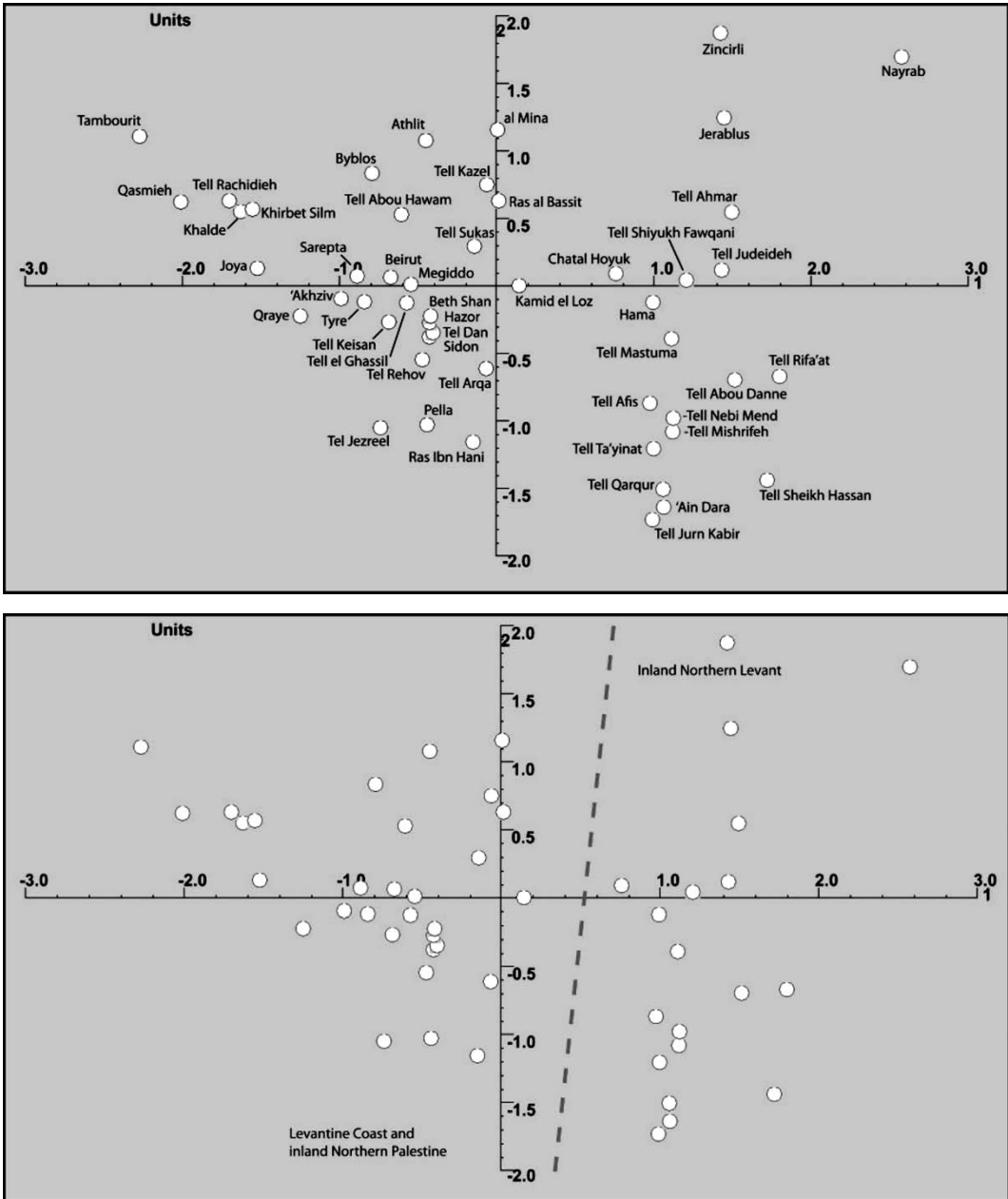


Figure 7: Whincop's CAs showing differentiations between northern Levantine coastal and inland sites (after Whincop, 2010: 38–39, chart 1 and 1a)



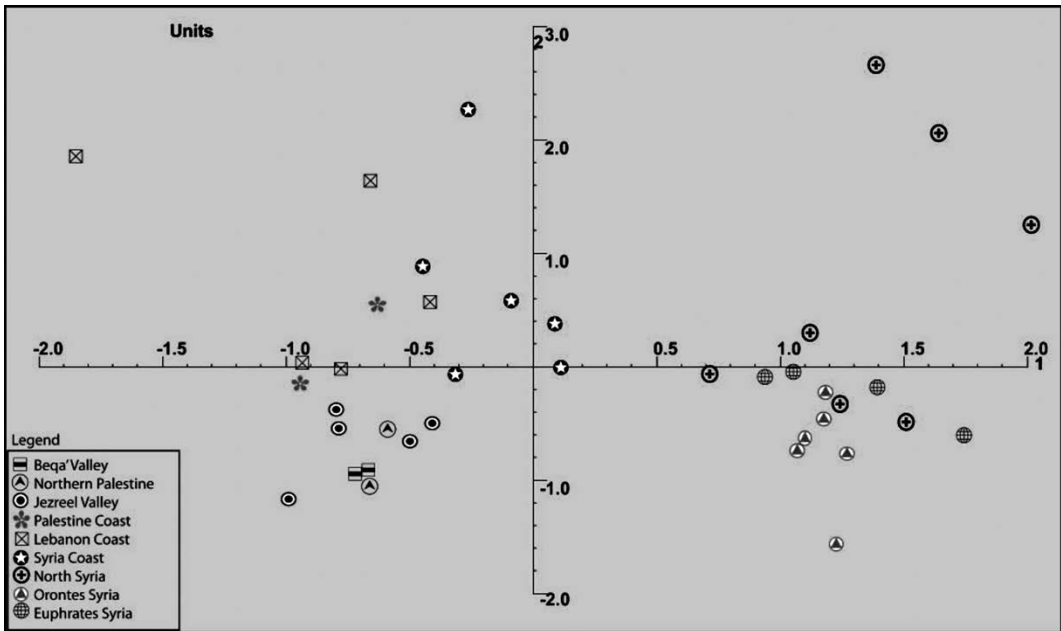


Figure 8: Whincop's CA analysis showing the differentiation between south-central coastal sites and northern coastal settlements (after Whincop, 2010: 40, chart 2)

### **Canaanites, Phoenicians and the ceramic traditions of the Levant**

The picture outlined is based on the ceramic evidence of the Late Bronze and Iron Age and, as such, has still had a limited impact on the reconstruction of the social/ethnic boundaries that defined the Canaanite and Phoenician presence in the Levant. Integration of the archaeological evidence with the geographical and textual/historical data is therefore necessary in order to propose a more precise picture which might use the pottery evidence to define the social/ethnic groups dominating the Levantine landscape in the late second and early first millennium BCE.

From a geographical point of view, the different ceramic traditions characterising contiguous regions (the coast and the inner areas, the northern and the southern regions) seem to broadly follow the geographical boundaries of the Levant. These ceramic borders seem quite comprehensible: a rather continuous chain of mountains separates the coast from the inner Levant. This may have hampered contacts between settlements, thus creating frontiers in the formation of material cultures that may have existed throughout different epochs. It is therefore not surprising to discover that a similar picture characterised the Levant during the LBA and the Iron Age.

A more interesting frontier occurs in the Akkar plain, more precisely in proximity to sites such as Tell Arqa and, in inner Syria, Qadesh. Its relevance is increased by its occurrence in both the Late Bronze and early Iron Ages, whereas

in later phases it seems to disappear. The reasons for this barrier are multiple and historical information can shed light in this respect. A first possible explanation deals with socio-political events that characterised the Levant during the 14<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE. This regards especially the historical importance of Qadesh, a “frontier city” whose control had long been disputed by the Egyptian and the Hittite empires, although, since Tuthmosis III’s expansionist political strategy – and with exception of a few ephemeral Mittanian military campaigns – one may safely say that it represented mostly the northern edge of the Egyptian presence in the Levant.<sup>31</sup>

The position of Qadesh favoured confrontation between the two dominant entities and eventually resulted in its being the arena for one of the most important – and famous – battles fought in the Levant, *i.e.* the conflict that saw the Hittites, led by Muwattalli, and the Egyptians, under the command of Ramses II, fighting for the control of the region, and possibly the entire Levant.<sup>32</sup> The following “Eternal Treaty”<sup>33</sup> marked the end of hostilities and fixed a border between the most powerful empires dominating the region. The *limes* represented by Qadesh lasted about 400 years, *i.e.* since the beginning of the New Kingdom and especially since the rise of the Tuthmosis dynasty. It is therefore easy to imagine that political influence together with the geographical boundaries contributed significantly to the formation of different traditions: the analysis of the LBA pottery traditions agrees on this point, *i.e.* on the emergence of societies that, although in contact with one another, were influenced by the long-lasting presence of empires dominating the region, eventually creating material cultures that differed significantly. Most importantly, the impact of this “geo-political fracture” was so rooted in the region that it lasted also during the early Iron Age until the 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE.

More or less in this latter century we observe the beginning of a process of increasing standardization and/or homogeneity of the material culture that worked at supra-regional level and re-shaped the general picture of the Levant, with the formation of larger ceramic *koiné* that characterised the entire Levant both internally and on its external side. Again, what determined the emergence of this larger common horizon? A reasonable explanation might refer to the stable presence of a new empire, namely the Assyrian empire. The Assyrians were not new in the landscape of the Levant; in the 9<sup>th</sup> century they started to raid and collect booty, generating reaction from the local kingdoms in the famous battle of Qarqur, but it was only from the reign of Tiglath-pileser III (744–722) that the Assyrians started to control the Levant more systematically.<sup>34</sup> The region’s political re-organization, with the creation of provinces under direct control of the Assyrian kings, facilitated long-distance contacts and in turn must have played a crucial

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<sup>31</sup> Grandet, 2022: 411–415.

<sup>32</sup> Bryce, 2014: 71–76.

<sup>33</sup> Bryce, 2014: 76–77.

<sup>34</sup> Bagg, 2017: 270–271.

role in the formation of a wider pottery culture in common in the Levant.<sup>35</sup>

The influence of supra-regional entities can therefore provide further insights into the transformation of the material/ceramic cultures of the Levant during the Iron Age (and in turn of the societies that used them).

However, in the context of the general standardization of the pottery culture it is hard to find clues that may help us to better understand the emergence of Phoenician societies. At most, the above-discussed scenario would appear to justify only a rather generic distinction between coastal and internal Levant, yet if we turn our attention to more local traditions the existence of more discrete groups that composed the Iron Age pottery landscape may be observed. The connection between the Beqa'a and the Jezreel Valley was evidenced by Lehmann's study. At the same time, Whincop's analysis stresses a significant aggregation level of the central Levantine coastal settlements (see fig. 8) and this may suggest the existence of a substantial cultural horizon that we may be tempted to define as an expression of a coherent/homogenous Phoenician tradition characterising the region. The previous LBA evidence suggested only a rather generic ceramic coastal *koinè* divided into two major regions (Northern and Southern Levant), which might have been a direct consequence of the presence (and dominion) in the Levant of Egypt in the south and Mittani and later the Hittites in the north.<sup>36</sup> From a wider chronological perspective, we may therefore envision the emergence of a more distinctive and restricted group of coastal settlements out of a previous more widespread Late Bronze Age tradition of settlements that may be generically defined as Canaanite.

In this sense the Phoenician tradition might be seen as a segment of wider pre-existing cultural substratum that appeared in the first millennium BCE. The turmoil that upset the Levant between the very end of the Late Bronze Age and the beginning of the Iron Age further contributed to the region's fragmentation. In particular it seems that the major conflicts occurred mostly in the Northern Levant, e.g. at Ugarit, which was never resettled after its destruction in the early 12<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>37</sup> and Tell Kazel, where substantial traces of destruction levels were encountered during excavation of the main mound.<sup>38</sup>

On the contrary, the central Levant, *i.e.* the area extending between the Plain of Akkar and Mount Carmel, seems to have been touched only marginally – if not indeed completely spared – by the dramatic events of the late LBA and early Iron Age. The absence of destruction levels in key sequences such as those excavated at Tyre and Sarepta offers convincing evidence for this interpretation.<sup>39</sup> This may have in turn facilitated the continuation of a homogeneous cultural tradition that

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<sup>35</sup> Mazzoni, 2000a–b.

<sup>36</sup> Killebrew, 2019.

<sup>37</sup> Yon, 1997; 2006.

<sup>38</sup> Badre, 2013; Badre *et al.*, 2018.

<sup>39</sup> Anderson, 1988; Aubet, 1993: 25.

later appeared (or, from a western perspective, was recognised) as the Phoenician *koine*.<sup>40</sup>

However, we have to consider four *caveats* before labelling this homogeneity as the consequence of an ethnic phenomenon.

The first is that from a statistical point of view it is possible – or even likely – that such similarity should also be found in previous epochs. In other terms one may presume that this similarity may to some extent also characterise Tyre, Sidon and Beirut during the MB or LBA. It would be necessary to test the similarity in two chronologically different case studies in order to single out a significant level of correlation between Phoenician society and ceramic tradition. If this analysis should document an increasing number of shared pottery types from the MB or LB to the Iron Age, this might support the idea of an emerging social homogeneity of coastal sites – thus reflecting the appearance of Phoenician culture. However, unfortunately this work has not yet been done, leaving the unpleasant feeling that a piece is missing from this analysis.

The second is that pottery may not be the best indicator for the identification of possible ethnic groups; in specific periods other artefact classes may be more distinctive. Votive terracotta, or masks or precious items such as ivory or metal objects as evidence of expressive forms of art<sup>41</sup> might also be possible indicators of a Phoenician ethnic element. Similarly, data from particular contexts such as burial customs might offer more reliable case studies, in the light of the plausibly closer correlation between the deceased and their material culture.

Third, the excavated sites – both with regard to context types and dimensions of investigated areas – are obviously different. Operations vary from small tranches covering a few tens of square metres to large open-area excavations in big sites investigated for years or even decades, such as at Hazor, Megiddo and Qatna. The excavated assemblages may thus differ significantly also with regard to the quantity and quality of pottery found and not only because they belong to a specific ceramic regional tradition. Furthermore, each site may have had a different role, with some that might have been more administrative in character, whereas others, such as Sarepta, might have been productive centres.<sup>42</sup> A good example of this might be Mishrifeh, which throughout its existence was a village/small urban centre (EBA), a regional capital (MBA), a major political centre (LBA) and, eventually, a site dedicated to the production of textiles during the Iron Age.<sup>43</sup> All these different phases throughout the life of a single settlement might have determined different ceramic typological spectra. However, it should at the same time be stressed that a radical modification of the pottery production in this sense (especially of the types) is still to be ascertained, especially when the

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<sup>40</sup> Killebrew, 2019.

<sup>41</sup> Feldman, 2014.

<sup>42</sup> Anderson, 1988.

<sup>43</sup> Iamoni, 2015; Morandi Bonacossi, 2009; 2019; Morandi Bonacossi / Al-Maqdissi, 2007.

analysis involves very large ceramic assemblages, which are made up to a great extent of – or even dominated by – common wares.

The last *caveat* is the need for a robust and coherent body of data on which to conduct investigations that aim to identify borders and frontiers, whether these are based only on artefact distributions or also imply ethnic/cultural connections at any level. The ceramic evidence analysed here and the statistical tools used to explore it offer a reliable indication; at the same time, it must be underlined that this work is based on studies that differ very much with respect to targets and areas investigated. This analysis involved an attempt to harmonize differing aspects, but in so doing inevitably sacrificed detailed reconstruction, in favour of a coarser-grain, though more reliable, picture.

So, returning to our case study, that is the changing boundaries between LBA and Iron Age and their relevance for the study of Canaanite and Phoenician societies, the picture obtained is undoubtedly biased by the evidence available, especially with regard to more detailed exploration of the occurrence of local traditions. However, it seems likely that more distinctive local pottery traditions may have characterised specific sub-regions of the Levant. The central sectors might be one of these: its internal ceramic coherence might mirror the emergence of cultural units within a broader horizon of common traits, which one might be tempted to correlate with the Phoenician Phenomenon. The cultural borders – in particular those along the northern side, coinciding with edges characterising the LBA ceramic regions – underpin the strong cultural connection between Canaanite and Phoenician societies. Furthermore, they underline the role played by the main political actors of the LBA, in the process of formation of these cultural and ethnic groups. Egypt, Mittani and the Hittites might have been among the major forces that triggered or facilitated the emergence of specific cultural *koinè* within their areas of dominion, contributing to influence also the areas of extension.

Unfortunately, this reconstruction is based on a limited number of case-studies. A significant number of sites have been investigated in Southern Lebanon, but there is still a dearth of information from the area north of Gubla/Byblos. Very recently, new projects have started to tackle the issue with regional investigations that promise to shed light on the local and regional dynamics shaping the formation of pottery traditions, *i.e.* the Northern Lebanon Project,<sup>44</sup> the Chekka Archaeological Project,<sup>45</sup> the Enfeh Archaeological Project.<sup>46</sup> It is to be expected that these projects may provide substantial evidence for understanding the traits of localised ceramic traditions and the significance of these for the exploration of the social/ethnic groups characterising the Levant.

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<sup>44</sup> Haider / Iamoni, 2021; Iamoni *et al.*, 2019.

<sup>45</sup> Kopetzky *et al.*, 2019.

<sup>46</sup> Panayot-Haroun *et al.*, 2016.

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# Boundaries, Borders, and Interaction Points

Some Considerations from Cyprus

Luigi Turri

## Abstract

Cyprus is the largest island in the eastern Mediterranean and thanks to the wealth of its resources – wood and copper – and its position it has always been at the centre of international relations. From the most ancient times, the island was inhabited by a multi-ethnic population and had the role of a passageway between west and east. Despite these, it has been often perceived as a liminal place.

The paper gives a brief and necessarily only partial survey of the position of the island in different historical periods, especially, but not only between the second and the first millennium BC, with the purpose to investigate the concepts and the definition of the problems faced in the study of the island's history and to understand why the island remained for a long time at the margins of major historical reconstructions and too often its history has been seen from a Western or from an Oriental perspective, without focusing on the island itself.

When one thinks of the Levant in the Bronze or the Iron Age – the Amarna letters, ivory, the Phoenician coast ... – Cyprus is always present: it is there, near, interacting and connected with the Near Eastern world. At the same time it is somehow different, a sort of outsider, maybe because it is also perceived as strongly related to the Western world, first the Mycenaean and then the Greek one. So, when the SHABO project – *Shaping boundaries. Ethnicity and Geography in the Eastern Mediterranean Area (First Millennium BC)* – was started here at the University of Verona, the question arose on what the role of Cyprus was in the dynamics between east and west. The aim of this paper is to consider approaches to and problems in the study of the role of the island, that was contemporaneously at the edges and at the centre of movements and relationships. Though it is brief and only partial, a survey of the position of the island in different historical periods is considered a useful premise to investigate the concepts and the definition of the problems we face when investigating events and dynamics of the First Millennium BC in the Mediterranean Area.

With an area of 9,250km<sup>2</sup> – a little less than Lebanon, just for comparison – Cyprus is the largest island in the eastern Mediterranean, and the third largest of the whole sea, after Sicily and Sardinia. Its position, 70km south of Anatolia and 100km west of Syria, facilitates contacts that were stimulated by its wealth of resources, especially wood and copper, and this has always put the island at the centre of international relations between the Levant, the central-eastern Mediter-

ranean, Anatolia and Egypt.

Its strategic position, multi-ethnic population and role as a passageway between west and east appear clearly throughout its history, even in recent centuries. It was a Christian stronghold during the Crusades;<sup>1</sup> the place for the Venetian-Ottoman confrontation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when there were two distinct communities living in the island, Greek and Levantine.<sup>2</sup> Following the Russian-Turkish war, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Cyprus was part of the British Empire, with the purpose of protecting the Ottoman Empire against possible Russian aggression and was used by Britain as a base in its colonial conquests.<sup>3</sup> After gaining independence in 1960, it was immediately affected by the ethnic tensions that led to the Turkish intervention in 1974 and the declaration of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, becoming, even politically, a clear boundary between east (Asia) and west (Europe). Moreover, the UK still retains the two Sovereign Base Areas of Akrotiri and Dhekelia. With the island's inclusion in the European Union in 2004, Cyprus also became its southernmost and easternmost outpost, its only country that is geographically located in Asia.

In more ancient periods, the position of the island clearly played a huge role as well: since prehistoric times, from the late Epi-palaeolithic, 10,000 years ago, it has been a passageway for people in search of food supply.<sup>4</sup> Its 'mixed' ethnic presence and its role as commercial hub were already evident in the Bronze Age. During the 15<sup>th</sup> century BC, the pharaoh Thutmose III affirmed to have received gifts or supplies from Cyprus, and at the end of the century, an unknown Hittite king claimed to own the island. Meanwhile, it seems that from the south-eastern coast there was a progressive penetration of Mycenaean and then Achaean people.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, at least in the 14<sup>th</sup> century BC, the island, the "land of Alashiya" as it is called in the Amarna letters and in other documents, was ruled by a king who controlled the production and the exportation of copper and was recognised as a peer by the Pharaoh, the great king of Egypt, and as a great king

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<sup>1</sup> In 1191, during the Third Crusade (the one fought to regain the conquests made by Saladin in the Holy Land), Richard I of England (Richard the Lionheart) conquered the island (subtracting it to the island's ruler, Isaac Komnenos) and used it as a base to give support to the Christians in the Holy Land. Later, it became a stop on pilgrimages to the Holy Land. See Hill, 1940, I: 314–317.

<sup>2</sup> On the War of Cyprus, see Hill, 1948, III: 950–1037.

<sup>3</sup> Hill, 1952, IV: 262–263, 269–299. In 1878 "Great Britain acquired *de facto*, if not *de jure*, sovereignty in Cyprus [...] Yet Great Britain never disputed the legal sovereignty of Turkey" (p. 285).

<sup>4</sup> Knapp, 2013: 477.

<sup>5</sup> Voskof / Knapp, 2008: 663 with literature. On the Egyptian and Hittite claims, see Knapp, 2008: 324–335; 2009: 220–223. There is very minimal material evidence of contacts between Cyprus and the Hittite (Knapp, 2008: 314). On the level of Hittite political influence on the island see *ibid.* 325–328. On the 'Mycenisation' of the island, see e.g. Orphanides, 2017.

by the king of Ugarit, a small city-state ruler<sup>6</sup> – and people from Ugarit were living in Cyprus.<sup>7</sup> After the great crisis of 1200 BC, which affected the whole Mediterranean, there was an established Phoenician presence on the southern coast of Cyprus which managed to coexist and prosper even with the successive rulers: the Assyrians, the Egyptians and the Persians.

Despite this, the island remains marginal in major historical reconstructions and too often its history has been seen from a Western perspective, that of the classicists or of the European historians, or from an oriental perspective, that of the Ancient Near East historians and archaeologists. Catherine Kearns argues “that this construct reproduces ancient otherings of the island, which developed via persistent yet fluid *topoi* of liminality”.<sup>8</sup> The concept of ‘othering’ refers to the process “whereby an individual or groups of people attribute negative characteristics to other individuals or groups of people that set them apart as representing that which is opposite to them”<sup>9</sup> and “the act of othering can exemplify power relations, where the outside of a self or identity regimes is normalized as the other”, and “normalizes the characteristics of the other into blunt descriptions or stereotypes that can, in time, become identity markers for the other. Such othering can, in fact, say more about self or one identity reference group to which the self feels to belong”.<sup>10</sup> It actually seems that few people are interested in the history of the island as seen from the island’s perspective, and see in it more their own histories. Many events and dynamics repeated themselves through the ages and became ‘trademarks’ of the island, such as the people who fled from Troy and founded cities on Cyprus (see below), even the people fleeing the persecution after Stephen’s death found shelter in the island, according to the New Testament (*Acts* 11: 19); or the Ionians who, at the time of Darius, according to Herodotus, “were in Cyprus when the Persians, crossing from Cilicia, marched to Salamis by land, and the Phoenicians were sailing around the headland which is called the keys of Cyprus” (Hdt. 5, 108, 2) and, as they affirm, “were sent by the common voice of Ionia to guard the seas, not to deliver our ships to men of Cyprus and encounter the Persians on land” (Hdt. 5, 109, 3), so the British justified their occupation of Cyprus between the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries with the protection of the Ottoman empire from a Russian invasion. In both cases, the story told is not that of Cyprus or the Cypriots but that of the Ionians against the Persians or of the British against the Russians.

These create connections of foreign lands to Cyprus, but these connections are self-perceived by the foreigners and could become reasons for future claims. In this context, an ideological use of history and archaeology is rather easy.

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<sup>6</sup> On Alashiya status, see e.g. Knapp, 2009: 222.

<sup>7</sup> See below.

<sup>8</sup> Kearns, 2018.

<sup>9</sup> Rohleder, 2014.

<sup>10</sup> Vainikka, 2019: 137–138.

This vision from the outside assigns Cyprus a liminal role, as if it were on the border of history and geography, and this makes us perceive Cyprus both as a familiar and an unfamiliar place at the same time. This appears clearly already in ancient Greek culture, in which Cyprus is actually very present: it is the birthplace of Aphrodite and a place of harbours for merchants and of shelters for refugees – as mentioned, many cities are founded by the heroes who fled from Troy, e.g. Teucer, who founded Salamis. The interior of the island is seldom considered and only for the presence of copper, which is very connected with Aphrodite, “for she was the first to teach mortal humans to be craftsmen / in making war-chariots and other things on wheels, decorated with bronze” (*Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, 12–13). So, the island is integrated in the Greek Man mental map, at least as a mythical place, but this does not imply a widespread knowledge of the region. The description of Strabo, aside from the description of the mines, portrays it as a place rich in wine, oil and wheat: “In fertility Cyprus is not inferior to any one of the islands, for it produces both good wine and good oil, and also a sufficient supply of grain for its own use. And at Tamassus there are abundant mines of copper ...” (Strabo XIV, 6, 5), while the island is a semi-arid place, subject to periods of drought – not exactly the most favourable place for agriculture.

The perception of Cyprus as a liminal place is evident from the very beginning of the archaeological research on the island. Max Ohnefalsch Richter, a German archaeologist who excavated in British-occupied Cyprus, published a volume in 1893 whose title clearly summarises this attitude: *Kypros, die Bibel und Homer*. The island is integrated both in the western and eastern worlds, but at the same time is located on the edges of both. This has consequences, since until recent times history and archaeology have directed their attention primarily toward the cores or centres of societies rather than their peripheries<sup>11</sup> which are seen only from the perspective of the cores. So, Cyprus became a land for others’ history and was perceived as a place that passively receives foreign influences, although at least since the Bronze Age it has played an active part in exchanges that involve a very large area.

A huge problem in the reconstruction of the island’s history is the lack of local written (understandable) sources and this point had a consequence also on archaeology: classical and oriental archaeology are heavily linked to written sources, sometimes too much, as they have not been used critically for a long time. For Cyprus we have only foreign sources and using them to reconstruct its history requires a lot of attention: the classical ones were often written in later periods, based on traditions formed over time, or composed for specific purposes related to the time in which they were composed. The Ancient Near Eastern texts, the Assyrian or the Egyptian ones, are contemporary to the events they mention, but

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<sup>11</sup> Feuer, 2016: 1.

they were written to glorify the Assyrian conquests or the might of the pharaoh.

Cyprus could be considered therefore the peripheral entity *par excellence*: a periphery is defined and characterised in comparison to the centre (or to the centres in the case of Cyprus) and is perceived as inferior, less evolved and a source of resources<sup>12</sup> – that for our island means mainly copper – but also timber and pottery. Relationships with foreign countries and people have certainly marked the history of the island and copper is one of the reasons for which it became famous. As mentioned above, the demand for copper, a raw material, by foreign powers, implies that Cyprus is perceived as a peripheral country – although in the LBA the need of foreign countries to import it would have been much greater than the need of Cyprus to export it.<sup>13</sup> This has led to the creation of labels that are difficult to remove, also because sometimes they are used for modern claims. For instance, the idea of a Greek colonisation has been used in recent times to support the Enosis (Ένωσις), the claim to be incorporated into the Greek state.<sup>14</sup>

Susan Sherratt recently pointed out how many of those “who work on the pre-history or early history of Cyprus ... feel academically (and perhaps also culturally) marginalized – dismissed patronizingly by those who work in the (especially Classical) Aegean as provincial or simply peripheral, and really part of (or at least badly tainted by) the Near East, while also at the same time ignored by Near Eastern archaeologists as effectively and conceptually part of an Aegean world. Each of these large, established disciplines nowadays has its own reasons for not wanting to have to think about Cyprus, and an autonomous Cypriot archaeology has not yet succeeded in making its mark in more than a tiny handful of European academic institutions outside Cyprus itself.”<sup>15</sup> This is despite the fact that archaeological finds in Cyprus have clearly shown the originality and uniqueness of the island, whose culture shows contacts with the East and the West, but without being subjected to them – so a culture born and formed on the island, not directly derived from the others. In recent years, a postcolonial approach has been used in social archaeology as a reaction “to one-sided interpretative models, such as Hellenization”<sup>16</sup>, so an approach that deals with concepts like social identity, ethnicity, intellectual colonisation and is against a Eurocentric view. In this way, history is reviewed from a non-Western perspective, with a regional focus. But for ancient Cyprus, even this approach presents some problems: is its colonisation a real one or is it just one of the labels created and consolidated over time, shown off for ideological reasons by the Hittite and Assyrian kings, and maintained for Eurocentric reasons in the case of the Mycenaean colonisation?

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<sup>12</sup> On these concepts, see among others Feuer, 2016 with extended literature.

<sup>13</sup> Liverani, 2001: 170.

<sup>14</sup> Voskof / Knapp, 2008: 662.

<sup>15</sup> Sherratt, 2015: 71.

<sup>16</sup> Voskos / Knapp, 2008: 661 and fn.13, who mentions Dietler, 1998: 295–298; 2005: 55–61; Keay / Terrenato, 2001.

We have already mentioned that the island was a passageway, a place of encounters even in the distant past, but the question of the colonisation of Cyprus by foreign powers starts to arise in the second millennium BC, when it was the primary source of copper for most of the major Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean powers<sup>17</sup>. At this time, its handmade pottery (white slip and base ring wares) was widely distributed in the Levant, as far south as the Egyptian Delta.<sup>18</sup> Hundreds of cylinder and stamp seals, devices used for a centralised and ideological control of production, have been found at Enkomi and suggest that half-way through the second millennium, the city had a central role in the mining, transport, refining, and export of copper.<sup>19</sup>

A little later, the Amarna letters show us that there was a king, the king of Alashiya, who was internationally recognised and that could not only communicate on an equal level with his ‘brothers’ the king of Hatti and the pharaoh<sup>20</sup> but also asked to be paid for copper, showing a clearly commercial and utilitarian aspect of international relationships that is unusual in the international society represented by the Amarna letters, where these kind of interactions are often dismissed as gift exchanges.<sup>21</sup> This commercial attitude and a foreign community living on the island appear clearly even in Ugarit, where Cypro-Minoan tablets were found in the House of Yabninu, alongside imported objects. Also, from the texts found in the House of Rapanu, we know that a scribe from Ugarit was living in Cyprus and that copper ingots were imported from there in exchange for horses. In a letter written by Ugarit’s king, Niqmaddu III, found in the House of Rapanu, the king of Cyprus is called ‘father’ which fits well in the dynamics of the international relations of the LBA and clearly points to a superiority of the island over the coastal city.<sup>22</sup>

The petrography of Amarna letters suggests that either *Alassa Paleotaverna* or *Kalavastos Ayios Dhimitrios* must have become the political and administrative centre of Alashiya during the 14<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.<sup>23</sup> Also, the pre-eminence of Enkomi seems to have ended by this time, leading to a fragmentation that is reflected by a number of urban settlements that flourished on the island in the 13<sup>th</sup> century BC (LC IIC) – at a time when the island is claimed as subjected by the

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<sup>17</sup> Cline, 2014: 60.

<sup>18</sup> Fourier, 2019: 481.

<sup>19</sup> Voskof / Knapp, 2008: 673.

<sup>20</sup> Moran, 1992; Knapp, 2008: 144–153; 2013: 432–447.

<sup>21</sup> Liverani, 2001: 170.

<sup>22</sup> Rapanu was apparently involved in some sensitive negotiations at the highest levels, as the contents of the archive indicate. The texts include a number of letters exchanged between the king of Ugarit and the king of Alashiya (Cyprus), written at the time that the Sea Peoples threatened both. See Cline, 2014: 105, 112.

<sup>23</sup> Goren / Bunimovitz / Finkelstein / Na'aman, 2003; 2004: 48–75.



Hittites<sup>24</sup> even though almost no Hittite archaeological finds have been discovered on the island and it is therefore not clear what kind of conquest it was.<sup>25</sup>

The individuality of the island is clearly visible during the general collapse that hit the whole Mediterranean at the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century BC, which had consequences even on Cyprus but with some differences, if compared to the rest of the area.

With the general collapse, there must have been a reduced demand for copper from the island, and this must have led to a stop or at least a reduction of mining activities in Cyprus and may have resulted also in a demographic reduction. Also, the former political/economic stability collapsed: various monumental structures were destroyed, some big coastal centres were abandoned with consequence on the other settlements and ceremonial, agricultural and mining sites in the interior of the island. The process lasted about 150 years (around 1200–1050), but some key sites of the second part of the 12<sup>th</sup> century BC (LC IIIA) seem to show little sign of collapse. The local independent traders were likely more reactive than those from other areas and saved the island from a total collapse,<sup>26</sup> or, according to Susan Sherrat, it was an aggressive economic policy of the rich merchants of the coastal cities that brought down the previous centralised political-economic system.<sup>27</sup> In addition, three large cities near the coast survived abandonment or destruction:<sup>28</sup> Palaepaphos, Kition and Enkomi (which previously had indeed suffered extensive destruction) became the new pre-eminent centres and resumed contacts overseas, showing both social resilience and cultural continuity with the past. Considering this, the collapse on Cyprus could be thought of as possibly more of a process of adaptation, leading to new settlement patterns and an economy of a different kind.

But what really happened on the island at the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century BC, and how did it survive the general crisis? Now the mercantile answer, just mentioned, is one of the hypotheses and has been proposed as an alternative to the Aegean colonisation that had much fortune in literature.<sup>29</sup> However, the Aegean

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<sup>24</sup> Singer, 2000: 27. Cline, 2014: 100. As already mentioned, (see fn. 5) Cyprus has been claimed as belonging to the Hittite between the 15<sup>th</sup> and the 14<sup>th</sup> centuries BC, in the *indictment of Madduwatta*, maybe at the time of Arnuwanda I. But the Hittite conquest is explicitly mentioned under Tudhaliya IV and again by Suppiluliuma II (Knapp, 2008: 324–325; 2009: 220–221). These are the firsts claims of a colonisation of the island by a foreign power.

<sup>25</sup> See fn. 5.

<sup>26</sup> Knapp / Meyer, 2020.

<sup>27</sup> Sherrat, 2015.

<sup>28</sup> Knapp / Meyer, 2020.

<sup>29</sup> Voskos / Knapp, 2008: 660. See already Myres, 1914: xxx–xxxI, 45–46, then Karageorghis, 2002; Iacovou, 1999; 2003.

theory was not the only one, and many other explanations have been proposed: Trojan colonisation, Aegean and Phoenician migrations, refugees from Ugarit or from Anatolia ...<sup>30</sup> As pointed out by Knapp, Cyprus is still seen too often as a bridge between superior cultures, that are reflected in local culture.<sup>31</sup>

At this point, it is important to make a distinction between colonisation and migration.<sup>32</sup> Proper colonisation relies on the settlement of a colony in foreign lands with political, social and economic control over local people. As pointed out by postcolonial theory, such a situation involves an interactive process, with alterations of both intrusive and indigenous social groups.<sup>33</sup> So, the outcome of the colonial encounter is a totally new cultural and social situation (this is the concept of 'hybridisation'). Migration, instead, is the movement of groups of people for specific reasons, especially when there is a negative, or more negative, situation in their homeland, and this movement is normally along familiar routes and towards known destinations,<sup>34</sup> places that have attractive features. Aegean merchants would have been quite familiar with Cyprus, considering the evidence of previous long trade contacts. But the richness of the soil was surely not among the attractive features of Cyprus.

In fact, another possible explanation given to the general crisis of the 12<sup>th</sup> century BC and the migrations that characterised the period is that of a climate change that caused extensive drought and pushed people to leave their lands in search for more favourable areas. However, Cyprus was already an arid area before. On the island, the rains vary greatly from year to year and most of them fall in rainstorms between October and March, with a very high evaporation rate that reaches 87%. Rain hardly contributes to agriculture, especially in summer. So, a worsening of the general climatic situation certainly did not make the island more attractive for human settlement.

What was the scale, the extent of the migrations towards Cyprus? Were there real migrations? Is it possible to suppose a mass migration based on the means of transport available and on demographic evidence?

Voskos and Knapp have shown how the material culture that has been often used to support the Aegean colonisation is actually more the result of local development or of hybridisation practices, so of the social interactions that take place between outsiders and locals when there is no forced dominance of colonial cultures over the indigenous ones. And even if we postulate a mixed population, we should not underestimate an internal development.

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<sup>30</sup> Knapp, 2016: 133 with literature.

<sup>31</sup> Knapp, 2012: 34.

<sup>32</sup> Voskos / Knapp, 2008.

<sup>33</sup> Van Dommelen, 2005: 117.

<sup>34</sup> Feuer, 2016.

Among their examples are the following: the major reorganisation of the city plan at Enkomi (level IIIA, LC IIIA), after the major destruction of around 1200 BC, that was rebuilt according to a well-planned grid of criss-crossing streets, whose best parallel come from Ras Ibn Hani; the use in the city of ashlar masonry<sup>35</sup> that is widely used also in the Levant, such as in Ugarit, and that in other sites of the island was actually already in use during the 13<sup>th</sup> century BC and thus must be interpreted more as an inheritance of the *koine* shared by the LBA elites of the eastern Mediterranean Sea than an Aegean innovation,<sup>36</sup> the cyclopean wall fortification, present also in other sites of the island as Kition, which is known from Aegean (Mycenae, Tiryns) as well as Anatolian (Bogazkoy, Alishar) and southern Levantine (Shechem) sites.<sup>37</sup> The same amalgam of foreign and local motives is visible on some artifacts: old motifs such as Aegean or Levantine-style birds are painted alongside contemporary Cypriot-style bulls on a strainer jug, found in a tomb in Kouklia, near Palaepaphos;<sup>38</sup> bronze anthropomorphic figurines found at Enkomi such as the so called ‘Horned God’ or the ‘Ingot God’ have a Levantine pose, but the former wears a Mycenaean helmet and an Aegean/Cypriot kilt, while the latter is protected by Aegean greaves and holds a Hittite shield;<sup>39</sup> a wide range of subjects and themes of different origins are represented on the locally-made four-sided bronze stands and as well on ivory objects<sup>40</sup> – and due to the complexity of the subject and the lack of space we cannot even briefly mention the implications of imported/exported pottery.<sup>41</sup>

It is clear that all these architectural features and objects cannot be linked only to the Aegean region or to any other specific area and rather refer to a general, broader, eastern Mediterranean horizon, reflecting a mixture of ideas and influences amalgamated together, the result of a long-term interactive process, without the dominance of any foreign, colonial cultures – and connected to the hybridisation process visible in material culture, there must have been also the creation of new social identities.

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<sup>35</sup> Philokyprou, 2011.

<sup>36</sup> Fisher, 2006–2007: 84; 2020.

<sup>37</sup> Wright, 1992: 253.

<sup>38</sup> Kling, 1988; Voskos / Knapp, 2008: 669.

<sup>39</sup> Knapp, 1986: 9–14; Voskos / Knapp 2008: 669–670.

<sup>40</sup> Voskos / Knapp, 2008: 670 with extensive literature.

<sup>41</sup> Knapp, 2009: 224: “Another factor that must be taken into account is the long-standing tension between those who see pottery as evidence of trade (from Gjerstad to Steel) and those who take it as an ethnic and cultural indicator of large-scale migrations or smaller scale movements of individual potters, merchants or refugees (from Myers to Karageorghis). The former viewpoint (pottery as trade) tends to hold sway today but the latter (pottery as people) is still prevalent wherever the local production of previously imported wares can be demonstrated: this is precisely the case for Aegean-style pottery found in Cyprus and the Levant during the 13<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries BC”. See also Sherratt, 2015: 75–78.

The connection between these periods and the new city kingdoms scattered on the island in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC is not clear either: are they a direct consequence of the events of the 12<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> centuries BC, or are they new socio-political entities that started to emerge in the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC? As already mentioned, connections with the Levant are very well attested since the LBA and the widespread diffusion of local pottery is a proof of these relations, but it is at this time that the presence of Phoenician-speaking populations in Cyprus appears clearly.<sup>42</sup>

Between the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC, two bronze bowls inscribed in Phoenician and some Assyrian texts mention a city called Qarthadasht, *New City*, a Phoenician name.<sup>43</sup> The identical dedicatory inscription of the bowls is directed to Baal of Lebanon on behalf of the governor of Qarthadasht, who is a servant of Hiram, king of the Sidonians (Hiram II of Tyre).<sup>44</sup> The presence of a city with a Phoenician name, ruled by a vassal of Tyre, has been interpreted as a clear sign of the colonisation of Kition by the Phoenicians and of the beginning of their presence on the island.<sup>45</sup> Some time later, the city's king is mentioned among the ten kings of Iadnana (as Cyprus is called in Neo-Assyrian sources) who pay tribute to Esarhaddon for the construction of his palace<sup>46</sup> – and the Assyrian presence on the island is confirmed already at the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC by a Sargon's stele found in Kition<sup>47</sup> in which it is said that seven kings of the island brought presents to him in Babylon. Several scholars identify Qarthadasht, that is not mentioned any more after these texts, with Kition<sup>48</sup>, that is absent in the Assyrian lists though the site was inhabited at the time – or better, with the Tyrian colony founded in the place of Kition, which should have regained its former name after its independence. The fact that Kition was a colony of Tyre is mentioned also in later Greek and Latin sources.<sup>49</sup>

Even at this time, the colonisation process remains elusive; we do not know to what extent the Phoenician control arrived and how the real relations with Assyria were.<sup>50</sup> Kition material culture of the time, by the way, shows a mixture of Cypriot and Phoenician elements.<sup>51</sup>

Looking at the summary maps of Knapp and Meyer 2020, we see how the majority of the old settlements of the 13<sup>th</sup> century BC were destroyed, abandoned

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<sup>42</sup> Fourier, 2019: 481 mention a short inscription painted on a local 9<sup>th</sup> century BC bi-chrome bowl from Salamis and a contemporary funerary stela. See also Sherratt, 2003: 234–235.

<sup>43</sup> Fourier, 2019: 482.

<sup>44</sup> Amadasi Guzzo, 2007: 198–199.

<sup>45</sup> Gjerstad, 1979.

<sup>46</sup> Lipinski, 1991.

<sup>47</sup> Frame, 2021: text 103.

<sup>48</sup> See e.g. Gjerstad, 1979: 233–241 and Cannavò, 2014: 149–150.

<sup>49</sup> Cannavò, 2014: 149–150.

<sup>50</sup> Fourier, 2019: 483–484.

<sup>51</sup> Fourier, 2021.

or relocated during the 12<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries BC, but from the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC a new structure formed by the city-states of the Iron Age began to take shape and many of the new centres arose.<sup>52</sup>

The re-emerging of centralised organisations has been explained as a reaction to the commercial pressure of the Phoenicians and their attempts to control parts of the island in the 9<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> centuries BC or to the political pressure of Assyrian imperialism<sup>53</sup> – though the fact that many cities paid tribute to Assyria would lead to suppose more to the continuation of a period of heterarchical peer-polities on the island, started after the 12<sup>th</sup> century BC crisis ended, than the more hierarchical structure of the Late Bronze Age.<sup>54</sup>

A change in the management of the power could be seen, though, at the beginning of the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC, in different practices connected with mining activities, visible in the shape of the ingots that from ox-hide became plano-convex – as visible in a specimen found at Hazor but coming from Cyprus. Moreover, the resumption of mining on big scale implies the need for a more centralised management of the territory.

To understand and explain these processes is beyond our scope, which is to try to highlight the role of Cyprus in the Mediterranean at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC. At that time, people from the Aegean and the Levant arrived on the island and introduced some diversities, but these were gradually integrated into the local traditions, a process that would have required some generations of cohabitation and intermarriage. However, that led to explicitly hybridised products and culture, reinforced by the fact that local Cypriot material culture had already assimilated Aegean and Near Eastern elements for a long time.<sup>55</sup>

The dominant theoretical model currently employed in the study of frontiers, borders and boundaries is that of centre and periphery,<sup>56</sup> particularly the world systems model in which a centre, a core (the more evolved areas), through political domain, violence or market dynamics dominates a periphery, a less evolved area, and exploits it. The core/periphery model does not concern only spatial re-

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<sup>52</sup> One of the problems encountered in the reconstruction of these processes is the lack of data coming from the settlements since the majority come from funeral contexts which do not give information on how and when these new entities emerged, nor on what their nature was – and even in this case it has been said that the new centres reproduced on a small scale the Aegean political system brought to the island by Aegean settlers between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries BC. See Knapp / Mayer, 2008: 241 who quotes, *e.g.*, Catling, 1994: 137.

<sup>53</sup> Rupp, 1998; Sherratt, 2003: 235.

<sup>54</sup> Rupp, 1998: 215; Fourier, 2013.

<sup>55</sup> On these processes see Voskof / Knapp, 2008: 677.

<sup>56</sup> Other related models include that of increasing or decreasing integration, see Feuer, 2016: 33–35.

lationships, but economic, political and social interrelation.

According to this explanation, due to the presence of ‘colonies’, being the source of raw materials, and other characteristics, Cyprus could be described as a border or even a frontier.

Border and frontier areas could be defined as liminal zones, indeterminate space where the opportunity or potential for social interaction and mixture are greater and occur more quickly – that is because different cultural and social groups can be found in closer proximity.

Normally, between different borders there is a boundary that separates the different groups, but this is not the case of Cyprus. Cyprus is not an indeterminate space, it has his own traditions and at the same time, due to its position, has a huge potential for interaction, favoured by its attractiveness due to its rich mines. The island is both a core zone, its own core zone, and a border, but it is border for several foreign groups. On Cyprus, the meeting of the border zones of different centres do not create a boundary but they overlap and mingle together and with the core of Cyprus, and create the culture of Cyprus.

Catherine Kearns has recently written that “in acknowledging its position as a paradoxical threshold that challenged certain Greek and Roman conceptions and perceptions of the world, we simultaneously affirm the relevance of Cyprus for future studies of how those ideas of alterity, boundary-making, and liminality came into being under different conditions and authorities. Through an integration of textual and material investigations, the island provokes us to analyse it as a complex foil for our canonical frameworks of the ancient spectra of east and west, self and other.”<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, as it appears clearly even from the short considerations expressed in this paper, Cyprus, more than being a boundary between east and west, challenges our perception of this opposition and shows clearly the fluid nature of identities, both ancient and modern.

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<sup>57</sup> Kearns, 2018: 68. Many years ago Strassoldo, 1977: 86 noted that “people largely agree in their identification of the core of things; to find the boundaries is more difficult”.

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# The Place and Frontiers of Judea in Judg 1 or How the Tribal System builds Greater Judea

Stéphanie Anthonioz

## Abstract

The study of Judges 1, which is here revisited in a historical approach, highlights the importance of the tribal model and its function in the construction of the chapter. Indeed, this model, so rooted in Levantine cultures, is construed over the centuries in different biblical texts so as to become the symbolic “twelve tribes” or “twelve sons of Jacob.” In its latest stage it becomes the identity of “Israel,” a genealogical, ethnic and clan-based definition rather than territorial. It is hoped to demonstrate here, in this detailed analysis of Judg 1, how frontiers are generated, through inner-biblical expansions and corrections, and how they build a “greater Judea” but also a “greater Israel” at a time when the Judean kingdom has turned into a province and is in search of a new identity and recognition.

The book of “Judges,” transmitted under the Hebrew name *šōpēṭîm* / שופטים, comes in between the books of Joshua and Samuel, between the conquest narrative and the establishment of the monarchy in Israel, narratives to which the book owes much<sup>1</sup>. But the name, unlike other biblical books (for example, *beré’sît* / בראשית), does not constitute the incipit of the book; rather, it opens a historical and political reflection regarding “judging” which means here “governing”.<sup>2</sup> The editorial history is far from consensual.<sup>3</sup> But its insertion in the Persian-Achaemenid period at the earliest, if not Hellenistic, seems likely in view of Spronk’s arguments.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, the Book of Judges establishes a Judean polemic with regard to the North, as Yairah Amit has analyzed. The author associates the writing of ancient traditions relating to some heroic figures with the criticism present in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah.<sup>5</sup> The controversy lies in the fact that the North,

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<sup>1</sup> Spronk, 2019: 16–19; 2009: 137–149. The 2009 article lists the results of Rake’s 2006 doctoral work.

<sup>2</sup> Spronk, 2020: 129–140; Müller, 2019: 121–134.

<sup>3</sup> The vision of very old stories, dating back to the beginning of the monarchy, as Galil, 2021: 1–25, defends, is opposed by the vision of narratives construed in the Hellenistic period, which arguments appear more solid, as proposed for example by Spronk, 2019: 22–25 or Guillaume, 2014: 146–164. For a middle position in the Persian-Achaemenid period, see for example Edenburg, 2018: 368–369; Murphy, 2017: 179–213; Abadie, 2011: 37–38. On the links between the Book of Judges and the Deuteronomist history, see Müller, 2019: 121–134; Weinfeld, 1993: 388–400.

<sup>4</sup> Spronk, 2019: 22–25.

<sup>5</sup> Amit, 2014: 106.

ancient kingdom of Israel, is at the center of the book of the Judges: with the exception of Othniel son of Kenaz, the judges come from the North, and most of the events take place in the territories of what corresponds to the old Northern Kingdom. Othniel, the only Judean “savior,” is built into a “national” hero, not just a regional one (Judg 3:7–11), while the cyclical nature of the religious fault irremediably condemns the Northern tribes (3:7.12; 4:1; 6:1; 8:33–35; 10:6; 13:1).<sup>6</sup> The polemic is all the more concise, as it is developed in one (the opening) chapter. Two major accusations are expressed:<sup>7</sup> 1) the Northern responsibility in the non-conquest of the land (Judg 1:21–36); 2) Benjamin’s responsibility for the fate of Jerusalem where the Jebusites still dwell (Judg 1:21, *contra* Josh 15:63, where it is the responsibility of Judah). Chapter 1 thus appears as a re-conquest to the advantage of Judah or a re-writing of the book of Joshua.<sup>8</sup>

The divinatory practice in Judg 1:1 (with the question “who will rise for us?”) takes note of a conquest that has not been completed (*contra* Josh 21:43–45) or that Yhwh has not completed (Josh 13:6–7). This assumption therefore makes it possible to repeat the conquest and to attempt this major coup de force to the glory of Judah! If the first chapter of the book of Judges has been the subject of many studies, there is a point that has not been developed: the intrusion into the narrative, “after the death of Joshua,” of Judah and Simeon, two entities defined as “brothers” (Judg 1:3.17), clearly referring to Jacob’s descendants.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, they are not referred to – as would seem logical – by the phrase “the sons of Judah” (בני יהודה), with a few exceptions in Judg 1:8–9.16)<sup>10</sup> or “the sons of Simeon” (בני שמעון),<sup>11</sup> descendants of the eponymous tribes, but “Judah” (Judg 1:2.3.4.10.17.19) and “Simeon” (1:3.17). One could always argue that the latter collectively refers to the descendants. However, the text insists on the fraternity of the two brothers producing, as has been said, the intrusion of the tribal genealogical model specific to the book of Genesis, in a narrative that is obviously well after the

<sup>6</sup> This polemical perspective has also been defined as anti-Saulide – since the first monarchy in Israel is that of the Benjaminite Saul – in connection with the last chapters of the Judges, the case of the concubine of Gibeah which brings about the condemnation of Benjamin (Judg 19–20). The purpose of the book would then point to the defense of the Davidic dynasty (Brulin, 2021; Amit, 2014: 113; Spronk, 2009: 137–149; Brettler, 1989: 395–418).

<sup>7</sup> Amit, 2014: 107–108.

<sup>8</sup> Indeed, the book of Joshua is concerned with the territory traditionally attributed to the tribe of Benjamin, the essence of the story focusing on Jericho, Ai and Gibeon (Josh 2; 6–9), while the conquest of the rest of the land is sketchy (Josh 10–11, see Dozeman, 2015: 27–31 and 392). In addition, Joshua, as we know, is an Ephraimite.

<sup>9</sup> Kaswalder, 1993: 89–113.

<sup>10</sup> See elsewhere in particular in the book of Joshua: Num 10:14; 26:19; Josh 14:6; 15:1.12.20.63; 18:11.14; 19:1.9; 21:9; Judg 1:8.16; 2 Sam 1:18; 1 Chr 2:3.10; 4:1.27; 6:50; 9:3; 12:25; 2 Chr 13:18; 25:12; 28:10; Esd 3:9; Jer 7:30; Hos 2:2; Joel 4:8.19.

<sup>11</sup> Num 10:19; 26:12; 34:20; Josh 19:1.8; 21:9; 1 Chr 4:24.42; 6:50; 12:26.

generations of Jacob and his sons, “after the death of Joshua” (Judg 1:1). The study of Judges 1, chapter which is revisited here, thus aims at highlighting the importance of the genealogical tribal model and its function in the construction of the chapter and more specifically in the construction of the Judean identity. This reflection on a model (as obviously a debate) regarding identity also invites us to understand why the tribal model is gaining momentum in the later texts of the Hebrew Bible (Num; Chr; Ezek), texts that may be dated to the Persian-Achaemenid period at the earliest, that is when Judah is no longer a kingdom but the province Yehud. This tribal model, so deeply rooted in Levantine cultures, is worked out over the centuries to become the symbolic “twelve” sons of Jacob<sup>12</sup> and the identity of “Israel:” a genealogical, ethnic and also theological definition rather than truly territorial or political. Our present aim is to study Judg 1 and demonstrate how it can be read as a manifesto of this tribal identity in a time and region, when and where political and territorial autonomy were lost thus leading to the active engagement of the elites, scribes and scholars to think over and built anew their own “national” identity and frontiers.

### 1) Judg 1:1–4: The “Rise” of Judah

And after the death of Joshua, the Israelites inquired of Yhwh, “Who will rise for us against the Canaanites, to fight against them?”<sup>2</sup> Yhwh said, “Judah shall rise. I hereby give the land into his hand.”<sup>3</sup> Judah said to his brother Simeon, “Rise with me into the territory allotted to me, that we may fight against the Canaanite; then I too will go with you into the territory allotted to you.” So Simeon went with him.<sup>4</sup> Then Judah rose and Yhwh gave the Canaanite and the Perizzite into their hand; and they struck ten thousand of them at Bezek. (Judg 1:1–4)

The first words of the chapter, which are also those of the book, open with the conjunction *wāw* and the temporal clause that reminds us that Joshua is dead and that the events taking place are situated after this death. This clause by its theme and grammatical construction constitutes a logical and immediate continuation to the book of Joshua (24:29–33). As studies on Joshua 24 have shown, the end of Joshua constitutes a new or rather renewed covenant, this time in Shechem, in the inheritance of the (future, according to biblical chronology) Northern kingdom.<sup>13</sup> Judg 1:1 by taking up the grammatical structure of Josh 24:29 takes place in the narrative as a logical sequence. At the same time, the link between Josh 24:28–31 and Judg 2:6–9 suggests that chapter 1 of the book of Judges was inserted secondarily into an already existing narrative.<sup>14</sup> What happens is that Judah, as son

<sup>12</sup> Anthonioz, 2022; Frevel, 2021; Tobolowsky, 2019; 2017.

<sup>13</sup> Schorch, 2020: 231–244; Dozeman, 2017: 145–147; Schmid, 2017: 148–160

<sup>14</sup> Edenburg, 2018: 355; Becker, 2018: 339–352; Frevel, 2018: 281–292; Lanoir, 2005: 120–125; Mullen, 1984: 33–54; Auld, 1975: 285.

of Jacob, is propelled (or raised, to keep the lexical field of the root עלה) at the head of a “re-conquest,” in a tribal and ethnic perspective rather than in a political or monarchical one: the story comes to reaffirm the Judean primacy, through the figure of Judah, while polemicizing and relegating to the background the power of the North. Certainly, the gift of the land anchors this story in the Abrahamic promise (Judg 1:2, cf. Gen 15:18; Num 33:53). Thus, the chapter begins by focusing on the election (or elevation) of Judah among the sons of Israel and its legitimacy to fight “first” the “Canaanite.” The primacy of Judah is affirmed both by the divine election of an oracular nature (1:2) and by the fulfillment of the oracle and the gift of the land (1:4). It should be noted that the oracular nature of the Judean election does not presuppose any particular sanctuary<sup>15</sup> and the fulfillment of the oracle in verse 4 does not take up the same object as complement: the “land,” a geographical unity, though vague and undelimited, is replaced by the double name, “the Canaanite and the Perizzite” (found again in Judg 1:5), which are ethnic entities, no less vague for the time of the editing of the text (to be compared to Gen 13:7; 34:30), knowing however that the Perizzite can be located North of Bethel, in the mountain of Ephraim.<sup>16</sup>

If one of the issues of the chapter is the construction of a Judean identity from a tribal point of view, it is clear that the geography of the given country is in line here with the biblical tradition of listing peoples. The land, it must indeed be remembered, is often characterized by different lists, whether “six peoples,” or “seven nations.”<sup>17</sup> With regard to these lists, the choice of the scribes of Judg 1 hints at two references in the book of Genesis, suggesting that the Perizzite and

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<sup>15</sup> Brulin, 2021: 122–125.

<sup>16</sup> Gass, 2019.

<sup>17</sup> The two longest lists are found in the book of Genesis: “Canaan became the father of Sidon his firstborn, and Heth, and the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, the Arkites, the Sinites, the Arvadites, the Zemarites, and the Hamathites.” (Gen 10:15–18) / “To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.” (Gen 15:18–21). These two lists offer elements of unknown populations, but others that constitute a “traditional” list of the peoples of the land: the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites (Exod 3:8.17; 13:5; 23:23; 33:2; 34:11; Deut 20:17; Josh 11:3; 12,8; Judg 3:5; 1 Kings 9:20; Neh 9:8; 2 Chr 8,7). These lists do not adopt a specific order and sometimes one or the other element is missing or is exchanged for another. Apart from these, there are the lists of the “seven nations” (שבעה גוים). The element added to the six is systematically the Girgashite element (Deut 7:1; Josh 3:10; 24:11). Because the occurrences of the seven nations are limited to the books of Deuteronomy and Joshua and because they are set in a context of war, destruction and dispossession, it seems likely that the list functions as a standard expression of conquest and that the number seven is a symbol of the total destruction of any element foreign to Israel in the promised land.

Canaanite land extends from Shechem to Hebron including the Jordan Valley (Gen 13:6–18; 34:20–31). Thus, the election of Judah makes him a worthy successor, in verse 2, to the figure of Abraham but, at the same time, in verse 4, a worthy successor of Joshua, victorious in a war of conquest, since 10,000 men are struck at Bezeq. Bezeq does not appear as a place of memory, even if we can associate this place with the emergence of Saulide monarchy.<sup>18</sup> Be that as it may, verse 3, which is inserted between the oracle and its realization, refers to tribal, not to say family, affairs and one can legitimately ask: What has Simeon to do here (Judg 1:3)? Simeon, as a clan, is indeed rather poorly attested,<sup>19</sup> to the point that E. A. Knauf and P. Guillaume make it a “ghost tribe” that has never existed outside biblical texts.<sup>20</sup> According to the book of Joshua (19:1–9, cf. 15:26–32.42), Simeon’s share is in the middle of the territory of Judah (Josh 19:9).<sup>21</sup> It is therefore obviously in connection with the traditions of the book of Joshua that the insertion of Simeon in the Judean “re-conquest” of the first chapter of the Judges must be understood.<sup>22</sup> Thus Judg 1:3 rewrites and corrects Joshua’s account of the conquest, since Judah invites his brother Simeon to fight the Canaanites. The question seems clearly a matter of genealogy, since Simeon is called “my brother” (Judg 1:3, cf. Gen 29:31–35). At the same time, the reference to the “lots,” which occupies verse 3, points back to the conquest according to the book of Joshua (18, cf. Num 34:13). Through the fraternal bounds, it is about defining, or even justifying, a larger “Judean” territory. It is therefore a “greater Judea” that is built through the figure of Judah *with* Simeon. One may wonder if the presence of Simeon is not also introduced here, in a strategic way to face the double entity of the North, which is represented by the house of Joseph: Ephraim *and* Manasseh (Josh 16–17, cf. Gen 41:50–52).

Thus far, the promotion of Judah, if it is political, is not in the sense of a defined (monarchical) government, but of a prominence and authority of a genealogical type, already (multi)ethnic (through Simeon) but also territorial with the references to the Perizzites and Canaanites. This first sequence reveals through

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<sup>18</sup> Brulin, 2021: 153–161.

<sup>19</sup> Augustine, 1990: 137–145; Na’aman, 1985: 111–136; Rainey, 1981: 146–151; 1977: 57–69; Talmon, 1965: 235–241; Albright, 1923: 131–161.

<sup>20</sup> Knauf / Guillaume, 2016: 48. In the genealogical sequence, Simeon is second after Reuben, by Leah. In the account of Jacob’s blessings (Gen 49), Simeon is associated with Levi in a blessing that is nothing but a curse (Macchi, 1999: 54, 66). Is their crime the revenge of their sister Dina (Gen 34)? Simeon is not mentioned either in the song of Deborah (Judg 5) – which can be understood, the tribes of the North are the only ones concerned – nor in the blessings of Moses (Deut 33) whereas previously Simeon and Levi are part, on the mountain of Gerizim, of the tribes blessed with Judah, Issakar, Joseph and Benjamin (Deut 27:12).

<sup>21</sup> See Na’aman, 1980: 136–152.

<sup>22</sup> Spronk, 2019: 53–54.

the figure of Judah the importance of the tribal model, its genealogical foundation as well as its territorial dimension.

## 2) Judg 1:5–7: From Bezeq to Jerusalem

They came upon Adoni-bezek at Bezek, and fought against him, and struck the Canaanite and the Perizzite. <sup>6</sup>Adoni-bezek fled; but they pursued him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and big toes. <sup>7</sup>Adoni-bezek said, “Seventy kings with their thumbs and big toes cut off used to pick up scraps under my table; as I have done, so God has paid me back.” They brought him to Jerusalem, and he died there. (Judg 1:5–7)

Verse 5 *clings* to the previous one by at least three means, the locality “Bezeq,” the phrase “the Canaanite and the Perizzite” and the verbal form “and they struck” (ויכרו, v.5, cf. ויכרום, v.4). The semantic unity of the passage turns around the character Adoni-Bezeq, probably “king” and “lord” – this is his title – of Bezeq. Indeed, the name is repeated within each verse, thus three times. The end of the section, with the mention of Jerusalem, introduces a new development. However, this passage raises different questions, particularly the link between Adoni-Bezeq and Adoni-Sedeq, “king of Jerusalem,” defeated in his time by Joshua (Josh 10:1).<sup>23</sup> According to A. G. Auld, the story may first have been about the defeat of Adoni-Sedeq in Jerusalem (explaining his flight and his death in Jerusalem, “at home,” in his capital). The name would then have been corrected to allow its insertion into the present narrative.<sup>24</sup> But what is then the narrative point of the passage and what is the meaning of the speech of Adoni-Bezeq? We learn that he is punished for what he did by the same atrocious and humiliating punishment that he himself had inflicted, thumbs of hands and feet cut off. We also learn that he recognizes Elōhîm. We finally learn that he is taken (or, if he is king, returned) to Jerusalem where he dies. But the status of the city has not yet been acknowledged – we only know later that it is not yet Judean – so it is difficult to draw any conclusions, except that the anecdote itself leads from Bezeq to Jerusalem. It is somehow sewn into the narrative and, before introducing to Jerusalem, it brings Bezeq in the spotlight.

What does Bezeq represent? Bezeq could be read in relation to the affirmation of Saul’s kingship (cf. 1 Sam 11:8)<sup>25</sup>. Indeed, Judg 1:1–7 insists on the unifying role of Judah and the battle of Bezeq gives the land *again* to the sons of Israel. Judg 1:4–5 can therefore be compared to 1 Sam 11:8 where Saul also leads a victorious battle. In other words, Judg 1:5–7 could be polemical, through this episode, about the figure of the first king of Israel Saul, a Benjaminite. This hypothesis is interesting. It is perhaps weakened by the fact that Saul’s victory (which

<sup>23</sup> See Auld, 1975: 268.

<sup>24</sup> Auld, 1975: 269; Mullen, 1984: 45.

<sup>25</sup> Brulin, 2021: 153–161; Spronk, 2019: 54–55.



indeed leads to Saul's kingship) takes place in Yavesh of Gilead over the Ammonite Nahash: in Bezeq, Saul only reviews the troops. Moreover, it is not certain as we have seen that the political issue at stake in the narrative is about the Davidic monarchy. We rather argue here that the issue is tribal. Finally, it is not impossible that the same name refers to two distinct geographical places, as defended by E. Gass, one in the North in connection with the Saulide monarchy, the other in the South, near Jerusalem.<sup>26</sup> Certainly, the analysis of this section (Judg 1:5–7) sheds more light on the scribal practices of composition than on the historical reasons that motivated the scribes.<sup>27</sup> The fact remains that, under the leadership of Judah, not only 10,000 men fall at Bezeq but a powerful king dies, whose name echoes Bezeq, and who in his time subdued the whole land (through the symbolic number of "70 kings"). It is therefore the land that is given in the hand of Judah, as announced by the oracle. This glorious and victorious character of the Judean conquest is accentuated in the next section presenting every feature of a "Blitzkrieg." Thus, Judah, after being promoted and raised (1:1–4), is construed into a glorious and victorious hero (1:5–7) whose conquests will then accelerate (1:8–11) at the cost of a certain number of corrections and reinventions if we keep in mind the stories of the conquest in the book of Joshua.

### 3) Judg 1:8–11: (Re-)Conquests of Judah: Jerusalem and the Canaanites

Then the people of Judah fought against Jerusalem and took it. They put it to the sword and set the city on fire. <sup>9</sup>Afterward the people of Judah went down to fight against the Canaanite who lived in the mountain, in the Negev/South, and in the Shephelah/plain. <sup>10</sup>Judah went against the Canaanites who lived in Hebron (the name of Hebron was formerly Kiriath-arba); and they struck Sheshai and Ahiman and Talmai. <sup>11</sup>From there they went against the inhabitants of Debir (the name of Debir was formerly Kiriath-sepher). (Judg 1:8–11)

The four following verses are outstanding in their repetitive aspect (phrases, structures and verbal forms) and construction that create the rhythm of a "Blitzkrieg." They also make it possible to clearly distinguish, on the one hand, the fate of Jerusalem and, on the other hand, the fate of the Canaanite. As various studies have shown, the issues at stake here in the Judean conquest are at the expense of Northern traditions;<sup>28</sup> Judg 1:8–11 can therefore be read in relation to the book of Joshua, in particular Judg 1:9 as an express summary of the developments of Josh

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<sup>26</sup> Gass, 2011.

<sup>27</sup> According to Spronk, 2019: 55, "(...) it is more likely that he [the author of Judges 1] only wanted to hint at the story of Josh. 10 in order to make a link with Jerusalem (the city of David) and to combine this with the link to Bezeq (the city of Saul)."

<sup>28</sup> Abadie, 2011: 28–38; Lanoir, 2005: 119–147; Mullen, 1984: 45–47; Lindars, 1979; Auld, 1975: 269–270.

15:21–63 relating to the Judean lot in the Negev/South (Josh 15:21–32), the Shephelah/plain (Josh 15:33–47) and the mountain (Josh 15:48–60). It is noteworthy that deprived of the geographical developments found in the book of Joshua, the enumeration of cities and their satellite villages, Judg 1:8 produces the impression of an invasive presence, since the notions of mountain, South (etymological meaning of the Negev) and plain (etymological sense of Shephelah) cannot delimit a precise territory.

Let us take up the most salient points of this cross-reading, which concern Jerusalem and Hebron, on the one hand, and the “Blitzkrieg” on the other. Concerning Jerusalem, Judg 1:8 presents its defeat and burning at the hands of the tribe of Judah. Now, in Josh 15:8, the city, mentioned as one situated on the borders of Judah, is Jebusite, but in Josh 18:28, the city is Benjaminite (cf. 18:16). Although Jerusalem may originally be considered as a border point, the account of Judg 1:4–8 clearly places it under the control of Judah. The reversal goes further. Indeed, what is according to Josh 15:63 a Judean defeat (“But the people of Judah could not drive out the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem; so the Jebusites live with the people of Judah in Jerusalem to this day”), becomes in Judg 1:21 a Benjaminite defeat (“But the Benjaminites did not drive out the Jebusites who lived in Jerusalem; so the Jebusites have lived in Jerusalem among the Benjaminites to this day”). The Judean tribe designated by the oracle of Yhwh, thus conquers the (future) city of Yhwh. The same goes for the conquest of Hebron (Judg 1:10, cf. 1:20),<sup>29</sup> which is Caleb’s in Josh 15:13, but becomes Judah’s, just as the victory over the three descendants of the Anakim (Josh 15:13–19). Here Judah takes up the victorious role of Joshua the Ephraimite.

Finally, the literary parallels and the frequency of active verbs form an astonishing echo to the Blitzkrieg in Josh 10:28–39 under the leadership of Joshua who, with all Israel, conquers Libnah, Lachish, Eglon, Hebron and Debir. In this passage, one finds the lexical field proper to the conquest, stereotypical formulas repeated at leisure, giving this section its character of “Blitzkrieg.” The literary analysis of the whole chapter shows, however, a very heterogeneous material put together.<sup>30</sup> The complexity of the transmission of diverse traditions and the scribal work of re-appropriation are obvious. In the case of the book of Joshua, it is a work to the glory of Northern traditions, under the leadership of Joshua the Ephraimite. In the case of Judges, it is – as we have understood – a work to the glory of Southern traditions, under the leadership of Judah.

#### 4) Judg 1:12–16: From the “son of Kenaz” / Othniel to the sons of Keni

Then Caleb said, “Whoever strikes Kiriath-sepher and takes it, I will give him my daughter Achsah as wife.”<sup>13</sup> And Othniel son of Kenaz, Caleb’s

<sup>29</sup> Mullen, 1984: 47.

<sup>30</sup> Rösel, 2011: 157–178.

younger brother, took it; and he gave him his daughter Achsah as wife. <sup>14</sup>When she came to him, she urged him to ask her father for a field. As she dismounted from her donkey, Caleb said to her, “What do you wish?” <sup>15</sup>She said to him, “Give me a present; since you have set me in the land of the Negeb, give me also Gulloth-mayim.” So Caleb gave her Upper Gulloth and Lower Gulloth. <sup>16</sup>The descendants of Hobab the Kenite, Moses’ father-in-law, went up with the people of Judah from the city of Palms into the wilderness of Judah, which lies in the Negeb near Arad. And they went and dwelled with the people. (Judg 1:12–16)

The following sequence somehow interrupts the “Blitzkrieg.” The catch-word connecting this new development to the previous section is the name of the city Debir. If Debir refers to Josh 10:38–39, the figure of Caleb refers to the description of the inheritance of Judah in Josh 15 which ends precisely with the conquest of Debir by Othniel, the marriage with Achsah promised by her father Caleb to the victor, and Achsah’s request to her father concerning the pools of water: the duplicate is almost perfect (Judg 1:12–15 = Josh 15:16–19).<sup>31</sup>

Why introduce this sequence into a fast narrative flow and thus slow it down? Obviously, the figure of Othniel is highlighted: Othniel, “son of Kenaz, brother of Caleb,” is the first judge or rather “savior” of the book of Judges (3:9–11). But, by the same token, it is also the figure of Caleb that is brought to light, a figure that we know as son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite (Num 32:12). Kenizzites and Kenites are clans located in the Southern Levant, so verse 16 can be read logically: “The descendants of Hobab the Kenite, Moses’ father-in-law, went up with the people of Judah from the city of Palms into the wilderness of Judah, which lies in the Negeb near Arad. Then they went and settled with the people” (Judg 1:16).

Can we unravel the links between these different clans, more Edomites than Judeans?<sup>32</sup> N. Amzallag has worked to elucidate the Southern or Kenite origins of Yahwism.<sup>33</sup> The author recalls that Moses’ father-in-law bears several names in the Bible: Jethro (Exod 3:1), Reuel (Exod 2:18), Hobab, son of Reuel (Num 10:29) and Keni (Judg 1:16). And these names are not without creating many links. Thus, Reuel is the name of one of the sons of Esau, whose nephew is none other than Kenaz (Gen 36:10–12); these clans are influential in Edom/Esau. Keni refers to the tribe of the Kenites or son of Kayin/Kain, which is indicated in the verse stating that “Heber, the Kenite, had separated from the tribe of Kayin, from the clan of the sons of Hobab, father-in-law of Moses” (Judg 4:11). According to Judg 1:16, the Kenites have a territory around the “city of the Palms,” a city obviously located in the Arabah. At the same time, the Kenites are also scattered

<sup>31</sup> See Lanoir, 2005: 139–141; Harlé / Roqueplo, 1999: 76–77; Mullen, 1984: 47–48; Auld, 1975: 270–272.

<sup>32</sup> Lanoir, 2005: 143–144.

<sup>33</sup> Amzallag, 2021; 2020: 48–52.

among the peoples. Heber the Kenite dwells among the Canaanites (Judg 4:11; 5:24), while other clans are settled in Southern Judea (Judg 1:16) and others in the midst of the Amalekites (1 Sam 15:6). And the Kenite reference is not without recalling the victory of Taanak (Judg 4) and the song of Deborah who praises Jael the Kenite, the wife of Heber, the heroine who killed Sisera, the general in chief of the armies of Jabin, king of Canaan, reigning in Hazor (Judg 5:24–27). As for the Kenizzites, they appear as the hero-saviors of Judea, known for their zeal towards Yhwh (Josh 14:14). From all these elements, it emerges that the function of the somewhat heterogeneous development in Judg 1:12–16 becomes clearer: clan and tribal ties are highlighted within Judah. On the one hand, Othniel, future “savior” of Israel is “son of Kenaz,” the latter, brother of Caleb, himself son of “Jephunneh the Kenizzite.” On the other hand, Jael, who is responsible for the definitive victory in Israel (over Jabin) is “wife of Heber, the Kenite.”<sup>34</sup>

The sequence in Judg 1:12–16 thus makes it possible to announce future victories in the book of Judges by rooting their heroes in a multiethnic, territorial and finally Judean identity. In view of the reflection carried out so far and the fraternity emphasized between Judah and Simeon, it can be said that the strength of Judah and its primacy, in this text at least, are based not only on a divine election but also a multi-ethnicity affirmed, even claimed. It should be noted that in Gen 15:19–20 Kenites and Kenizzites belong to the list of peoples whose land is given to Abraham and his descendants!

The sequence “and they went and dwelt with the people” (1:16) makes it possible to renew the thread of the “Blitzkrieg” by inscribing this action in the sequence of the successive movements of Judah (cf. Judg 1:10–11). It is also this expression that makes it possible to connect the next sequence, the last of which Judah is the subject (Judg 1:17–21).

### 5) Judg 1:17–21: A strange victory

Judah went with his brother Simeon, and they struck the Canaanite who inhabited Zephath, and devoted it to destruction (*hèrèm*). So the city was called Hormah.<sup>18</sup> Judah took Gaza with its territory, Ashkelon with its territory, and Ekron with its territory.<sup>19</sup> Yhwh was with Judah, and he took possession of the mountain, he could not drive out the inhabitants of the plain, because they had chariots of iron.<sup>20</sup> Hebron was given to Caleb, as Moses had said; and he drove out from it the three sons of Anak.<sup>21</sup> But the Benjaminites did not drive out the Jebusites who lived in Jerusalem; so the

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<sup>34</sup> Note in this regard the verbal form  $\text{נָּסַדְּתָהּ}$ , “and she descended,” which root appears only three times in the Hebrew Bible precisely in the 3<sup>rd</sup> pers. fem. sing. (Josh 15:18; Judg 1:14; 4:21; see Lanoir, 2005: 135–138), creating a tenuous but playful link between the figure of Achsah and Yael, both heroines to the glory of Southern traditions.

Jebusites have lived in Jerusalem among the Benjaminites to this day.  
(Judg 1:17–21)

The thread of the war continues in this section at a fast and repetitive pace. In addition to the vocabulary of conquest, the enumeration of Philistine cities and the insertion relating to the name of Zephath/Hormah take up familiar scribal practices. Note in passing the historical difficulty posed by the Judean conquest of the Philistine cities (cf. Josh 13:2–3; 15:45–47; Judg 3:3).<sup>35</sup> The rapid progression is further supported by a term, new in the context of Judg 1, but symbol of the conquest in the book of Joshua.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, only Judah and Simeon realize the *hèrèm*, a warrior and sacred practice of total destruction (according to Deut 7:2 and 20:16–18). As E.T. Mullen points out, “since this institution of holy war is connected with the Judges account of the conquest only in reference to Judah, it brings into clear focus the intention of the redactor to show that only Judah of all the tribes had fulfilled the demands of Moses set forth in Deuteronomy”.<sup>37</sup>

At the same time, an internal contradiction emerges in verse 19. Certainly, Yhwh is with Judah, but in the end, only the mountain is taken: the plain cannot be, for lack of adequate military equipment, especially the iron chariot! This “Blitzkrieg” therefore gives the taste of a funny victory, not to say a no-victory. Maybe the victory is more about being with Yhwh (אֶת־יְהוָה, 1,19) than in the conquest of territories. Clearly the Judean re-conquest is here corrected and remains unfinished. The two verses that follow mark a geographical transition and a number of renegotiations: the city of Hebron is this time given to Caleb, who himself dispossessed the sons of Anaq (and not Judah, 1:20, cf. 1:10; Josh 15:13–19) and Jerusalem is this time inhabited by the Jebusites, which the Benjaminites or “son of Benjamin” (and not Judah according to Josh 15:63) could not dispossess (1:21, cf. 1:8). Obviously, these renegotiations are also corrections in accordance with the book of Joshua.<sup>38</sup> By this Benjaminite reference, we turn to the second part of this chapter devoted to the son of Joseph.<sup>39</sup>

## 6) Judg 1:22–36: The “House of Joseph,” “Israel”

The last section of the chapter, the longest, is striking for its repetitive nature (so it is not necessary to make a long quotation here). The “house of Joseph” is the subject, a house with which Yhwh is also (1:22) echoing the presence of Yhwh with Judah (1:19). But this time it describes the no-conquest of the “house of Jo-

<sup>35</sup> Different proposals have been made, for example, Spronk, 2019: 64; Guillaume, 1998: 12–17.

<sup>36</sup> Josh 2:10; 6:17.21; 7:1.11.15; 8:26; 10:1.28.35.37.39; 11:11.20; 19:38; 22:20; cf. Judg 1:17; 21:11.

<sup>37</sup> Mullen, 1984: 49.

<sup>38</sup> Auld, 1975: 274–275.

<sup>39</sup> “This geographical situation becomes a literary link between the southern and northern tribes.” Mullen, 1984: 50.

seph.” We find the same lexical field as before, the “rise” of Joseph (1:22, cf. 1:2.3.4), the action of “striking” (1:25, cf. 1:4.5.8.10.12.17), “over the sword” (1:25, cf. 1:8), the verbal form that characterized a war of movement (1:26 cf. 1:10.11.16.17), the scribal insertions relating to the names and etiology of the cities (here Bethel and Luz, 1:23–26). The repetitive character of the section is also emphasized by the notion of inheritance and possession of the land that the root \*yrš expresses in biblical Hebrew (here systematically in the *hifil*, cf. 1:19), as each Northern tribe is mentioned. Again, we may compare this text with its parallels to the book of Joshua and highlight, as has been done, the corrections, to the disadvantage of the tribes of the North.<sup>40</sup> But that’s not all, the use of the root \*yrš in the *hifil* is theologically interesting.<sup>41</sup> It is traditionally translated here as “dispossess:” such a tribe did not dispossess such a site or that people, which makes it comparable to an active *paal*: to inherit one land is to dispossess another. The idea of the causative *hifil* should be the idea that the one who is the owner or the one who executes the will shares the property. Thus, in Judg 1:19, verse in which the first occurrence of the root appears, one could understand, in a literal manner, “Yhwh was with Judah, and Yhwh made (him) inherit the mountain, he did not make (him) inherit the plain/he did not dispossess the inhabitants of the plain,” rather than “Yhwh was with Judah, and Judah took possession (וַיִּרְשׁ) of the mountain, he could not drive out (לֹא לָהֹרֵשׁ) the inhabitants of the plain.” It is true that this solution is not fully satisfactory with regard to the end of the verse “because they had iron chariots.” On the other hand, it is with regard to Josh 13:6 which affirms that the conquest is the fact of Yhwh, he who makes his sons inherit, he who dispossesses the peoples, while Joshua has only to share the country: “all the inhabitants of the hill country from Lebanon to Misrephoth-maim, even all the Sidonians. I will myself drive them out from before the Israelites (אֶנְכִּי יִשְׁרָאֵל רַק הַפְּלֵה) (אֲוֹרֵשׁם מִפְּנֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל); only allot the land to Israel for an inheritance (לְיִשְׂרָאֵל בְּנַחֲלָה), as I have commanded you” (Josh 13:6). The divine responsibility in the conquest, and consequently in the no-conquest, must not be concealed and justifies the analysis carried out above: the divine presence is with Judah as it is with Joseph, but it does not imply full success of the conquest. There is therefore a non-negligible correction to the ideology of conquest, since Yhwh is responsible for an unfinished conquest, a mixed occupation of the territory, a situation where the construction of identity must necessarily be thought of otherwise than by territory, land, and frontiers. In this sense, the tribal, clan or multi-ethnic model highlighted, at this point in our investigation, is a major clue to this construction of identity: it is not just about building a “greater Judea,” it is about building a “greater Israel,” an identity thus joining *again* ancient Northern and Southern

<sup>40</sup> Especially Josh 17:11–13 (Manasseh); Josh 16:10 (Ephraim); Josh 19:10–16 (Zebulon); Josh 19:24–31.32–39 (Asher and Naphtali); Josh 19:40–46 (Dan), see Mullen, 1984: 51–52.

<sup>41</sup> Creach, 2012: 156.

kingdoms. It does not matter what the territorial geography and historical frontiers are if human ties define the borders. The tribal model then makes it possible to build borders that are not necessarily historical and claim a greater land.

What the analysis conducted here leads to is the importance of the tribal model beyond the territorial question in a time of lost political autonomy. For if Judah is first it is indeed in reference to a tribal model and if he associates with Simeon, it is also in relation to the tribal model and the powerful model of the North, Ephraim *and* Manasseh, sons of Joseph. The tribal model is therefore put at the service of an identity that is not monarchical – there are no more independent kingdoms whether in the North or in the South – but multi-ethnic: the strength of Judah is not only a matter of divine election (Judg 1:2), since at the very moment this preference is affirmed (Judg 1:19a), the admission of failure in re-conquering the land is admitted (1:19b), just as it is concerning the house of Joseph. In our opinion, this admission of failure must be viewed in connection with the clan and tribal ties that are developed: Simeon, the Kenites and the Kenizzites. The territory is shared and fraternal ties as well as matrimonial unions have enlarged it. Therefore, Judah's strength lies in its mixed and multi-ethnic identity that allows it to form a "greater Judea," that is, at the time of redaction, a greater "Yehud." Both the Judean territory and the text are woven, and this clan or multi-ethnic weaving defines and constructs the Judean identity more than geographical frontiers. This is a non-negligible correction to the ideology of conquest, since the territory rather than being conquered is invested and enlarged by familial ties and alliances forged. Yhwh is also partly responsible for the incompleteness of the conquest: the text clearly renegotiates the identity of a population, both Judean and Israelite, legitimizing the mixed occupation of the territory and defining new ethnic borders to the glory of Judah it is true. This is an important result in understanding the identity that is being built here, at a time when "there was no longer a king" (Judg 18:1; 19:1) and when clearly Israel's heritage is being built and transmitted in Judea/Yehud. This rewriting is understood at the earliest in the Persian-Achaemenid era, or better Hellenistic period, when the traditions of the Hexateuch and the Kings are already "in place." It seems that at this late period of time, and in the absence of a monarchical government, the intention of the sanctuary of Jerusalem, the heart of the small Judean province, is to assert its identity by a glorious past, certainly, but also by a tribal and multi-ethnic identity, of an almost mythical antiquity, since it is anchored in the "direct" descent of Jacob. This construction to the glory of Judah in the first chapter of the Judges thus remains deeply rooted in the framework of the tribal system, of the "twelve" tribes, and suggests that this model clearly constructs the identity of a people whose land and borders no longer depend on a monarchical sovereignty and are the game of various interests and powers, often foreign.

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# The Seer Mopsos

Legendary Foundations in Archaic Anatolia before the Neileids

Mary R. Bachvarova

“Close by is Mallos, lying on the peak, a foundation of Amphiloehus and Mopsos, the son of Apollo and Manto; about them many myths are told” (Strabo 14.5.16).

## Abstract

The historical and cultural context of the Karatepe inscriptions (ca. 700 BCE) has been carefully analyzed by many, including more than one participant in this symposium, but less attention has been paid to the light it can shed on the way stories of Anatolian colonization were used in Greek identity-making in the Archaic period. These stories are best preserved for us by the likes of Herodotus and Pausanias, but in forms that are likely to have undergone multiple alterations in response to a changing political landscape: Lydian hegemony, the Persian invasion, the Delian League, etc. In contrast, the Karatepe inscriptions are roughly contemporary with the Homeric *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and a couple of generations earlier than elegiac poets such as Callinus and Mimnermus, who made reference to the legendary histories of their cities – respectively Ephesus and Colophon – when exhorting their fellow citizens to action. Entwined in this history was a hero bearing the same name as the founder of the dynasty whom Azatiwata boasts he serves, Mopsos. I argue that by combining the Greek evidence with the Phoenician and Luwian evidence from Karatepe we can unearth traces of legends in the Archaic period creating connections via Greek colonizing heroes among cities along the coast of Anatolia from the Troad to Ionia to Cilicia. This conclusion presents in turn the possibility of shedding further light on the activities of people the Assyrians called "Ionian" in southeastern Anatolia and the Levant in the 8<sup>th</sup> century.

## Introduction

In the mid-eighth-century foundation inscription of Cilician Karatepe,<sup>1</sup> Azatiwata boasts of how he built the eponymous city of Azatiwataya and protected the kingdom of his lord Awarikus for his descendants, expanding it until it filled all the plain of Adanawa. Azatiwata calls the royal dynasty of Adana “the House of Mopsos”: in Phoenician *bt mpš*, in Hieroglyphic Luwian *mu-ka-sa-sa-na DOMUS-ni-*

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<sup>1</sup> Here I follow the newly published argument by Novák, 2021, for up-dating the Karatepe inscriptions. For another recent review of the study of the inscriptions, see Gabrieli, 2021: 330–331. All dates are BCE. All translations are my own.

*i.*<sup>2</sup> In addition, *wryks* of the House of Mopsos appears the trilingual Phoenician-Hieroglyphic Luwian-Assyrian Çineköy inscription (ca. 740).<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, in the Çineköy inscription, found 15 miles south of Karatepe, an Adanaean king *w[r(y)k]/Warīkas* describes himself as a descendant of Mopsos.<sup>4</sup> Here the Phoenician ethnonym *dnnym* (9) corresponds to Hieroglyphic Luwian *hi-ia-wali* (I, III),<sup>5</sup> which is derived from the Late Bronze Age term *Aḫhiyawa* for the homeland of the Mycenaeans.<sup>6</sup> The inscriptions have been carefully analyzed by many, including more than one participant in the symposium upon which this volume is based. One thread of argumentation attempts to elucidate the contemporaneous Near Eastern context, trying to mesh with the Neo-Assyrian versions of events involving Cilicia.<sup>7</sup> The other thread of argumentation concerns whether the mentions of Hiyawa and Mopsos confirm the historicity of legends of Greek colonization in Cilicia, and whether they should be linked to the movements of the so-called Sea Peoples at the end of the Bronze Age.<sup>8</sup> But, less attention has been paid to the light the legends of the seer Mopsos can shed on the way stories of Anatolian colonization were used in Greek identity-making in the Archaic period. These stories are best preserved for us by the likes of Strabo and Pausanias, but in forms that are likely to have undergone multiple alterations in response to a changing political landscape: claims of Panionian identity, Lydian hegemony, Persian domination, the Delian League, and so on. In contrast, the Karatepe inscriptions are roughly contemporary with the earliest Greek literature, the Homeric *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

I begin with a discussion of the various forms of the name, offering reasons for the inconsistencies that appear to defy the linguistic rules of regular sound change. I then go over yet again the various versions of Greek legends about Mopsos. Although they present a complicated picture, it is possible to untangle them to some degree and separate them into layers, each reworking elements of older stories to new purposes, as already well analyzed by Roberto Baldriga (1994).<sup>9</sup> I of course consider the texts that are typically taken into account in modern dis-

<sup>2</sup> KARATEPE 1: Phoen.: Phu A I 16; HL: Hu. 4b, §XXI, 112–113, ed. and trans. of the Phoenician version: W. Rollig in Çambel, 1999: 50–68; Hieroglyphic Luwian version: Hawkins, 2000: 45–68;

<sup>3</sup> Ed. and trans. Kaufman, 2007. Only the Phoenician version is legible.

<sup>4</sup> Phoen. [*pr*] *špḫ mpš*, 1–2; Hier. Luw. [*mu-ka*]-*sa-sa* INFANS.NEPOS-*si-sà* §I.6–7.

<sup>5</sup> Ed. and trans. Tekoğlu / Lemaire, 2000.

<sup>6</sup> Oreshko, 2013.

<sup>7</sup> E.g., Lanfranchi, 2009; Novák, 2021.

<sup>8</sup> E.g., Lane Fox, 2009: 214–226: negative. López-Ruiz, 2010: 38–43, 68–69: germ of truth.

<sup>9</sup> For the many different locations to which the name of Mopsos was attached, see Vanschoonwinkel, 1991: 314–30. The following discussion uses references drawn from Baldriga, 1994, and is in part inspired by Baldriga's distinction between legends attributable to a Theban epic tradition, attached to the *nostoi*, and representing Rhodian interests.

cussions of Mopsos: the epic traditions of the *Melampodia*, the *nostoi*, and the Theban cycle. But, I also attempt to ferret out earlier discussions of Mopsos, and I will argue against current opinion that the Ephesian elegiac poet Callinus did not make reference to a Mopsos in eastern Anatolia. Not only did he link Mopsos to the Greek mainland via descentance from the line of Theban seers, as found in later works, but he also mentioned a migration to Cilicia that began in the Troad. Only after this has been established can we move on to understanding how knowledge of the Adanawean House of Mopsos could have shaped the development of the different Greek traditions that were stitched together to form a complex story about a Mopsos connected on the one hand to mainland Greece via Thebes and Delphi and on the other hand to the story of the Trojan War, and finally, to sites in Cilicia and Pamphylia.

### The Name(s) of Mopsos

The first question to ask is whether modern scholars have been correct to consider various names to be forms of Mopsos or two names were conflated at Karatepe, as Zsolt Simon has recently argued.<sup>10</sup> Here I will engage in the inverse thought exercise that Simon did, finding a way to explain the inconcinnities in the attestations, which concomitantly will offer evidence concerning cultural interactions in the Bronze and Iron Ages.

We have three Late Bronze Age attestations. The oldest, ca. 1400, appears in a Middle Hittite document dealing with conflicts along the Aegean, the *Maduwatta Indictment* – unfortunately in a fragmentary context – apparently quoting from a previous letter to the Hittite king, which only informs us that *Mu-uk-šu-uš* was a high-status individual, not with which side he allied himself (KUB 14.1, rev. 75). Linear B documents mention the name *Mo-qo-so* twice, once in a tablet from Knossos dating to the Late Minoan IIIB1 (ca. 1300) among the personal names of men in charge of flocks of sheep (KN De 1381), and once in a tablet from Pylos, dating to the Late Helladic IIIB1 (ca. 1300–1250), as the owner of a chariot (PY Sa 774).<sup>11</sup> The latter shows the name could be borne by high-status men. As has long been recognized, the name *Mukšuš* cannot be the Hittite transcription of *Mok<sup>w</sup>sos*, since the labiovelar would be spelled out (*Mu-uk-ku-šu-uš*). Simon considers this to be a key piece of evidence supporting the non-identity of the names.<sup>12</sup>

If we wish to consider the names to be related, therefore, we must assume an intermediary language lacking the labiovelar, presumably located in west Anatolia, through which the name passed before it was encountered by the Hittite scribe. We should bear in mind that the name *Mok<sup>w</sup>sos* has neither obvious Indo-European cognates outside of those discussed here nor a Greek etymology. Thus, there

<sup>10</sup> Simon, 2021. See Gabrieli, 2021: 331–333, for a recent survey of the question.

<sup>11</sup> I use the higher date proposed by Godart / Sacconi, 2020, for the Pylos tablets.

<sup>12</sup> Simon, 2021: 183–184.

is no reason to assume it is of Indo-European origin instead of from a local language indigenous to the Aegean area, and the name could have been borrowed into the putative Anatolian intermediary language directly from the pre-Greek language in which it originated, rather than from Greek. One obvious possibility for an intermediary language is a Tyrrhenian language, at least for those who believe the language family originated in west Anatolia.<sup>13</sup> For example, a Mycenaean – or pre-Greek-speaking – man could have bestowed the name on a child conceived in a marriage with a local west Anatolian woman (or vice-versa), and the child’s local relatives adapted the name to their native phonology. Given the high status of Mukšuš, we can suggest a marriage alliance between an immigrant and an Anatolian. Thus, we surmise a mixed ethnic identity for the family of Mukšuš, which would not be contradicted by the situation he found himself in, enmeshed in the machinations between Maduwatta and the Hittite king along the Aegean coast. As in the name Alakšanduš (of Wiluša, ca. 1275), Greek *o* is realized in Hittite cuneiform with a *Cu* sign.

The name or names start to appear again in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. Outside of Cilicia, Muksos is found among the names inscribed on one of the wooden beams closing the tomb of the Phrygian Tumulus MM just before installation (ca. 740), suggesting he was one of the men involved in the final ceremonies of the interment of king, again a high-status role.<sup>14</sup> His name would be based on the name Mukšuš with Phrygianization of the stem, and it corresponds to the Hieroglyphic Luwian *a*-stem Muksas, whereas the Phoenician name MPŠ evidently reflects the Greek pronunciation of the name after the sound change *k<sup>w</sup>>p / \_o*, which occurred in the later 2<sup>nd</sup> to early 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BCE.<sup>15</sup> In mainland Greece, the earliest attestation in an alphabetic inscription comes from the 6<sup>th</sup> century in the genitive form ΜΞΟΨΟΥ.<sup>16</sup> Finally, the deeds of a just Lydian general named Moxos were discussed by the 5<sup>th</sup>-century historian Xanthus the Lydian as part of the history of relations between Lydia and Syria in the legendary pre-Mermnad past. The spelling is actually corrected by modern editors from the manuscript tradition “Mopsos,” based on the name’s appearance in late inscriptions.<sup>17</sup>

Simon, although noting that the Lydian name Moxos only appears in Greek inscriptions, therefore in an alphabet that cannot represent Lydian *q*, asserts that

<sup>13</sup> Bachvarova, 2016: 361–362; Beekes, 2003; Kloekhorst, 2012; 2022. See Scheer, 1993: 267, for earlier scholars’ suggestions of the name’s origin.

<sup>14</sup> Liebhart / Brixhe, 2009: 144–145, 147–141.

<sup>15</sup> Simon, 2021: 184, n. 7, is right to lay aside Lycian B *muxssa* (TL 44d.39), on which see most recently Sasseville, 2021: 175–176.

<sup>16</sup> Tafel 14, IIIa, Kunze, 1950: discussion, 178–179, 213.

<sup>17</sup> Nicolaus of Damascus (64 BCE – 4 CE), *FGrH* 765 F17a, *FGrH* 90 F16 = *FGrH* 765 F17c. On the name among the Lydians, see Bremmer, 2008: 142–143. As Paradiso, 2018, ad F 17a, in her commentary on Xanthus points out, Nicolaus when he repeats the story told by Xanthus spells the name Moxos.

the Greek spelling does not represent a putative Lydian Moqsos. That is, the Lydian name does not stem from a second-millennium borrowing in west Anatolia directly from Greek (or the pre-Greek language from which the name originated). Rather, he insists the name must represent Lydian Moksos, from *\*Mél/ólówksos*. From this pre-form one can derive by systematic sound changes both the Lydian and the Hieroglyphic Luwian form.<sup>18</sup> However, if the Old Phrygian name was borrowed from first-millennium Lydian, one would expect Moxos. If borrowed in the pre-form *\*Mél/ólówksos*, one would expect in Old Phrygian respectively Meuksos, Mauksos, or Mōksos/Mouksos. Muksos could represent /Mōuksos/,<sup>19</sup> but the long diphthong is not expected in proto-Lydian.

The problem with the name Muksas is not the impossible realization of the labiovelar as *k*, but the *a*-stem next to the *u*-stem Mukšuš. While Simon accepts that the Phrygian name is borrowed from Luwian Muksas “with a trivial Phrygionization of the ending,”<sup>20</sup> he precludes the possibility for the same adaptation for the Luwian name via his assumption that the Greek spelling Moxos of the Lydian name cannot represent the Greek attempt to write Lydian Moqsos. In this way Simon arrives at the conclusion that “the translator of the Phoenician original [of the Karatepe inscription] created for the dynasty of Mopsos translated/luwianized the name MPŠ (Mopsos) with a similar-sounding Luwian name *Muksa*-.”<sup>21</sup>

Note that since Iron-Age Luwians were not historical linguists, the similarity between the two high-status names would never provoke anything more than a folk-etymological equation in their minds, whether or not modern linguists would consider them cognate. So, Simon’s point ends up being that the folk-etymological equation was original to the man translating the Karatepe inscription into Luwian, rather than a long-standing equation in Cilicia. Yet, one would imagine that there was already an agreed-upon pronunciation of the dynastic name in Luwian, the local language! Furthermore, Simon does not discuss how the fact that Muksas was a high-status name in Anatolia impacted perceptions of the similarity with the high-status Greek name.

In fact, Muksos and Muksas must be from the same source; the name written in the single Hittite attestation as Mukšuš was adapted to Phrygian and Hieroglyphic Luwian *o*- and *a*-stems (or one language borrowed the other’s adapted form and adapted it to its own stem formant), this despite the fact that both languages do have *u*-stem personal names. Thus, there were two separate onomastic traditions within Indo-European Anatolian for what was originally the same name appearing in Linear B as Moqsos and in 1<sup>st</sup>-millennium Greek as Mopsos: the Lydian Mok<sup>w</sup>sos, written in the Greek alphabet as Moxos, and from the form that

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<sup>18</sup> Simon, 2021: 186–187.

<sup>19</sup> See Ligorio / Lubotsky, 2018: 18–19, on Phrygian diphthongs.

<sup>20</sup> Simon, 2021: 187–188.

<sup>21</sup> Simon, 2021: 188. The Luwian version of the name is not preserved in its entirety in the Çineköy inscription, so it must be laid aside.

had lost the labialization, Hittite Mukšuš, Phrygian Muksos, and Hieroglyphic Luwian Muksas.

### The seers Mopsos

As I will show, on the Greek side the name Mopsos was deeply enmeshed with legends about Greco-Anatolian interactions. I delve more deeply now into the (at least) two seers Mopsos in Archaic Greek mytho-history. Each of them can be considered to represent important heroes who were fitted in different ways into a schema of the legendary past that was eventually dominated by the Trojan War as the watershed event separating the heroic age from the present Iron Age. The Lapith (Thessalian) Argonaut Mopsos, who participated in Jason's voyage to Colchis on the eastern coast of the Black Sea, belonged to a generation before the Trojan War, which was a convenient place to locate the exploits of heroes whose legends existed in the era before the master narrative of the Trojan War ended up dominating Greek legendary history. The other Mopsos, associated particularly with Claros, was attached to the *nostoi* after the Trojan War.

Firstly, though, why was the name Mopsos applied to seers? As noted earlier, the name remains without etymology, but Carolina López-Ruiz's suggestion makes sense: a folk-etymological connection with the Greek root *op* 'see' played a role in assigning the heroes this career path, which then could be shaped further by the awareness on the part of the Greeks that Anatolians were particularly proficient in various forms of divination,<sup>22</sup> including the fish oracles found throughout Caria and Lycia, the many oracles of Apollo,<sup>23</sup> and the augury that Hittite texts show was a specialty of west Anatolian Arzawans in the Late Bronze Age.<sup>24</sup>

### The Argonaut Mopsos

The Archaic-period *Argonautica* is now lost. While M. L. West argues that since the epic was inspired by Milesian colonization of the Black Sea, it could not date to before ca. 650, the Argo is in fact mentioned by Circe as well known in the *Odyssey* (12.69–72).<sup>25</sup> This is not a problem for West, who believes in a relatively late date for the *Odyssey*; however, many would prefer to postulate a date of composition around 700 BCE.<sup>26</sup> In any case, we currently do not have any information that would allow us to hypothesize that Mopsos was a member of the Argonauts

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<sup>22</sup> López-Ruiz, 2009: 390. Also see Scheer, 1993: 266–271, arguing that the various Mopsos' connection with the "Sakrale" speaks to Greek awareness of Anatolian expertise in divinatory techniques, albeit to support a very different argument than the one I am building towards in this contribution.

<sup>23</sup> Curnow, 2004: 121–153; Lebrun, 1990.

<sup>24</sup> Mouton / Rutherford, 2013.

<sup>25</sup> West, 2005. Also cf. the mention of Jason at *Il.* 7.469, and see Strabo (12.38.9) and Greaves, 2002: 106, on Homer's knowledge of Jason's story.

<sup>26</sup> See Burgess, 2019: 16–17.



in the very earliest phase of the epic tradition. He is first attested providing guidance to Jason in the 5<sup>th</sup> century by Pindar (*Pyth.* 4.191, 201), while the earliest attestation of Mopsos' name, which was mentioned above, appears on an early 6<sup>th</sup>-century shield strap dedicated at Olympia. It accompanies a scene of two men boxing at the funeral games of Jason's uncle Pelias with the prize tripod between them.<sup>27</sup> We can note therefore that the legendary Argonaut was given exposure in supralocal competitive contexts. This Mopsos was also depicted on the Chest of Cypselus, again boxing in Pelias' funeral games, and here he was called son of Ampyx 'boxer' (Paus. 5.17.10), as he was in the story of the fight between the Lapiths and the Centaurs in the 6<sup>th</sup>-century Hesiodic *Shield of Heracles* (F 181 Most). The Cypselus chest, which was on display at Olympia and described in detail by Pausanias, is considered to date to ca. 580–570.<sup>28</sup>

Jason's quest for the Golden Fleece is a story sufficiently replete with Anatolian motifs to support the supposition that there was substantial Anatolian participation in the formation of the narrative. Specifically, the fleece hanging on the sacred oak tree brings to mind the *kurša*, the fleecy sacred hunting bag that is described as hanging from the *eya*-tree, perhaps a yew or live oak, in the culmination of the *mugawar* invocation ritual, when the disappeared god returns with kindly intent for the client. Meanwhile, the snake guarding the tree has been compared to the snake that appears in the north central Anatolian Illuyanka myth.<sup>29</sup> Thus, the Argonaut Mopsos participated in one version of Greco-Anatolian legendary history that created a connection between Greeks and barbarians.

### Clarian Mopsos

The other seer Mopsos connected Greece and Anatolia in a very different way. He was attached to Claros, where there was a famous Apolline oracle in the ambit of the Ionian city Colophon.<sup>30</sup> This Mopsos was mentioned in the mid 6<sup>th</sup>-century Hesiodic *Melampodia*,<sup>31</sup> a genealogically structured narrative telling of the deeds of the descendants of the Argive seer Melampous, their foundings, and their rivalries with seers across the eastern Mediterranean. Strabo (14.1.27 = Hes. F 214 Most), discussing "the ancient oracle" of "Colophon, an Ionian city, and the grove in front of it of Apollo Clarios,"<sup>32</sup> says Hesiod told a variant of the well-known

<sup>27</sup> Kunze, 1950. Mopsos in early myth: Gantz, 1993: 191–193, 343–345. The Argonaut Mopsos: Lane Fox, 2009: 212; Scheer, 1993:155–158.

<sup>28</sup> Date of Chest of Cypselus: Borg, 2010: 81, 84, with earlier references. Mopsos also appears in late versions of the Calydonian boar hunt (Ovid *Met.* 8.316, Hyginus *Fab.* 173).

<sup>29</sup> Bachvarova, 2016: 103–104; Bremmer, 2006; Haas, 1978.

<sup>30</sup> Mopsos in legendary histories of Colophon: Hornblower, 2015: 210–12; Mac Sweeney, 2013: 104–137, but note she takes the citation of Callinus instead of Callisthenes in Strabo 14.4.3, discussed below, for granted; Thomas, 2019: 50–52, 169–175.

<sup>31</sup> Dating: Löffler, 1963: 59.

<sup>32</sup> On the oracle see Johnston, 2008: 76–82.

story of how Mopsos bested the augur Calchas, “who arrived there on foot with Amphiloachus, the son of Amphiaraus, on the way back from Troy, and because he encountered a seer more powerful than him at Claros, Mopsos, son of Manto, daughter of Teiresias, he died from grief.” Later, Strabo specifies that he is referring to a Mopsos whose father is Apollo (14.5.16), and it may be that this parentage gave him the advantage over the Achaean seer. Calchas, on the other hand, was descended from Melampous.<sup>33</sup> Thus, the conflict between Calchas and Mopsos is between the two major Hellenic families of seers. Furthermore, the meeting between Mopsos and Calchas connects the Trojan War story to the Theban Cycle, a different, competing fallen city story, whose iconic role in Greek history (cf. Hesiod’s *Works and Days* 163) was eventually overshadowed by the increasingly dominant Troy tradition as *the* event marking the end of the age of heroes. Finally, Mopsos represents a layer of Greek settlement dating to before the Trojan War, not the later legendary colonization led by the Neileids, which was used to create a shared Ionian identity among the Greek cities along the Anatolian littoral.

Calchas’ failed *nostos* at Colophon is not mentioned in the *Odyssey* but is described in the lost epic poem *Nostoi*. Scholars typically explain the legendary returns of the Achaean heroes after the Trojan War as providing (or reworked to provide) a mythical underpinning to Greek colonizations in the Archaic period by situating them in the master narrative of the Trojan War.<sup>34</sup> While the *Nostoi* is tentatively dated to the sixth century, the individual stories about local heroes’ returns could have been known well before.<sup>35</sup> Unfortunately, in Proclus’ summary of the *Nostoi* (2) an error seems to have crept into the account of Calchas’ failed return after his arrival on foot in Colophon with Leontes and Polypoetes, presumably having chosen the land route because the seer knows of the impending storm that will scatter the Achaean fleet.<sup>36</sup> Proclus simply states, “They bury Teiresias after he died there.” Modern scholars have dealt with the inconsistency by emending Teiresias to Calchas, following Apollodorus (*Bibl. Epit.* 6.2–4), who refers to the visible landmark of Calchas’ tomb, surely making use of the *Epigonoï*, a member of the Theban epic cycle.<sup>37</sup> It is most unfortunate that we do not have a fuller version of this episode, for apparently the *Nostoi*’s author was well enough acquainted with Colophon for some to assume it was his home (Eustathius, *ad Od.* 1796.52), although Proclus attributes the epic to Agias of Troezen. One thing of which we can be sure is that a voyage to Cilicia or Pamphylia was not in the

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<sup>33</sup> Calchas’ genealogy is established by Löffler, 1963: 46.

<sup>34</sup> Malkin, 1998.

<sup>35</sup> See Burgess, 2019: 29–30; Danek, 2015: 359–60; Hornblower, 2018.

<sup>36</sup> Danek, 2015: 373.

<sup>37</sup> Tomb: Mac Sweeney, 2018: 251–256. Apollodorus’ use of the *Epigonoï*: Danek, 2015: 354, 367–368; West, 2013: 254–255; Cingano, 2015 on *Bib.* 3.7.2–5, where the earlier parts of the *epigonoï* story are related.

*Nostoi*.<sup>38</sup>

The Theban epic tradition included the attack on Thebes by the sons of the warriors who had lost the war between Oedipus' sons Eteocles and Polyneices and the subsequent travels of those who were forced to abandon Thebes. In this tradition, Mopsos continued Teiresias' line after the destruction of Thebes, but outside of mainland Greece. Only preserved in exiguous fragments, the Theban epics are not datable more precisely than to the Archaic or early Classical periods, but the *Iliad* (4.406–10) assumes knowledge of the deeds of the sons of the seven warriors who died attacking Thebes, so the kernel at least of the story of the *epigonoí* is known to Homer.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, Pausanias states (9.9.5 = T 10 Gentili-Prato):

This war, which the Argives fought [against Thebes], I think, of all that were fought against Hellenes by Hellenes in the times called heroic, was the most worthy of story.... An epic, *Thebaid*, was also composed about this war; and this epic Callinus [ms. Καλαῖνος emended by Sylburg to Καλλῖνος], when he made mention of it, said Homer was the one who composed it.

Certainly, we should not assume the mid-7<sup>th</sup>-century Ephesian poet Callinus was citing a fixed text, but we can infer that by his time there was a prestigious epic tradition about the fall of Thebes known in Ionia.<sup>40</sup>

According to a scholion on Apollonius of Rhodes' *Argonautica* (ad 1.308b = *Epigonoí* T 3 Bernabé):

Those who have written the *Thebaid* say that Manto the daughter of Teiresias was dedicated to Delphi by the *epigonoí*, having been sent there. Having left according to the oracle of Apollo, she met Rhakios, son of Lebes, Mycenaean with regard to his family. And having married him, ... she went to Colophon. ... And, she made the shrine of Apollo.

Presumably the epic named Mopsos as the son of Manto and Rhakios. Thus, in this story Mopsos is given a mainland Greek origin, and the Clarian oracle is denied an indigenous one. Delphi, the most famous oracle from mainland Greece, was already well known as an initiator of colonizing journeys by the late 8<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>41</sup> and therefore was drawn into the ambit of the Theban storyline.

Modern commentators have suggested that the scholiast's mention of the *Thebaid* should be amended to *Epigonoí*, assuming that each epic served as a chapter in the story of Oedipus' reign and its aftermath (cf. the two separate titles men-

<sup>38</sup> Danek, 2015: 368.

<sup>39</sup> See Davies, 2014: 32–40. Dating of the writing down of the *Thebaid* to 543 BCE: Torres-Guerra, 2015: 241–243. Dating of the *Epigonoí*: Cingano, 2015: 244–245.

<sup>40</sup> See discussions of Cingano, 2015: 245; Davies, 2014: 28–32; Torres-Guerra, 2015: 228.

<sup>41</sup> Malkin, 1987: 22, 24.

tioned in *Certamen Homeri et Hesiodi* 15 = *Thebaid* T 4, *Epigonoï* T 1 Bernabé). Thus, Alberto Bernabé in his edition of the Greek epic fragments is careful to distinguish the *Thebais*, to which he assigns the fragments referring to the battle between Oedipus' sons Polyneices and Eteocles, from the *Epigonoï*, to which he assigns the fragments referring to the activities of their descendants. However, it is possible that this assumption is not warranted. As Ettore Cingano argues, "Pausanias clearly considers the two Theban wars as being narrated in one single poem, which he identifies with the *Thebaid*. It follows that in antiquity this title was also used in a loose way to refer to one single poem narrating the two Theban wars."<sup>42</sup> No matter what, since Pausanias states that Callinus paid homage to the Theban epic tradition in his own poetry, we find support for the surmise that the story of Manto's arrival in Colophon, which linked Thebes to Ionia, predates the mid seventh century.<sup>43</sup> That is, even if we accept the emendation to *Epigonoï* in the scholion, we need to explain why the Ephesian Callinus would be so interested in the story of the fall of Thebes as to praise it in his own poetry. The answer must be the link to Mopsos at nearby Colophon.

Connected to this question is the fact that the Colophonians also had available another colonization story, one that countered the claims of the Theban tradition, which is summarized by Pausanias (7.3.1–2), like Strabo in a discussion of the great antiquity of their oracle:

The Colophonians think that the shrine at Claros and the oracle is from most ancient times; they say that, while the Carians still held the land, the Cretans came into it as the first of the Hellenic world, but Rhakios and however many other people had followed Rhakios held the area along the shore because they were powerful in their ships; but, the Carians still occupied most of the land. After Thersander, son of Polyneices, and the Argives seized Thebes, both the other war captives and Manto (daughter of Teiresias) were brought to Delphi, to Apollo.... When the god had sent them on a colonizing expedition, they crossed with ships to Asia, and when they were at Claros, the Cretans went against them with weapons and took them to Rhakios; but he – for he learned from Manto who they were among men and for what reason they had come – took Manto as wife and made them also settlers with him. But, Mopsos, son of Rhakios and Manto, threw the Carians completely out of the land. The Ionians, having made an oath to the Hellenes in Colophon, lived with them as a single *polis*, having no additional power. The leaders of the Ionians, Damasichthon and Prome-

<sup>42</sup> Cingano, 2015: 245. Davies, 2014: 31–2, 107–108, presents the argument for separate plots.

<sup>43</sup> The Theban connection to Claros likely helped to motivate the late 5<sup>th</sup>-century Colophonian Antimachus' lengthy *Thebaid*, although it did not encompass the *epigonoï* story. The latter point is made by Cingano, 2015: 246. For Antimachus' *Thebaid*, see Matthews, 1996: 20–26.

thus, sons of Codrus [*i.e.*, Neleids], took the kingship. But afterwards Prometheus, after he had killed his brother Damasichthon, fled to Naxos and died there, but his body, once it was brought home, was accepted by the children of Damasichthon. And, the tomb of Prometheus is there; the place is named Polyteixides.

So, while Rhakios – who in Pausanias’ brief telling arrived from an unnamed location in the Greek world and an indefinite time after the Cretans – allowed the new set of colonizers to stay, in the end his son Mopsos drove the Carians out, and the two groups of Greek-identified residents came to an agreement to share the polis, at least at first. The story skips over Calchas’ failed *nostos* completely, and it portrays the oracular shrine of Claros as decisively seized from the Carians by a Mopsos who unites two separate legendary Greek immigrations in his person. Moreover, this version of events seems to clash directly with the remembrance of the poet Mimnermus of Colophon or Smyrna (*fl.* 632–629, T 1 Gentili-Prato),<sup>44</sup> who describes the arrival of the Neleids from Pylos: “Having left the steep Neleian city of Pylos, we arrived at desirable Asia with ships, and in lovely Colophon, wielding arrogant force (βίην ὑπέροπλον ἔχοντες) we settled, leaders of grievous violence” (F 3.1–4 Gentili-Prato = Str. 14.1.4). However, the fragment quoted by Strabo does not tell us against whom the “arrogant force” was wielded.

It is not unusual for Ionian cities to have foundation stories that are both conflicting and layered, with legendary arrivals perhaps refracting immigration in the Bronze Age preceding arrivals refracting immigration from mainland Greece in the Protogeometric period, at some point re-imagined as a unified Neileid migration. The most well-studied example is Miletus.<sup>45</sup> And, similarly to Colophon, Milesian foundation stories show the contested nature of their prestigious Apolline oracle at Didyma, with different legends giving different origin stories either linking Didyma to mainland Greece or to Crete, or grounding it in indigenous Anatolian culture.<sup>46</sup> We might suggest that before Colophon adapted its history to create a common past with the other members of the Panionian Dodecapolis, an older, local, and independent Colophonian foundation story connecting it back to the Greek mainland via Thebes through its famous seer Mopsos contained the seeds of the linkages expanded and elaborated in the *Melampodia*. The meeting with Calchas was inspired by the already well-established fame of a Clarian Mopsos already considered to have descended from Teiresias. It seems reasonable to locate the creation of this foundation story before the Lydian king Gyges’ conquest of Colophon (*regnavit* 680–644; Herodotus 1.14).<sup>47</sup>

<sup>44</sup> See Gerber, 1997b: 109, on Mimnermus’ homeland.

<sup>45</sup> Carless Unwin, 2017; Mac Sweeney, 2013; Thomas, 2019.

<sup>46</sup> Bachvarova, 2022: 59–62.

<sup>47</sup> On the dating, see Berndt-Ersöz, 2008: 7.

Thus, we can distinguish three layers of the Clarian Mopsos story. He must have already been important when the connection to Thebes was made, and after that came the connection to the other famous seer Calchas. Secondly, we have some evidence supporting an early date for Calchas' incorporation into the legendary history of Claros stemming from a story about the founding of Italian Siris briefly mentioned by Athenaeus (12.523c), who attributes it to the Sicilian historian Timaeus (*vixit* 356–260, *FGrH* 566 F 51) and Aristotle (F 584 Rose): Siris was colonized in two waves, first by people from Troy, then by Colophonians who placed the tomb of Calchas there. This note can be combined with Strabo's remark (6.1.14) that Siris was founded by Ionians fleeing Lydian domination to arrive at the conclusion that Calchas was an important part of Colophonian history for at least one faction in Colophon by the time of Gyges.<sup>48</sup> I suggest that the Colophonian version of their history cited by Strabo shows some tension between two factions at Colophon, one which found Calchas useful to think with, and the other which refused to acknowledge his participation in their history.

Moreover, it is notable that the preserved stories about Claros always ensure Mopsos represents Greekness, not indigeneity – this despite the fact that archaeological evidence shows the sanctuary of Claros next to the spring, which in the Archaic period inspired Apollo's priests to oracular utterances, was in continuous use starting from 1100 onwards.<sup>49</sup> And, it is hard to believe that early 8<sup>th</sup>- and 7<sup>th</sup>-century Colophonians were completely unaware that the similar-sounding names Moqsos, Muksos, and/or Muksas were attached to high-status Anatolians living in their vicinity, given the existence of the 8<sup>th</sup>-century Phrygian Muksos. Possibly they were aware of figures of local indigenous legend, like the dynasty founder at Karatepe and perhaps the pre-Mermnad Lydian king Moxos (although we do not know the date and context of the development of his legend). If so, they would have been able to make the same equation between names as found at Karatepe.<sup>50</sup>

As I have already discussed, the Argonaut Mopsos also was deployed in a story about Greek exploration in Anatolia, in this case through the Bosphorus and along its northern edge, and the already existent story of Argo's voyage was perhaps specifically promoted by Ionian Miletus to provide context for its colonizing activities, so there was definitely a sense that the name belonged to such stories, with Colophon presenting a separate use for the legendary name. Indeed, given the fact that all three layers of the Clarian Mopsos story were in place before the

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<sup>48</sup> On the colonization of Siris, see Malkin, 1998: 226–231. Lane Fox, 2009: 221–222, sees the remnants of a rivalry between Aeolian Notion (cf. the Argonaut Mopsos) and Ionian Colophon, but see the comments of Hornblower, 2015: 210.

<sup>49</sup> Debord / Şahin, 2011; Şahin, 2014: 15; Zunal, 2016. Operation of the oracle: Moretti *et al.*, 2014: 33–34.

<sup>50</sup> Compare Lane Fox, 2009: 216–226, on what he imagines were Greek reactions to the discovery that there were multiple indigenous legendary characters with a name relatable to their Mopsos. I arrive at quite different conclusions than his, however.

reign of Gyges, and that Milesian colonization of the Black Sea littoral started to ramp up in the mid 8<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>51</sup> we might wonder whether a Mopsos with a different Greek heritage was added to the crew of the Argonauts to compete with the fame of Clarian Mopsos.<sup>52</sup> The inter-state competition behind his creation is perhaps signaled by Mopsos, son of Ampyx, as the Panhellenic athletic competitor par excellence?

### The seer Mopsos in Cilicia in the 7<sup>th</sup> century?

I will now argue for the retention of the disputed citation of Callinus by Strabo (14.4.3) in the story of Mopsos leading a migration to Pamphylia and Cilicia, rather than that of Callisthenes (360–328), thus anchoring the legend in the mid-7<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>53</sup> As found in the dominant manuscript tradition, Strabo contrasts the views of Herodotus and Callinus on the Greek settlement of Pamphylia:

Herodotus says that the Pamphylians are (the descendants) of the host around Amphilochous and Calchas, a mixture of people accompanying them from Troy [Hdt. 3.91.1]; on the one hand, the majority in fact remained there; on the other, some scattered to many places on earth. But, Callinus says that, on the one hand, Calchas finished his life in Claros, on the other, after the host with Mopsos crossed the Tauros, some stayed in Pamphylia, others were divided in Cilicia and in Syria, even as far as Phoenicia.

However, a 5<sup>th</sup>-cent. CE majuscule script text of Strabo twice over-written has Callisthenes instead of Callinus (codex Vatic. gr. 2306). Aubrey Diller describes the copy thus: “The text of Π itself is full of faults.... It seems fair to conclude that Π has a much worse text than [the medieval text] ω. Nevertheless Π mends many faults in ω, sometimes confirming modern conjectures.”<sup>54</sup> Here, Diller must be thinking of the emendation to Callisthenes, which had already been suggested by Felix Jacoby.<sup>55</sup> However, modern scholars’ preference for Callisthenes violates the principle of choosing the *lectio difficilior*. Does it not make more sense that the scribe in a lapse of attention mistakenly wrote the name of a well-known historian he knew discussed Cilicia and Pamphylia as part of his encomiastic account of Alexander the Great’s victory at Issos in 333 BCE,<sup>56</sup> in the place of the

<sup>51</sup> Greaves, 2002: 104–107; the newer analyses thus support an earlier date for colonization than West, 2005, assumed (cf. n. 25).

<sup>52</sup> Scheer, 1993, 157–158, 267, instead suggests that the Argonaut was original to the story, based on the Thessalian place name Mopsion (cf. Strabo 9.5.22), and he later became a seer based on the Clarian Mopsos.

<sup>53</sup> History of the discussion: Hornblower, 2015: 211.

<sup>54</sup> Diller, 1975: 22. Full discussion: Diller, 1975: 19–24. The reading was discovered by Aly, 1956: 111, with commentary at 206, followed by Radt, 2005: 96; 2009: 110–111.

<sup>55</sup> *Ad FG rH* 124 FF 32–33.

<sup>56</sup> See, however, the careful discussion of Milns, 2006/07, on what Callisthenes actually said about Alexander.

far more obscure Callinus? We have already seen that the mention in Pausanias requires an emendation to restore his name from the nonsensical Καλαῖνος, so the Ephesian poet's name was hardly on the tip of copyists' pens.

Indeed, the sands of time had so buried the facts about Callinus in Strabo's own era that the geographer himself felt the need to weigh in on a clearly ongoing argument in order to show that Callinus was earlier than Archilochus, arguing, "And long ago, it befell the Magnesians to be completely destroyed by the Tretes, a Cimmerian tribe, after they had been prosperous for a long time.... Callinus in fact makes reference to the Magnesians as still prosperous and doing well in the war against the Ephesians," while Archilochus knows they had been devastated (14.1.40 = TT 1, 8 Gentili-Prato). To support his dating, Strabo states when Callinus exhorts his countrymen against the approaching ὀβριμοεργῶν Cimmerians (F 3 Gentili-Prato, perhaps drawing the Homeric epithet from Callinus himself), he speaks of the Cimmerian attack of Sardis ca. 652 resulting in Gyges' death. So, Callinus lived approximately 100 years after the Karatepe gatehouse was built by Azatiwataya.

It is certainly true that Callisthenes also discussed migrations in Cilicia and Pamphylia, and to complicate matters further Callisthenes himself also made use of Callinus. Strabo used not only Callisthenes' *Deeds of Alexander*, but also had access to at least passages from his commentary on *Iliad 2*, where Callisthenes discussed migrations from the Troad to Cilicia, as Strabo (12.3.5) makes clear in a discussion of the obscure Anatolian ethnic group, the Caucones; he notes that Callisthenes in his *Diakosmos* stated they travelled as far as the White Syrians (Cappadocians).<sup>57</sup> And, just before Strabo mentions Mopsos in the key passage under discussion here, he refers to Callisthenes when stating nearly the same historical detail. As the geographer describes the environs of Phaselis, he notes (14.4.1 = *FGrH* 124 F 32):

They say that Thebe and Lyrnessus are found in the place between Phaselis and Attaleia, because the Cilician Trojans were expelled from the plain of [Troadic] Thebe in part into Pamphylia, as Callisthenes has said.

This bit of lore likely came via the second-century antiquarian Demetrius of Scepsis's erudite and far-ranging geographic commentary on Homer's catalog of Trojan allies in *Iliad 2*.<sup>58</sup> Possibly it was with reference to the conundrum of place names attached to more than one location, a problem to which Demetrius paid particular attention. Cilician Thebe in both western and eastern Anatolia was one frequently discussed example; its doublet in the Troad was the place from which Chryseis was seized by Achilles and the birthplace of Andromache. That Strabo's discussion comes from Demetrius is indicated by Strabo's earlier mention of Ci-

<sup>57</sup> Milns, 2006/07: 235; Radt, 2008: 350–351; Trachsel, 2021: 12–13. Oddly, Rzepka, 2016, does not mention Callisthenes' *Diakosmos* in his biographical essay.

<sup>58</sup> On Strabo's use of Demetrius: Leaf, 1923: xxvii–xxxiv; Trachsel, 2021: 69–83.



lician Thebe in 13.1.7, which quotes repeatedly from the *Iliad*.<sup>59</sup> Demetrius must have included in his discussion of Troadic Cilicia the story of a population transfer to eastern Anatolia that explained the doublets of Cilicia, Thebe, and Lyrnessus. And, here he must have used Callisthenes along with other ancient sources.

Strabo cites Callinus five times in addition to the disputed reading, all in Books 13 and 14.<sup>60</sup> Four citations involve events relevant to Ephesus during his time, which faced attacks by the Cimmerians and Lydians,<sup>61</sup> but one involves a bit of obscure lore about the migration of Teucrians to Troy from Crete, which was, according to Strabo (13.1.48) – or his source – first mentioned by Callinus and followed by others. This is part of a discussion of the myths around the founding of the temple at Chryse of Apollo Smintheus, whose recondite epiclesis provoked much erudite discussion.<sup>62</sup> The epithet, used by the god’s insulted priest Chryses as he calls the plague down on the Achaeans in *Iliad* 1.39, is explained as referring to a swarm of mice (potentially carrying disease) that happened around Hamaxitos, which the Teucrians interpreted as fulfilling their colonizing prophesy and therefore settled there. Strabo also cites Heraclides of Pontus (*vixit* 390–310) here. In other words, Callinus alluded to an event adjacent to the Trojan war legend. It is possible that the entire discussion, including Heraclides’ contribution, was accessible to Strabo via Demetrius.

Indeed, we go on to learn from Strabo (13.1.64) when he again picks up the thread of the etymology of Smintheus that this mention of the Teucrian migration went parcel and parcel with an examination of the original location of Apollo Smintheus’ temple. It was at first in the Chryse on the coastline of the Troad, but the temple was transferred inland to a new Chryse “near Hamaxitos when the Cilicians were expelled, some into Pamphylia, some into Hamaxitos” (13.1.63). Strabo makes some snippy comments about those who in their ignorance of ancient history confuse the later Chryse with the one known to Homer near Thebe, thus making clear that starting no later than 13.1.61 where Strabo first broaches the topic of Homeric Thebe and Lyrnessus, he is accessing a polemical study of Troadic historical geography, either by Demetrius or a later Homeric scholar commenting on Demetrius.<sup>63</sup> So, at a minimum, the mention of the migration to eastern Anatolia, which was at some point considered to have been led by Mopsos, comes from a section of a lost study of Homeric geography that also cited Callinus!<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Trachsel, 2021: 86–87, 135–136: Demetrius discussed Thebe(s).

<sup>60</sup> See Dueck, 2005, on Strabo’s citation of Archaic poets.

<sup>61</sup> 13.1.48, 13.4.8, 14.1.4, 14.1.40 (two times). Historical background on Callinus: Gerber, 1997a: 98–101; Podlecki, 1984: 52–56.

<sup>62</sup> Palamidis, 2019, makes clear that we should not attribute the story about the prophesy and mouse plague to Callinus, but to later Hellenistic scholars.

<sup>63</sup> Leaf, 1923: 303–317.

<sup>64</sup> Also see Trachsel, 2007: 219–225.

At a later point in Book 13 when segueing from a description of notable landmarks around Sardis, Strabo uses Callisthenes as a source for Callinus while citing Demetrius in the same breath, for he states (13.4.8 = Callinus T 7 Gentili-Prato, Callisthenes *FGrH* 124 F 29, Demetrius *FGrHCont* 2013 F 41):

Callisthenes says that Sardis was captured by the Cimmerians first, then by the Treres and Lycians, which very thing the elegiac poet Callinus also describes (ὅπερ καὶ Καλλῖνον δηλοῦν), and the last was its capture in the time of Cyrus and Croesus. And, when Callinus says the invasion of the Cimmerians was against the Hesiones, during which time Sardis was captured, those who follow the Scepsian suppose that “Asiones” are pronounced “Hesiones” in the Ionic dialect. For perhaps Maeonia, he says, was called “Asia.”

The Homeric scholars who follow Demetrius’ analysis here back up their surmise by quoting *Iliad* 2.461, Ἀσίῳ ἐν λεμιῶνι, Καῦστρίου ἀμφὶ ῥέεθρα, says Strabo. We do not know whether Strabo was accessing Callisthenes here through the erudite Scepsian or was using Callisthenes directly, possibly his *Hellenica*,<sup>65</sup> and consulting him side by side with Demetrius. But, the infinitive δηλοῦν shows that Strabo when listing the sacks of Sardis is citing Callinus in indirect speech via Callisthenes.<sup>66</sup>

Moreover, the Byzantine scholar Stephanus preserves a mention by Callinus of the Treres exactly in a context suggesting an invasion or migration: “leading Trerian men” (Τρήερας ἄνδρας ἄγων, Stephanus, p. 634.3 Meineke = Callinus F 4 Gentili-Prato).<sup>67</sup> The mention of the “Hesiones” is surely from the same poem. Here Callinus was using a rare term and reveals an interest in linking present events to a legendary past. Significantly, the third mention of the Treres made by Strabo (1.3.21), which occurs in an extended polemical discussion of methods, is as an example of less well-known migrations, along with the Carians (discussed at, e.g., 13.1.59), Teucrians, and Galatians. Strabo notes that the Treres are often grouped with the Cimmerians, then goes on to discuss some little-known facts about the Cimmerians, finishing with the statement that Lygdamis, “leading his own men, marched up to Lydia and Ionia and took Sardis, but was killed in Cilicia.” We now can put together a discussion about migrations involving Treres, Teucrians, the Troad, and Cilicia that have been referenced in Callinus’ work because his town was directly affected by the depredations of Cimmerian Lygdamis when he sacked the temple of Ephesian Artemis. In speaking of this recent history Callinus would have commemorated the arrival of the Teucrians in the Troad to

<sup>65</sup> So Milns, 2006–07: 235.

<sup>66</sup> N.B., this contradicts Trachsel’s statement (2021: 22) that Demetrius is citing Callinus directly, as well as Rzepka’s analysis (2016: *ad loc*).

<sup>67</sup> Also see Podlecki, 1984: 52–3. He sees a reference to the attack in the time of Ardys, 645 BCE.

settle at Chryse before the Trojan War, as well as the subsequent departure of a group of Trojans from nearby Troadic Cilician Thebe to east Anatolian Cilicia after the war, thus paralleling the movements of Lygdamis, with the momentous assault on Sardis implicitly or explicitly compared to that on Troy. Still, it may in fact be that Strabo accessed this information about Callinus via Callisthenes.

### Cilician Mopsos in the 5<sup>th</sup> century

We can certainly push back the legend of a west Anatolian Mopsos colonizing eastern Anatolia to the mid fifth century. It is when discussing the founding of the Cilician town Mallos that Strabo (14.5.16) picks up again the story of the colonizer Mopsos, the son of Apollo and Manto, and his fellow seer Amphilochochus, an important *epigonos* as the son of Amphiaraus although never mentioned in the *Iliad*.<sup>68</sup> Strabo connects it back to his mention of death of the chagrined Calchas at Colophon (14.1.27), where he had noted that there were several versions of the riddling contest between Calchas and Mopsos. There he had presented the Hesiodic version as a variation on the standard, contrasting it with Pherecydes' and Sophocles' versions.<sup>69</sup> Strabo remarks that Sophocles goes so far as to transfer the contest between Calchas and Mopsos to Cilicia in his *Demand for Helen's Return* (*TrGF* FF 180, 180a). Since the action of this tragedy or satyr play took place before the siege of Troy had started, Hugh Lloyd-Jones suggests that the event was only prophesied within the drama,<sup>70</sup> apparently looking ahead to the failed *nostos* of the Achaean seer. This tragic prophesy plays with the fact that Calchas had advance knowledge about the storm scattering the Achaeans after their victory at Troy that caused him to choose to depart on foot in the *Nostoi*.

In his description of Cilicia Strabo again notes that there are several versions of its early history. We can assume that, as previously, he is using at least the *Melampodia*, Pherecydes (*FGrH* 3 F 142), and Sophocles, although we do not know if he is accessing one or more of the sources through a secondary source such as Callisthenes. Sophocles' variant is clearly the odd man out for Strabo; he places the contest between Calchas and Mopsos in Cilicia, but "he calls [it] 'Pamphylia' in the tragic way, just as (he calls) Lycia 'Caria', and Lydia and Troy 'Phrygia'. And Sophocles and others transmit that the death of Calchas occurred there." Strabo (14.5.16) goes on to assert:

But, they tell in the myth that the contest was not about divination, but also about rulership. For they say Mopsos and Amphilochochus, having come from Troy, founded Mallos. Then Amphilochochus went away to Argos, but dis-

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<sup>68</sup> Cingano, 2015: 252–253.

<sup>69</sup> Riddle contests are an inherited Indo-European performance type, and the seer's death when confounded by a riddle is a traditional Indo-European motif: Compton, 2006: 46, 365–6 (pagination follows the electronic version). On the various versions of a contest between Mopsos and another seer, see Scheer, 1993: 162–182.

<sup>70</sup> Lloyd-Jones, 1996: 68–69.

pleased with the matters there he came back. And, because he was excluded from participation in government, he engaged in a duel with Mopsos. After both fell, they were buried so they were not in sight of each other. Even now the tombs are visible around Magarsa near the Pyramus.

Meanwhile, Strabo (14.4.17) is clearly using Callisthenes when he mentions, “They say that Alexander sacrificed to Amphilochous because of his kinship from Argos. But, Hesiod says that Amphilochous was killed by Apollo at Soli [F 215 Most]; but, some (say) that it was around the Aleian plain, others in Syria, after he had left the Aleian plain because of the conflict.”<sup>71</sup> It may be, then, that Strabo is accessing Hesiod via Callisthenes, and that Callisthenes listed a series of variants on the story of Amphilochous, mentioning Mopsos only because of Alexander’s interest in Argive Amphilochous.

The *nostos* myth attached to the current-day Cilician landmarks is clearly secondary and derivative, adding an additional contest among seers settled with sword instead of cunning, placing the famous Mopsos at Troy – fighting on the Achaean side? – and apparently pointedly bypassing a visit to Claros, and with a political agenda patterned after the internecine conflicts among the Neleids for power, which provided context for oligarchic stasis in Archaic-period Ionia.<sup>72</sup> Sophocles surely did not include such a wealth of detail; it would have been the riddle that interested him the most. He may have brought in Amphilochous to contrast with Homer’s neglect of the Theban hero and in conformance with the Hesiodic treatment of Calchas’ demise, and he was encompassing the whole Trojan war with the prophecy of Calchas’ failed *nostos* brought to an end by Mopsos, on which he innovates by transferring it from Claros to Cilicia.

What is important to recognize is that the legend of Clarian Mopsos’ colonization of Cilicia and Pamphylia must have been well-established by the mid fifth century.<sup>73</sup> That is, it is unlikely Sophocles was the first to equate a Cilician Mopsos originating in the Troad with the Clarian Mopsos. Not only in later legends but already in Sophocles’ time Mopsos’ move to Cilicia could have been explained as a consequence of the Neleids seizing power in Colophon, but any earlier linking remains to be explained.

Therefore, the fact that Herodotus omits any mention of Mopsos in his version of events cannot be used to argue that in the fifth century the story did not exist. Herodotus (7.91) in his list of the members of the Persian fleet first mentions the Cilicians, who “were called in the old days Hypachaeans, and they took the name from Cilix, son of Agenor, a Phoenician man,” then the Pamphylians: “these Pamphylians are of those scattered from Troy along with Amphilochous and Calchas.” The former factoid utterly denies the migration from Troadic Cilician Thebe, the

<sup>71</sup> See further Lane Fox, 2009: 223–224.

<sup>72</sup> Bachvarova, 2022: 59–62.

<sup>73</sup> Lane Fox, 2009: 214.

latter frames the migration from the Troad as a separate event carried out by Argives. Perhaps, as Robin Lane Fox suggests, Herodotus is following an Argive version of events rather than an Ionian one.<sup>74</sup> In any case, there were competing legends about Achaeans in Cilicia, either linking their arrival with Mopsos or denying it, as Herodotus does. Note, however, that the extension of the journeys of the Argive seers Amphilocheus and Calchas to Cilicia implies the awareness of the claim that their competitor Mopsos was there too. Moreover, we are glimpsing traces of a second set of stories distinguishing two separate groups of settlers in Cilicia and Pamphylia, although how they interfaced with the deployment of Mopsos as legendary ancestor remains to be elucidated.

### Conclusion

Summing up, Clarian Mopsos was already embedded in a story of migration to Cilicia by the time of Callinus. But, we can also see that Mopsos was used or ignored by factions of Greeks creating their versions of the legendary past. The contested deployment of Mopsos in myth likely played a role in Ephesian Callinus' interest in the legend of the fall of Thebes, which he put on a par with the fall of Troy. Furthermore, we get hints of Callinus' use of the Trojan War story to provide context for the arrival of Cimmerians in west Anatolia, a watershed event for his compatriots, which ended with the death of Lygdamis, sacker of Ephesian Artemis' temple, in Cilicia. This could have motivated Callinus' mention of Mopsos in Cilicia. Obviously, we should not veer in the opposite direction from current thinking and argue that Callinus was the one who *established* the myth of Mopsos' migration from the Troad to Cilicia; I am simply attempting to argue that he mentioned it, and that his contribution was among those brought into discussion by those who were interested in explaining inconsistencies in Homeric geography. The key fact to be gleaned is that within 100 years of the Karatepe inscription we can see that a Cilician Mopsos was part of Greek legendary history.

However, why was Mopsos in the Troad in the first place? I infer the existence of a separate, now barely visible, migration myth involving a Mopsos going directly from the Troad to east Anatolian Cilicia. Not coincidentally, this appears to correspond what we can conjecture about the movement of a mixed group of Aegean Sea Peoples into east Anatolia at the end of the Bronze Age, even if we cannot assume a mass migration.<sup>75</sup>

Much remains to be discussed in order to elucidate the relationship between putative legends about Mopsos/Muksas at Karatepe and the Greek hero Mopsos, but the road forward involves, on the one hand, a deeper understanding of how contemporary politics and military conflicts motivated the deployment of legend-

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<sup>74</sup> Lane Fox, 2009: 223.

<sup>75</sup> See most recently Gabrieli, 2021: 327–328; Ponchia, 2021, on the weakness of the archaeological evidence used to support the theory of a mass migration of Aegean peoples to Cilicia at the beginning of the Iron Age.

ary history by Archaic elegiac poets, a gap bemoaned by Simonetta Ponchia in her recent study of Greek contact with the Near East in the Archaic period,<sup>76</sup> and on the other, how Archaic Greeks in western Anatolia responded to the activities of Assyrians in eastern Anatolia, work already begun by Giovanni-Battista Lanfranchi.<sup>77</sup>

### Abbreviations

Bernabé: Bernabé, A. (ed.), 1987: *Poetae epici Graeci: Testimonia et fragmenta. Pars I*. Leipzig.

FGrH and FGrHCont: *Jacoby On-line: Brill's New Jacoby* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), <https://scholarlyeditions.brill.com/bnjo/>.

Gentili-Prato: Gentili, B. / Prato, C. (eds.), 1979: *Poetarum elegiacorum testimonia et fragmenta*. Leipzig.

KUB: Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköi.

Meineke: Meineke, A. (ed.), 1984: *Stephani Byzantii Ethnicorum quae supersunt*. Berlin.

Most: Most, G. W. (ed.), 2007: *Hesiod II: The Shield, Catalogue of Women, Other Fragments*. Cambridge, Mass. / London.

Rose: Rose, V., 1886: *Aristotelis qui ferebantur librorum fragmenta*. Leipzig.

TL: Kalinka, T. (ed.), 1901: *Tituli Lyciae lingua Lycia conscripti*. Vienna.

TrGF: Radt, S., 1977: *Tragicorum Graecorum fragmenta 4: Sophocles*. Göttingen.

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<sup>76</sup> Ponchia, 2021: 315–317.

<sup>77</sup> Lanfranchi, 2011.

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## « Mobilités mythiques »

Récits de fondation, liens légendaires et traversée des frontières  
entre cités grecques de Troade et de Propontide

Madalina Dana

### Résumé

Les parentés légendaires entre cités grecques, qui ont déjà fait l'objet de nombreuses études, n'auront de cesse à susciter l'intérêt des chercheurs, tant les renseignements qu'offrent les récits de fondation sont riches. À travers tous les types de sources qui invoquent des relations politiques et culturelles durables, nous nous proposons de nous intéresser en particulier aux échanges symboliques, au niveau à la fois du discours et des pratiques, qui justifient une mobilité spécifique entre les cités grecques. Le cas de la Troade est exemplaire à ce titre, quand on pense à la contribution de l'un de ses illustres représentants dans le domaine de la *paideia*, l'historien Bombos d'Alexandrie de Troade, à renforcer la connexion mythique entre Larisa en Thessalie et les Éoliens de Troade. Les héros thessaliens fondateurs de cités du nord de l'Asie mineure sont par ailleurs nombreux dans les récits qui visaient à façonner les frontières réelles et symboliques entre communautés locales. Il sera également question de l'élaboration d'un discours à partir d'une mobilité imaginaire ou réelle, afin de créer des ponts entre communautés.

### Introduction

Cette contribution part d'une réflexion plus ancienne sur les mobilités antiques, menant à une interrogation nouvelle sur les récits qui visaient à façonner les frontières réelles et symboliques entre communautés. Ainsi, des repères mythiques jalonnent la terre connue grâce à l'installation des Grecs, les premiers à marquer l'espace d'un avant et d'un après sans pour autant tracer des limites. Nous allons nous interroger tout particulièrement sur l'élaboration d'un discours à partir d'une mobilité imaginaire ou réelle, discours qui vise à créer des ponts entre communautés. Ce discours identitaire se construit à travers les liens que les cités entretenaient avec d'autres communautés: se rapporter aux autres permettait de mieux se définir soi-même, par une sorte de reflet ou image en miroir que des communautés connectées par des parentés historiques ou par des liens mythiques se renvoyaient réciproquement. Ce processus était facilité par le fait que ces communautés partageaient un système commun de références qui est celui des mythes et des légendes fondatrices. À travers des sources complexes, qui ne se limitent pas aux créations littéraires mais prennent en compte également les inscriptions civiques, nous nous proposons de nous intéresser en particulier aux échanges symboliques, au niveau à la fois du discours et des pratiques, qui justifient une mobilité spécifique entre les cités grecques.

### I. La «connexion thessalienne»

Les mythes, qui permettent de délimiter l'espace symbolique de l'hellénisme à l'échelle de la région, furent également les instruments privilégiés de rapprochement entre communautés civiques géographiquement éloignées mais partageant des origines et des traditions similaires. Les légendes de fondation, à l'œuvre quand il s'agit de cités reliées par la parenté<sup>1</sup>, trouvent un écho particulier dans la figure de ce qu'on peut appeler des «héros connecteurs» ou des «mythes connecteurs». Une inscription trouvée à Sinope, que j'ai eu l'occasion de rééditer<sup>2</sup>, sous la forme d'une dédicace d'un certain Léomédôn fils d'Aristonicos, fait état d'un culte rendu à un héros mentionné avec ses frères dans les récits littéraires entourant la fondation de la cité mais qui trouve une expression inattendue dans l'épigraphie civique. Le culte est celui de Phlogios, dont le nom apparaît au datif dans la dédicace (lecture remplaçant le nominatif Phlogion lu initialement), compagnon et frère du héros Autolycos plus étroitement associé à la fondation de la cité dans l'une des trois traditions de fondation<sup>3</sup>. Phlogios, à l'instar d'Autolycos et de leur frère, Déiléon, mentionné seulement par une partie des sources, sont Thessaliens, origine sur laquelle je reviendrai plus longuement. Or, la plupart des sources s'accordent pour faire de Sinope une fondation milésienne<sup>4</sup>. Cette fondation milésienne est en réalité mentionnée seulement par la troisième tradition, qui présente un récit à caractère historique concernant des exilés milésiens arrivés dans la région en deux étapes. Ils furent dirigés par des personnages dont les noms ont dû remonter grâce à la tradition orale perpétuée par les descendants<sup>5</sup>. La première légende de fondation de Sinope correspond à un schéma généalogique selon lequel la cité aurait été fondée par la nymphe éponyme, fille du fleuve Asopos de Béotie, enlevée par Apollon et transportée en Asie Mineure. Ce récit pouvait servir, à n'en pas douter, à créer si nécessaire une parenté avec la Béotie.

Pour revenir à la tradition qui nous intéresse, les trois héros fondateurs, fils de Deimachos, sont étroitement associés aux mythes qui ont marqué ce territoire. Ils

<sup>1</sup> Voir notamment Curty, 1995; Curty, 1999. Je remercie Caroline Plichon (Lyon) de sa relecture attentive et de ses remarques et suggestions.

<sup>2</sup> French, 2004: n. 62, avec réédition par Dana, 2007: 511–521, cf. *BÉ*, 2008, 273.

<sup>3</sup> Voir Ivantchik, 1997; Ivantchik, 1998. Voir aussi Marcotte, 2000: 259–261.

<sup>4</sup> Origine milésienne: Xen, *An.* 6.1.15; DS. 14.31.2; Str. 12.3.11; Arr., *P.* 14.5; voir Ehrhardt 1988: 55–58.

<sup>5</sup> Scymn. 947–952: «Puis il y aurait eu Habron, originaire de Milet, que des Cimmériens sont censés avoir mis à mort et, après les Cimmériens, ce fut le tour de Krétinès de Cos et d'exilés milésiens (μετὰ Κιμμερίους Κῶως, πάλιν δὲ Κρητίνης, οἱ γενόμενοι φυγάδες ὄρων Μιλησίων). Ces deniers fondent la ville quand l'armée cimmérienne eut déferlé sur l'Asie» (trad. D. Marcotte, qui préfère y voir un fondateur Krétinès originaire de Cos, et non pas deux co-fondateurs, tous les deux exilés milésiens, comme A. Ivantchik). Phlégon de Tralles (*FGrHist* 257 F 30 *apud* Étienne de Byzance s.v. Σινώπη) définit Sinope comme κτίσμα Κρητίνου Κώου; cf. Eust., *Comm. Dion. Perieg.* 772: κτίσμα κατὰ τινὰς Κριτίου ἀνδρὸς Κώου (le nom du fondateur est donné comme Kritias, étant sans doute corrompu).

auraient suivi Héraclès dans sa campagne contre les Amazones, comme le mentionnent les périples<sup>6</sup> et comme l'affirme Plutarque: «Autolykos fut, dit-on, l'un des compagnons d'Héraclès qui partirent avec lui de Thessalie pour combattre les Amazones<sup>7</sup>; il était fils de Deimachos. En revenant de cette expédition avec *Démoléon* et Phlogios, il perdit son vaisseau qui se brisa contre un écueil dans un endroit de la Chersonèse appelé Pédalion, mais lui-même, sauvé avec ses armes et ses compagnons, aborda à Sinope et enleva la ville aux Syriens, car elle appartenait alors aux Syriens, issus, dit-on, de Syros, fils d'Apollon et de Sinopè, fille d'Asopos»<sup>8</sup>. On voit déjà à l'œuvre l'imbrication entre la légende mettant en lien la nymphe béotienne Sinopè avec le territoire où allait être fondée la cité, et la présence des héros thessaliens, qui se substituent aux premiers occupants des lieux. Peu avant (23.4), en évoquant le rêve de Lucullus qui s'était emparé de la ville après avoir vaincu Mithridate, Plutarque mentionne l'existence d'une statue, «un chef d'œuvre de Sthennis<sup>9</sup> (...) cette statue représentait Autolykos, le fondateur de Sinope». C'est toujours dans l'entourage d'Héraclès qu'Appien mentionne Autolykos, encore une fois sans ses frères: «On dit qu'Autolykos, accompagnant Héraclès dans son expédition contre les Amazones, fut contraint par une tempête d'aborder à Sinope et se rendit maître de la ville. Une statue vénérée de ce héros rendait des oracles aux Sinopéens»<sup>10</sup>.

Autolykos, vénéré comme oeciste<sup>11</sup>, devait posséder dans la ville un sanctuaire, peut-être oraculaire, avec une statue de culte. Cette statue du héros, mentionnée également par Strabon (chez lequel Autolykos figure parmi les compagnons de Jason), fut l'objet de la convoitise du général romain L. Licinius Lucullus, qui en 70 av. J.-C. l'emmena à Rome: «Lucullus laissa intacts les monuments

<sup>6</sup> Scymn. 943–946 = *Anonym. P. Eux* 22: μετὰ ταῦτα δ', ὡς λέγουσιν, Ἑλλήνων ὅσοι ἐπ' Ἀμαζόνας διέβησαν, Ἀυτόλυκος τε καὶ σὺν Δηϊλέοντι Φλόγιος, ὄντες Θεσσαλοὶ («Des Grecs venus combattre les Amazones l'auraient ensuite occupée; il s'agit des Thessaliens Autolykos et Phlogios qui suivaient Déiléon») (trad. D. Marcotte; je propose de traduire par «Autolykos ainsi qu'avec Déiléon Phlogios»).

<sup>7</sup> Il y est allé pour s'emparer de la ceinture de leur reine Hippolytè, cf. Plut., *Thes.* 26.1: μεθ' Ἡρακλέους ἐπὶ τὰς Ἀμαζόνας συστρατεύσας. Dans les *Argonotiques*, le roi des Maryandiniens, Lycos, raconte à ses hôtes grecs les exploits d'Héraclès: «Car je le connais bien pour l'avoir vu en ces lieux au palais de Daskylos, mon père, quand, à travers le continent asiatique, il passa ici à pied pour aller chercher le baudrier de la belliqueuse Hippolytè» (AR. 2.774–779); *ibid.*, 2.965–969: dans le pays des Amazones Héraclès avait capturé Mélanippè, la sœur d'Hippolytè, et avait remporté la ceinture de cette dernière.

<sup>8</sup> Plut., *Luc.* 23.5.

<sup>9</sup> Pour ce fameux sculpteur originaire d'Olynthe, actif à Athènes à partir de 348 av. J.-C., voir en dernier lieu Knoepfler, 2005, en partic. 665 et n. 37–38.

<sup>10</sup> App., *Mithr.* 83; selon Goukowsky, 2001: 214 n. 772, il y avait deux statues d'Autolykos, «l'une probablement très ancienne», l'autre faite par Sthennis.

<sup>11</sup> Deux pièces de théâtre d'Eupolis portaient le nom du héros, cf. Kassel / Austin, 1986: FF 48–75. Voir aussi Braund, 2005: 92.

qui ornaient la ville, mais il enleva le globe céleste de Billaros et la statue d'Autolykos<sup>12</sup>, œuvre de Sthennis. Autolykos était considéré par les habitants comme le fondateur de la cité et ils le révéraient à l'égal d'un dieu; il avait un sanctuaire oraculaire. On croit qu'il fut un des compagnons de Jason dans ses navigations et qu'il prit alors possession de ce lieu, que plus tard les Milésiens s'approprièrent et où ils installèrent des colons, s'étant rendu compte de ses avantages naturels et de la faiblesse de ses occupants»<sup>13</sup>. Enfin, un troisième récit associe les trois frères aux deux expéditions, en accord avec la pratique qui consiste à mettre ensemble le plus grand nombre de héros qui se devaient d'accomplir le plus grand nombre d'exploits. Les actions des trois Thessaliens se retrouvent donc au croisement des deux cycles héroïques. Ainsi, quand les Argonautes arrivent aux environs de Sinope, ils tombent sur les anciens camarades d'Héraclès: «C'est là que les trois fils de l'illustre Deimachos de Tricca, Déiléon, Autolykos et Phlogios, habitaient encore après s'être égarés loin d'Héraclès. Dès qu'ils virent arriver l'expédition des héros, ils vinrent à leur rencontre et se firent connaître sans détour. Ils ne voulaient pas rester encore là, pour toujours, et on les fit embarquer à bord dès qu'Argestès vint les favoriser de son souffle» (AR. 2.955–957). Conformément à ce récit, ils rentrent avec les Argonautes en Grèce<sup>14</sup>. Il convient donc de retenir que les trois héros sont arrivés dans le Pont avec une expédition grecque – celle de Jason, postérieure à celle d'Héraclès, permet de «récupérer» les trois frères – et qu'ils y fondèrent une ville, au détriment, selon Plutarque, des anciens occupants des lieux descendants de la nymphe Sinopè.

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<sup>12</sup> Str. 12.3.11. La même pratique peut être observée pour le frère du général romain, M. Licinius Lucullus Terentius Varron, qui avait enlevé à Apollonia du Pont, cité milésienne de la côte ouest, pour l'emmener à Rome, la statue colossale d'Apollon réalisée par l'Athénien Calamis (Str. 7.6.1; App., *Ill.* 30; Plin., *H.N.* 4.13.92 et 34.39). C'est cette statue qui est représentée sur les monnaies de la ville, voir Dana / Dana, 2021: 49.

<sup>13</sup> Apd., *Bibl.* 1.9.16, mentionne un homonyme qui est le grand-père maternel du héros d'Iolcos et qu'il ne faut pas confondre avec notre héros: «Jason était fils d'Aeson fils de Créthée et de Polymède fille d'Autolykos».

<sup>14</sup> Dans la version donnée par un autre auteur d'histoires argonautiques, Valérius Flaccus, les trois frères apparaissent ensemble (5.113–118): «Fortune, en un heureux hasard, donna aux Argonautes trois nouveaux compagnons, Autolykos, Phlogios et Déiléon qui avaient suivi les armes d'Hercule; au bout de leur course errante, ils s'étaient établis là. Aussitôt aperçu l'équipage grec et le vaisseau pélasgien, ils se précipitent en hâte au bord des flots et supplient les marins de les accepter comme compagnons». Chez Hygin on remarque une certaine confusion, ce qui rend leur identité plus difficile à saisir: «Vinrent également les rejoindre, depuis l'île de Dia, les fils de Phrixus et de Chalciope sœur de Médée, Argus, Méla, Phrontis, Cylindrus, auxquels d'autres donnent les noms de Phronius, *Démoléon*, Autolykos, Phlogios: Hercule, quand il les eut fait venir à lui comme compagnons dans sa quête de la ceinture des Amazones, les laissa frappés de terreur» (*Fab.* 14.30).

L'origine thessalienne des trois héros, tout comme leur filiation, semblent bien établies selon les témoignages d'Apollonios de Rhodes et de Plutarque. Tricca, d'où ils sont dits avoir été originaires, apparaît deux fois dans l'*Iliade*: une fois dans le catalogue des vaisseaux (2.729) et une fois comme cité d'origine des deux médecins célèbres, Podalire et Machaon, fils d'Asclépios (11.833). L'hypothétique fondation de la cité par ces héros thessaliens et les revendications des Sinopéens d'une parenté héroïque avec la Thessalie pourrait être confortée par un décret d'Histiée d'Eubée en l'honneur de Sinope, datant de 220 av. J.-C. : [κα]ἰ [τοῖ]ς Σινωπε[ῶ]σιν ἐκ παλαιοῦ φίλοις καὶ ἀδελφοῖς<sup>15</sup>. Ce décret ne reflète pas, comme affirme D. Asheri, l'expression d'un rapport entre cité-mère et cité-fille<sup>16</sup>. Puisque les deux cités se disent sœurs (ou, littéralement, les Sinopéens sont considérés comme étant des «frères» par des Histiéens), Histiée d'Eubée ne saurait être la métropole de Sinope. En revanche, elles peuvent toutes les deux se revendiquer d'une métropole commune<sup>17</sup>. La métropole d'Histiée eubéenne serait, selon Strabon, Histiée de Thessalie<sup>18</sup>. Or, comme le remarque à juste titre D. Knoepfler, il n'y a pas de cité du nom d'Hestiaia en Thessalie, mais bien une région portant le nom d'Hestiatide, identique au nom du territoire de la cité eubéenne. Cette dénomination s'explique non pas par une origine thessalienne des habitants d'Histiée en Eubée, mais au contraire, comme le rapporte Strabon, par l'occupation de cette région thessalienne par des Histiéens d'Eubée chassés de leur pays par les Perrhèbes<sup>19</sup>. La cité de Tricca, d'où étaient originaires les trois frères, se trouvant en cette Hestiatide thessalienne, les Sinopéens pouvaient ainsi en toute «légitimité mythique» se revendiquer comme étant «frères» des Histiéens<sup>20</sup>.

L'origine thessalienne a par ailleurs été attribuée aux fondateurs mythiques de plusieurs cités d'Asie Mineure et en particulier de la Propontide. Le mythe de fondation de Cyzique, évoqué par Apollonios de Rhodes qui s'inspire de l'historien local Dei(l)ochos<sup>21</sup>, mentionne comme fondateur le héros éponyme Cyzicos, roi des Dolions, tué par erreur par Jason après avoir reçu à sa cour les Argonautes. En se renseignant sur la race de ces derniers, il proclame son identité thessalienne: en effet, son père Ainéus<sup>22</sup> est le petit-fils de Pénée, dieu-fleuve en Thessalie et l'éponyme d'Ainéia de Chalcidique. Cyzicos en tant qu'éponyme apparaît sur les

<sup>15</sup> *IG* XII, 9, 1186, l. 22.

<sup>16</sup> Asheri, 1973, notamment 74; *SEG* XXX 1106.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Curty, 1995: 218–220.

<sup>18</sup> Str. 9.5.17 et 10.1.4.

<sup>19</sup> D. Knoepfler, *BÉ*, 121, 2007, 273, qui insiste sur les relations étroites d'Histiée avec la Thessalie méridionale (cf. aussi *BÉ*, 121, 2007, 274).

<sup>20</sup> Robert, 1951: 183 et n. 6, avait annoncé une étude, jamais publiée, sur la «fraternité» entre Histiée et Sinope.

<sup>21</sup> AR. 1.936–938, ainsi que F 7 b (= *Schol. Apoll. Rhod.* 1.989–991) et 8 (= *Schol. Apoll. Rhod.* 1.1037–1038b).

<sup>22</sup> *FGrHist* 471 F 4 (= *Schol. Apoll. Rhod.* 1.961–963). Pour les détails, voir Vecchio, 1998: 47.

monnaies en électrum de la cité<sup>23</sup>, mais l'origine milésienne, tout comme pour Sinope, n'est pas contestée, comme l'attestent à la fois les sources littéraires et les sources épigraphiques<sup>24</sup>.

Ce qu'on peut appeler «la connexion thessalienne» de la région est confirmée, cette fois en rapport avec le mythe dominant de la Troade, celui de la guerre de Troie, par un décret honorifique de Larisa pour un historien originaire d'Alexandrie de Troade, Bombos, fils d'Alcaios<sup>25</sup>. Bien qu'assez rare, ce nom s'inscrit dans une série onomastique présente dans la région, comme le montre Louis Robert<sup>26</sup>. On doit la lecture correcte du patronyme à Bruno Helly, alors que les éditeurs et commentateurs précédents avaient lu Alphéios:

«Attendu que Bombos, fils d'Alcaios, Éolien d'Alexandrie de Troade, est venu séjourner dans notre cité et y a fait des démonstrations (ἐπιδείξεις) au gymnase en faisant mémoire dans ses ouvrages et dans ses conférences des personnages qui ont été fameux chez les Lariséens, et qu'il a renouvelé la parenté et l'amitié mutuelles qui existent entre les deux cités ainsi que les dispositions privilégiées que les Éoliens ont envers les Lariséens, attendu qu'il a accompli son séjour (dans notre cité) dans la bonne forme et de la manière qui revient à un homme de bien, il a plu au peuple des Lariséens d'accorder l'éloge à Bombos, fils d'Alcaios, Éolien d'Alexandrie en Troade, pour le séjour qu'il a fait et pour la peine qu'il a prise à notre éducation (παιδεία) ainsi que pour avoir dispensé le meilleur de son art (ἐπιτήδευμα)<sup>27</sup>, et de lui donner, à lui et à ses descendants, le droit de cité, le droit de propriété, et que lui appartiennent tous les autres avantages qui sont ceux des Lariséens» (l. 12–26) (trad. B. Helly légèrement modifiée).

<sup>23</sup> *BMC Mysia*, p. 21, n. 23.

<sup>24</sup> Anaximène de Lampsaque (*FGrHist* 72 F 26) et le traité d'isopolitie entre Milet et Apollonia du Rhyndacos, qui allait être intégrée au territoire de Cyzique au milieu du II<sup>e</sup> s. av. J.-C. (Curty, 199 : n. 58).

<sup>25</sup> Bequignon, 1935: 55–64 (le décret pour Bombos se trouve aux ll. 10–32, alors que les ll. 35–45 conservent un décret pour un autre Alexandrin de Troade, Leukios, fils de Nikasias). Cf. *BÉ*, 1936, 367; 1959, 330 (exemples réunis à propos d'une inscription de Thasos); 1967, 331; Marek, 1984: n. 378; Chaniotis, 1988: 310, E 18. Voir en dernier lieu Helly, 2006, en partic. 194–197. Helly propose une date entre 160 et 150 av. J.-C.

<sup>26</sup> Voir Robert, 1966: 61–62, commentaire du nom Bombichos porté par un monétaire d'Alexandrie de Troade (tétradrachme de 222 av. J.-C.). Robert met en évidence la racine *bomb-*, qui signifie «bourdonner». Le nom Bombos apparaît une deuxième fois en Troade, désignant un certain Bombos, fils de Lysithémis, un citoyen d'Assos délégué par sa cité à Ilion en 77 av. J.-C. Le patronyme Alcaios est connu dans le domaine éolien, par exemple le célèbre poète Alcée (cf. aussi *SEG* XXXV 594, un citoyen d'Alexandrie de Troade).

<sup>27</sup> Terme employé également pour les médecins et les poètes (Robert, 1946: 36), à côté de *technè*; dans les textes thessaliens il sert aussi à qualifier le travail des secrétaires des juges étrangers.



Outre les mérites de Bombos dans le domaine de la *paideia*, qu'il faut comprendre non seulement comme éducation des jeunes, mais aussi comme «développement culturel des Lariséens»<sup>28</sup>, le décret rappelle les liens entre les Éoliens de Troade et la cité de Larisa, qui dans ce cas précis ne devaient pas se réduire à des contacts sporadiques<sup>29</sup>. En effet, dans l'ouvrage de Philostrate intitulé *Sur les héros* est avancée une tradition selon laquelle les Thessaliens devaient envoyer une procession annuelle en Troade pour honorer Achille, le héros thessalien mort dans cette contrée lors de la guerre de Troie, selon un rituel particulier. En évoquant la condamnation qui frappa les Thessaliens, à l'époque de Septime Sévère, pour ne pas avoir respecté le monopole impérial sur le commerce de pourpre, Philostrate offre une description détaillée de ce rituel, avec les considérations du héros Protésilas sur la faute de ceux qui négligent de rendre honneur aux héros. Il prend comme exemple précisément les malheurs qui sont arrivés aux Thessaliens chaque fois qu'ils avaient omis de rendre hommage au héros à son tombeau<sup>30</sup>. L'engagement aurait été pris sur l'ordre de l'oracle de Dodone et date, selon l'expression de Philostrate, «des commencements», les cérémonies instituées étant «vénérables et antiques». La négligence dont les Thessaliens font preuve à plusieurs reprises met le héros en colère et provoque de graves crises dans la cité. Cette interruption comprend la période écoulée entre les guerres médiques, quand les Thessaliens avaient embrassé la cause des Perses, et le moment où Alexandre franchit l'Hellespont et se rendit sur la tombe d'Achille – les auteurs grecs la situent à Ilion – en compagnie des cavaliers thessaliens et honora le héros<sup>31</sup> dont il fit son allié dans son entreprise de conquête de l'Asie<sup>32</sup>. En effet, Alexandre, par sa mère, descend d'Achille, devenu héros pan-thessalien. La Phthie, la patrie thessalienne de l'ancêtre, reçoit un statut privilégié<sup>33</sup>; or, comme le montrent à juste titre R. Bouchon et B. Helly, cette région, qui s'étend de Lamia jusqu'à Pharsale, est une «terre désirée», mais que l'on n'avait plus<sup>34</sup>. L'inconséquence des Thessaliens se serait prolongée à l'époque impériale, au point qu'au moment où Apollonios de Tyane se rendit à Ilion pour interroger les mânes d'Achille, le héros se serait plaint de l'interruption des honneurs qui lui étaient dus. Apollonios se fit ambassadeur du héros auprès des Thessaliens, en les rappelant à leur devoir: «Il alla ensuite en Thessalie s'acquitter du message dont Achille l'avait chargé: c'était l'époque de la réunion du conseil amphictyonique aux Thermopyles. Les Thessaliens, effrayés de ce que leur dit Apollonios, ordonnèrent par un décret que

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<sup>28</sup> Helly, 2006: 200.

<sup>29</sup> Helly, 2006: 195–196 et n. 60.

<sup>30</sup> Philstr., *Her.* 52.3–54.1.

<sup>31</sup> Arr., *An.* 1.12.1; Plut., *Alex.* 15.3; Justin 11.5.12.

<sup>32</sup> Philstr., *Her.* 53, 14–17.

<sup>33</sup> Radet, 1925.

<sup>34</sup> Bouchon / Helly, 2013, p. 213 (et sur Achille p. 211–214).

les sacrifices dus au tombeau d'Achille seraient rétablis»<sup>35</sup>.

Le rite, détaillé dans le récit de Philostrate, présente plusieurs anomalies que I. Rutherford décrypte dans son analyse de cette *théoria* très particulière<sup>36</sup>. Les théores, au nombre de quatorze (deux fois sept), apportant un taureau blanc et un autre noir, ainsi que de la terre du Pélion, de l'eau du Spercheios et des couronnes d'amarantes ou «immortelles» (de la sorte, en cas de difficultés de navigation, les fleurs n'étaient pas flétries par le vent), arrivaient sur un vaisseau à voile noire. Ils débarquaient de nuit au «port des Achéens» chantant un hymne pour Thétis<sup>37</sup>, mère d'Achille<sup>38</sup>. Dans cet hymne, ils rappellent la double nature, mortelle et immortelle, du héros; or, comme le montre I. Rutherford, il s'agit de rapprocher dans un seul et unique rituel les traits des religions non-chthonienne (le taureau blanc) et chthonienne (le taureau noir) identifiées dans le mythe corinthien concernant les purifications des meurtres des enfants de Médée et celui lemnien (purification annuelle par le feu) de la mise à mort des hommes par les femmes de Lemnos; la voile noire rappelle la légende de Thésée et son retour à Athènes entaché de la mort d'Égée. Les éléments des sacrifices célébrés en Troade proviennent exclusivement de la Thessalie, symbole de l'attachement du héros à sa terre d'origine. Or, les territoires cités (Pélion, Spercheios) ont été intégrés tardivement à la Thessalie, ce qui relève de la construction *a posteriori* du scénario mettant en scène le

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<sup>35</sup> Philstr., *V.Ap.* 4.23 (et 4.11 et 16 pour le dialogue avec l'ombre d'Achille et la plainte d'Achille contre les Thessaliens).

<sup>36</sup> Rutherford, 2009: 242–245.

<sup>37</sup> Le rapport entre le couple mère-fils et la Thessalie a été mis en évidence, bien qu'on puisse émettre quelques réserves en raison du caractère spéculatif du raisonnement, par Ghisellini, 2017.

<sup>38</sup> Philstr., *Her.* 53.9; voir le commentaire de Grossardt, 2006: 713-735, spec. 720-721 a 53.9. Le lien entre Thétis et son fils est très fort. Selon le poète milésien Arctinos (VII<sup>e</sup>–VI<sup>e</sup> s.?), auteur d'un poème épique intitulé *l'Éthiopide*, Achille aurait été enlevé par sa mère et aurait trouvé sa dernière demeure sur l'île Blanche (Leukè), au nord de la mer Noire, où il avait un sanctuaire et était honoré comme un dieu (passage conservé chez Proclus, dans Davies, 1988: 47= Bernabé, 1996: 67–69). Leukè est à l'origine l'île des ombres pâles, cf. Hom., *Od.* 24.11 (Λευκάδα πέρην), qui devient par la suite l'île des Bienheureux, cf. Pd., *O.* 2.68–88. Beaucoup plus tard Maxime de Tyr (*Philosoph.* 9.7), mentionnant les *daimones*, parle des apparitions d'Achille (qui possède un temple sur une île de la mer Noire, sans doute Leukè), devant les marins qui passent à côté de l'île; un marin aurait même vu Achille jouant de la lyre, accompagné de Patrocle et Thétis. C'est toujours sur cette île que le héros thessalien aurait coulé des jours heureux aux côtés d'Hélène, près de laquelle il est représenté sur un vase (voir Hind, 1996); voir en dernier lieu Rusyaeva, 2003. Le culte d'Achille se déplace sur l'île de Bérézan, Νῆσος Ἀχιλλέως, où, à la fin du I<sup>er</sup> s. ap. J.-C., fut inscrit un hymne en son honneur, hymne qui fait également référence à sa mère, Thétis (*SEG* XL 610; *BÉ*, 1991, 419; Vinogradov, 1997: 395–396 («Kykliche Dichtung in Olbia»); Hupe, 2006: cat. 7 (le catalogue des inscriptions concernant Achille aux p. 215–233).

rituel<sup>39</sup>. D'autre part, la présence des fleurs d'amarante n'est pas anodine et renvoie à des pratiques d'immortalité empruntées à la philosophie néoplatonicienne très prisée à l'époque de Philostrate. Ces détails et notamment la pratique d'«inter-ritualité» que le sophiste met en œuvre pour évoquer le lien d'Achille avec la terre où il trouva la mort (une «connexion» entre les mythes), font douter à juste titre I. Rutherford de la réalité de ce rituel, qu'il considère comme une invention littéraire. Ce n'est pour autant une raison pour rejeter la possibilité d'une ambassade thessalienne envoyée en Troade dont la présence prendrait racine dans le mythe, tant que l'utilité de cet ancrage mythique est reconnue par les deux communautés. Plus loin (53, 14), Philostrate précise que ce sont les cités qui envoient des théores en Troade, ce qui semble indiquer une initiative civique et collective, du moins à certaines périodes<sup>40</sup>. Indépendamment de la manière dont le rite est perpétré et en dépit du caractère inhabituel de la théorie, il s'agit d'un lieu de mémoire institutionnalisé par la présence des théores, par la réitération qui se veut annuelle de la procession, ainsi que par le souvenir fait de ces liens dans les décrets officiels tel celui voté en l'honneur de Bombos. On peut parler de liens mythiques et non d'une parenté historique ou légendaire. Le lien est construit sur la célébration de la mort du héros sur cette terre. B. Helly, selon lequel «il ne fait pas de doute que les décrets des Lariséens pour ces citoyens d'Alexandrie de Troade trouvent leur justification dans la participation des théores de Larisa à la procession que les Thessaliens envoyaient sur le tombeau d'Achille», n'émet aucun doute quant à la nature de ce dernier rituel. En revanche, il a raison d'affirmer que «le séjour de Bombos à Larisa a aussi pour objet de rappeler cette histoire et de renouveler l'ardeur des Thessaliens pour qu'ils assurent le maintien de ce culte héroïque»<sup>41</sup>.

Le verbe qui caractérise la contribution de Bombos (l. 15), *συμμαμονεύσατο*, est utilisé pour désigner l'effort de rappeler la parenté entre communautés. La suite du décret le confirme (l. 17-18): «et qu'il a renouvelé la parenté et l'amitié mutuelles qui existent entre les deux cités comme aussi les dispositions privilégiées que les Éoliens ont envers les Lariséens» (*τὰν τε συγγενείαν καὶ φιλίαν ταῖς πολιέσσι π[ὸ]θ' εὐτάς καὶ τὰ φινάθρουπα τὰ ὑπάρχοντα Αἰολειέσσι πὸτ τὰν πόλιν τὰν Λαρισαίων*). En ce qui concerne le contenu des conférences données par Bombos, il avait sans doute écrit sur les personnages illustres de Larisa dont il a fait l'éloge devant leurs concitoyens<sup>42</sup>.

<sup>39</sup> Bouchon / Helly, 2015: 248–249.

<sup>40</sup> Rutherford, 2009: 245, qui met en avant l'attraction que pouvait représenter l'Achilleion et le fait que les cités ont pu envoyer des *théoriai* vers des sanctuaires éloignés afin de procéder à des sacrifices.

<sup>41</sup> Helly, 2006: 196.

<sup>42</sup> Dans le cas de Leukios, fils de Nikasias, dont le décret est gravé sur la même stèle que celui de Bombos, les verbes au présent montrent qu'il est honoré non pas pour une activité ponctuelle comme Bombos, mais pour ses bienfaits constants (Helly, 2006: 200, n. 209).

Cependant, le culte et le tombeau d'Achille sont surtout revendiqués par la cité d'Ilion<sup>43</sup>, dont la rivalité avec Alexandrie de Troade était notoire<sup>44</sup>. Des trois maigres fragments conservés de la périégèse que Polémon d'Ilion a consacrée à sa cité, un est explicitement lié à un épisode troyen: ainsi, l'auteur attire l'attention sur une pierre qui avait inspiré l'invention du jeu d'échecs à Palamède, conservée à Ilion<sup>45</sup>. Le lien entre la cité et le mythe de la guerre de Troie est affirmé par le rôle que joue la protectrice d'Achille, Athéna, dans la vie religieuse et dans la constitution des réseaux des Iliens: elle est honorée à Ilion au cours d'une fête civique, les *Ilieia*<sup>46</sup>, ainsi que dans le cadre du *koinon* régional réunissant une douzaine de cités autour de son culte<sup>47</sup>. Un rituel particulier est associé au culte de la déesse, attestant, comme le sacrifice que les Thessaliens devaient apporter à Achille, un lien particulier entre deux communautés, d'ordre religieux, prenant appui sur le mythe. Il s'agit de la tradition de l'envoi annuel de deux vierges locriennes à Ilion, ayant comme but la commémoration du sacrilège commis par Ajax fils d'Oïlée, ancêtre des Locriens, contre l'autel d'Athéna<sup>48</sup>. Il y aurait violé Cassandre qui s'y était réfugiée. Cet épisode, évoqué par une tradition posthomérique, peut être assimilé aux violences de guerre aussi bien qu'à un acte d'impiété extrême. Les conséquences de cet acte touchent non seulement Ajax, qui est foudroyé par la déesse lors de son voyage de retour et n'atteint jamais sa patrie, mais aussi le peuple des Locriens, qui doivent subir, au retour des compagnons d'Ajax en Locride, une épidémie et de mauvaises récoltes. La réponse de l'oracle qu'ils avaient consulté pour mettre fin à leurs malheurs est éclairante: pour expier leur crime et amadouer la divinité, dont l'un des leurs a profané l'autel en exerçant un acte d'extrême violence contre sa prêtresse, les Locriens doivent envoyer pendant mille ans deux vierges à Ilion<sup>49</sup>. Le poids qui va alors peser sur la communauté est aggravé par le sort terrible réservé aux jeunes filles<sup>50</sup>: à leur arrivée en Troade, les vierges locriennes sont attaquées et massacrées par la population, leurs corps

<sup>43</sup> Voir Chiaï, 2017: 223–233 pour les tombes des héros en rapport avec la guerre de Troie et signalées en Troade par les auteurs anciens, y compris pour la tombe d'Achille.

<sup>44</sup> On montrait le tombeau d'Achille en Troade, près du cap Sigée, à l'entrée de l'Hellespont. Il s'agirait du tertre même qu'avaient érigé Agamemnon et les Achéens pour abriter les restes d'Achille (Hom., *Od.*, 24.80–84). Pour la localisation, voir Rutherford 2009, 231, qui parle sur la base des fouilles récentes d'un élargissement d'une petite île (Beşik-Sivritepe) à l'époque hellénistique afin de la transformer en attraction touristique.

<sup>45</sup> Eustathe, *ad Il.* 2.32. Un autre fragment explique l'épiclèse d'Apollon *Smintheus* (Eustathe, *ad Il.* 1.39).

<sup>46</sup> Le philosophe Lycon de Troade aurait participé à ces fêtes (DL. 5.67).

<sup>47</sup> Pillot, 2016.

<sup>48</sup> Voir Pillot, 2016: 159–161.

<sup>49</sup> Voir Vidal-Naquet, 1981.

<sup>50</sup> Lyc. 1141–1173, appuyé par une scholie de Tzétzès au v. 1141 de l'*Alexandra*, qui a comme source l'historien Timée de Tauroménion (*FGrHist* 566 F 146; Hurst / Kolde, 2008: 273–275).

sont brûlés et leurs cendres dispersées dans la mer. De ce point de vue, observe W. Pillot, «le rituel des vierges locriennes relève plutôt d'un culte civique expiatoire locrien, et non d'un culte ilien à proprement parler. Cependant, lors des années suivantes, les vierges locriennes envoyées en Troade, qui parviennent à échapper aux Iliens qui les traquent, et à traverser le territoire jusqu'à se réfugier dans le sanctuaire d'Athéna Ilias, sont épargnées. Les Iliens acceptent alors de leur accorder la vie sauve, en échange de quoi les jeunes filles doivent se consacrer au service de la déesse. Il s'agit donc bien, cette fois, d'un rite religieux ilien, puisque les vierges locriennes servent dans le sanctuaire d'Athéna»<sup>51</sup>. Le rituel, encadré progressivement par la cité, a dû s'apaiser. La découverte en 1895, dans le territoire d'Oiantheia en Locride, d'une inscription réglementant l'envoi de ce tribut à l'époque hellénistique (ca. 280 av. J.-C.)<sup>52</sup>, semble aller dans le sens d'une tradition ritualisée et purgée de son caractère sanglant, même si le cadre exact de ce rituel nous échappe: ἐπὶ τοῖσδε Αἰάντειοι καὶ ἡ πόλις Ναρυκαίων Λοκροῖς ἀνεδέξαντο τὰς κόρα[ς πέμψειν]. La mention à la l. 23 de la forme grammaticale de duel τοῖν κόραιν conforte l'hypothèse de l'envoi de deux jeunes filles.

## II. Parentés mythiques et symboliques: Ilion et Xanthos

En vertu de son lien avec un événement aussi prestigieux que la guerre de Troie, Ilion se retrouve au centre d'un réseau aussi bien politique que culturel illustré par la mobilité des intellectuels. Ce phénomène est particulièrement à l'œuvre à l'époque hellénistique, soutenu par les revendications de parenté, historique ou mythique, entre des «entités civiques politiquement égales» (*peer polity interaction*), pour reprendre l'expression de John Ma<sup>53</sup>. Un décret voté par Xanthos en l'honneur du rhéteur Thémistoclès d'Ilion, en 196 av. J.-C. (datation assurée par l'ère royale séleucide), insiste sur la contribution de ce littérateur à resserrer les liens déjà existants, en vertu de la parenté, entre les deux communautés:

«Sous le règne d'Antiochos et de son fils Antiochos, an 116, mois Hyperbérétaios; sous l'archiprêtrise de Nikanor; à Xanthos, étant prêtre devant la ville Tlépolémos, fils d'Artapatès; l'assemblée étant souveraine.

Il a plu à la cité et aux magistrats de Xanthos: attendu que Thémistoclès, fils d'Aischylos, d'Ilion, étant arrivé dans notre cité, a donné des démonstrations de discours rhétoriques, dans lesquels il a donné la plus haute satisfaction; il a séjourné un temps assez long, ayant été irréprochable et digne de la parenté existant entre nous et les Iliens; plaise de décerner l'éloge public à Thémistoclès, fils d'Aischylos, d'Ilion, qui a été un homme

<sup>51</sup> Pillot, 2016: 161.

<sup>52</sup> L'inscription a été retrouvée près de Vitrinita, considérée comme étant le site de l'antique Oiantheia, alors qu'elle concerne non pas Oiantheia elle-même mais la cité voisine de Naryx (*IG IX 1<sup>2</sup>, 3, 706 = Staatsverträge III, n. 472*).

<sup>53</sup> Ma, 2003; Giovannini, 1993.

excellent pendant son séjour et qui a envers nous des dispositions de dévouement cordial; de l'honorer d'une somme de 400 drachmes; afin que nous manifestations que nous rendons un remerciement pur et solide à ceux qui sont honorés, que les magistrats fassent transcrire ce décret sur deux stèles de pierre et placent l'une à l'endroit le plus en vue, dans le sanctuaire de Léto, et qu'ils envoient l'autre à Ilion pour qu'elle soit placée dans le sanctuaire d'Athéna Ilias à côté des statues d'Aischylos, père de Thémistoclès» (trad. L. Robert)<sup>54</sup>.

Thémistoclès vient d'une cité prestigieuse, Ilion se considérant au centre de l'épopée fondatrice sinon du panhellénisme, du moins de la reconnaissance d'une hellénité, du partage d'une histoire et d'un patrimoine communs. Tout Grec connaissant Ilion grâce aux épopées homériques, la venue d'un notable originaire de cette cité patrimoniale a dû constituer un moment d'exception dans la cité lycienne. Le séjour, qualifié de long, digne et irréprochable, mettant l'accent sur les qualités morales de l'homme qui a donné satisfaction en tous points à la cité, est celui d'un «homme excellent» (*kalos kagathos*). L'archétype du bon citoyen depuis l'époque classique, là encore, renvoie par la rhétorique au partage de valeurs communes entre les Iliens et les Xanthiens. La présence des statues du père de Thémistoclès dans le sanctuaire d'Athéna Ilias, dont l'existence était connue des Xanthiens, montre peut-être que ces derniers l'avaient honoré eux-mêmes ou du moins qu'on a affaire à un représentant de l'élite civique. D'autre part, le décret devait être affiché à la fois à Ilion, dans le sanctuaire de la déesse, et à Xanthos, dans le sanctuaire de Léto, l'une des divinités les plus importantes de la cité.

Bien que sa qualité d'historien ne soit pas mentionnée *expressis verbis*, ses conférences devaient exalter non seulement l'excellence de la cité qui l'avait invité mais aussi l'histoire des relations entre les deux communautés, les Iliens et les Xanthiens<sup>55</sup>. Le thème de la *συγγένεια* dans les rapports entre cités, ainsi que la présence d'intellectuels responsables d'en entretenir le souvenir et les traditions, sont bien attestés dans tout le monde grec<sup>56</sup>. On peut citer l'exemple de l'historien thasien Alexandros<sup>57</sup>, honoré certainement par la métropole Paros, comme le montre de manière convaincante P. Hamon, dans un décret qui a été envoyé pour être affiché dans la cité d'origine du personnage, la «fille» de Paros, Thasos. Les termes employés dans les considérants sont en effet caractéristiques

<sup>54</sup> Traduction et discussion chez Robert, 1983: 154–163, n. 15 B, (*SEG* XXXIII 1184 = Chaniotis 1988: 305–306, E 12 = Curty 1995: n. 76).

<sup>55</sup> Pour sa qualité de *Burgerhistoriker* voir Dana, 2016: 199–200.

<sup>56</sup> Pour d'autres exemples édifiants, voir J. et L. Robert, *BÉ*, 1959, 330 et *BÉ*, 1979, 271. En dernier lieu, voir Jones, 2010.

<sup>57</sup> Le nom a été restitué avec prudence par P. Hamon dans la nouvelle édition qu'il donne de ce décret, Hamon, 2008 (première édition par Dunant / Pouilloux, 1958: 11–15, n. 166, avec les remarques de J. et L. Robert, *BÉ*, 1959, 330; Chaniotis, 1988: 312, E 20: a, l. 1–10).

des décrets pour les rhéteurs et historiens, auteurs d'ouvrages (πραγματεύεσθαι, *a*, l. 4) relatifs aux événements glorieux du passé (τὰ τῆς πόλεως ἔνδοξα, *a*, l. 5). L'hypothèse d'une origine parienne permet de conclure à la pérennité des relations entre Thasos et sa métropole à la basse époque hellénistique. Or, aucune tradition ne rapporte l'existence d'un tel type de parenté entre les Iliens et les Xanthiens, alors que l'une des raisons de l'octroi du décret au rhéteur consiste précisément dans le fait qu'il s'est montré digne de la συγγένεια entre les deux cités. Cette mention a incité les éditeurs et commentateurs du texte à voir dans la venue de Thémistoclès l'occasion de raviver cette parenté par son expression même. Il est raisonnable de penser que les *logoi* prononcés par Thémistoclès aient été fondés sur une érudition conduisant à rechercher les liens de parenté entre Ilion et Xanthos à travers les mythes fondateurs des deux cités ainsi qu'une histoire commune réelle ou imaginée à partir de ces mythes. S'il est de l'intérêt d'une cité lycienne à rechercher les parentés qui la relient à diverses cités du monde grec afin de proclamer son appartenance à ce monde<sup>58</sup>, la parenté avec Ilion est sans doute la plus prestigieuse de toutes, ce qui justifie la somme de 400 drachmes offerte à un citoyen ilien. Thémistoclès a dû faire œuvre de mythographe pour construire un lien entre les deux cités en fondant sans doute sa démonstration sur le fait que le Xanthe est le fleuve sur lequel fut édifée la cité de Xanthos mais aussi l'autre nom du Scamandre, fleuve de la Troie homérique. En effet, le dieu-fleuve Xanthe-Scamandre est considéré comme le fondateur de la cité lycienne. Il a pu également utiliser la figure de Sarpédon, prince lycien ayant combattu aux côtés d'Enée.

Ainsi, la volonté de mettre en exergue les liens de parenté entre les cités ne doit pas être interprétée comme une simple gymnastique intellectuelle visant à glorifier des cités. Au-delà de leur valeur symbolique, ces mythographies peuvent jouer un rôle dans les relations diplomatiques. Ainsi, lors du règlement d'Apamée en 188 av. J.-C., les Iliens sont intervenus, au nom de leur parenté, pour demander le pardon des fautes des Lyciens<sup>59</sup>. Les discours de Thémistoclès ont pu servir de fondement à l'argumentation des deux envoyés iliens. Le décret ne fonde pas la parenté entre les deux cités qui préexiste nécessairement à la venue de Thémistoclès mais le travail de ce dernier et la publicité des honneurs qui lui sont rendus permettent de la proclamer sur une base historique et argumentée.

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<sup>58</sup> On peut penser, dans le sens inverse, au dossier conservé sur la même stèle dans le Létôn, concernant les relations entre Xanthos et la petite cité de Kyténion de Doride (lettre de demande de la part des Kyténiens, appuyée par une lettre et un décret de la confédération étolienne, puis la réponse de la cité de Xanthos au sujet d'une aide financière sollicitée par les habitants de Kyténion pour la réfection des murailles). La demande s'appuie principalement sur une argumentation savamment construite de la parenté mythique entre les deux communautés, par des héros et par des dieux (Curty, 1995: n. 75; cf. aussi Curty, 1999: 177-178).

<sup>59</sup> Pol. 22.5.3.

## Conclusion

Les traces laissées par le passage des héros, les *signa* qui sont leur tombes ou éléments naturels associés à leur passage, les dénominations des lieux et des cités, représentent tout autant de connexions entre le monde «barbare» rendu «civilisé» par le passage des Grecs et le monde grec. En poussant plus loin la réflexion, on peut affirmer que les frontières symboliques entre des communautés éloignées dans l'espace sont abolies à travers la circulation et le partage des mythes, ainsi que par les valeurs communes qui sont celles de la *paideia* au cœur de laquelle on trouve l'exaltation du passé. Il ne faut pas oublier que, si Homère est l'éducateur de la Grèce, les hauts faits des héros homériques et les événements narrés dans les épopées ne cessent d'être des dénominateurs communs pour les pratiques religieuses et culturelles des Grecs. La guerre de Troie et ses reliques ne sont pas seulement une source de prestige mais aussi un véritable connecteur à travers les mers et les siècles. Ce rapprochement par des légendes et mythes de fondations ne serait pas possible sans les médiateurs de cette connexion, qui sont les conférenciers itinérants et les intellectuels grecs au sens large.

## Abréviations

BÉ: *Bulletin Épigraphique*, dans la *Revue des études grecques*.  
 BMC Mysia: Wroth, W., 1892: *A Catalogue of Greek Coins in the British Museum. Mysia*. London. (rééd. Bologne, 1964).  
 FGrHist: Jacoby, F., 1923–1954: *Die Fragmente der griechischer Historiker*, I–III. Berlin / Leyde.  
 IG: *Inscriptiones Graecae*. Berlin, 1903–.  
 SEG: *Supplementum epigraphicum Graecum*. Leiden (puis Amsterdam). 1923–.

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# Civiltà a contatto in Asia Minore

Frigi, Lidi e Persiani

Fabrizio Gaetano

## Abstract

Modern geostoric research tends to distinguish between ‘population’ (people who live on a territory) and ‘people’ (people who share a long co-living experience, same language, customs and traditions). These two notions must be considered altogether in order to understand the features and quality of border and ethnic interactions in 1<sup>st</sup> millennium Asia Minor. In this social and historical context we may observe some political structures in which cultural bonds are much more effective than any chorographic delimitations. As we shall see, in Lydian royal genealogy Phrygians are made part of a collective history; likewise, Persian empire and its regional partition involving Phrygians determine, elsewhere in time and space, specific cultural elaborations.

## 1. Introduzione

All’indomani della fine del primo conflitto mondiale, il trattato firmato a Versailles il 28 giugno 1919 ridisegnava drasticamente la carta politica del vecchio continente, sconvolto da anni di guerra e dal crollo di numerosi imperi. La Germania, additata come principale responsabile dello scoppio delle ostilità, dovette accettare le clausole economiche e militari più severe e umilianti; i domini degli Asburgo e degli Ottomani subirono soprattutto pesanti trasformazioni territoriali, che si tradussero, per i secondi, nella completa estromissione dall’Europa, nella perdita degli estesi possedimenti arabi e nella conservazione della sola penisola anatolica, con la notevole eccezione, tuttavia, della regione di Smirne, assegnata alla Grecia.

La reazione turca a questa situazione e alle dure imposizioni della successiva pace di Sèvres venne, pochi anni dopo, dalle forze armate. Fra il 1921 e il 1922 l’esercito guidato da Mustafà Kemal sottrasse il paese a ogni ingerenza straniera e sconfisse ripetutamente i Greci, costretti a evacuare in massa la zona di Smirne e a far ritorno in patria. Si concludeva, così, con l’abbandono tragico e precipitoso dell’odierna İzmir, un’esperienza insediativa di durata millenaria: con la ratifica del trattato di Losanna le coste occidentali dell’Anatolia, rimaste sostanzialmente estranee alle incursioni delle navi micenee dei secoli XIV e XIII a.C<sup>1</sup>, vedevano interrotta, in maniera drastica e brutale, la continuità abitativa avviata dai Greci,

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<sup>1</sup> Il raggio del commercio miceneo sembra aver incluso solo un’esigua fascia costiera nella parte sudoccidentale della penisola; in ogni caso, non si giunse mai a fondazioni stabili (cfr. Collins *et al.*, 2008: 11–62; si veda anche Murray, 2017).

agli albori dell'Età del Ferro, durante le ondate migratorie verso oriente sintetizzabili nell'evento della cosiddetta prima colonizzazione<sup>2</sup>.

La catastrofe dell'Asia Minore<sup>3</sup> – per recuperare l'espressione impiegata dalla moderna storiografia di matrice ellenica – fornisce un esempio abbastanza recente di questioni di convivenza etnica che sono, in realtà, molto antiche e sempre complesse. Che la penisola anatolica sia crocevia di popoli è affermazione abusata e, nondimeno, storicamente esatta ed efficace. Come caratteri endemici di questo territorio, contatti, ibridazioni e mescolanze creano le condizioni per lo studio di numerosi fenomeni di interazione culturale, che appaiono distribuiti nel corso di una lunga e mutevole evoluzione geopolitica. La scelta di precise coordinate spazio-temporali si pone quindi come premessa metodologica necessaria.

La prima metà del I millennio a.C., arco cronologico di elezione del progetto *ShaBo*, è già un filtro analitico di rilievo; da un punto di vista spaziale, al contrario, l'intera Anatolia resta un termine di riferimento ancora troppo ampio e vago. La mia preferenza per un'indagine focalizzata sull'Asia Minore centro e nordoccidentale e sui rapporti tra Frigi, Lidi e Persiani nel VI secolo scaturisce da una domanda specifica sull'esistenza di elementi di connessione fra tre civiltà che vissero sicuramente vicende umane irriducibili e originali, ma senza che queste escludessero importanti momenti di contatto e di dominazione reciproca. Il quadro è tanto più interessante quanto più la qualità di questa relazione appare filtrata dalle fonti greche, che, da un lato, aggiungono un ulteriore fattore di complicazione (c'è una quarta civiltà da considerare); dall'altro offrono, però, un'eccellente materia di riflessione.

## 2. Frigi e Lidi

I Frigi fanno la loro comparsa in Anatolia durante la prima età del Ferro. L'evidenza archeologica e la documentazione di matrice assira e greca testimoniano la presenza di un organismo statale potente, radicato in origine presso il tratto centrale del fiume Halys e impegnato in relazioni diplomatiche sia con gli imperi del Vicino Oriente che con i Greci della costa a occidente. Non è dato sapere se le invasioni dei Cimмери del VII secolo abbiano innescato nel regno frigio una crisi politica decisiva per la sua caduta; in ogni caso, alla metà del VI secolo – ma forse già ai suoi inizi – la Frigia è ormai sotto il controllo stabile della Lidia<sup>4</sup>.

Ora, nel settimo libro delle sue *Storie* lo storico greco Erodoto espone nel dettaglio il percorso compiuto in Asia Minore dall'esercito del re persiano Serse, che sta muovendo contro la Grecia. Dopo aver varcato l'Halys e aver superato le città

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<sup>2</sup> Per una lettura globale dell'esperienza colonizzatrice greca cfr. i lavori riuniti in Tsetskhladze, 2006–2008.

<sup>3</sup> 'Asia Minore' compare per la prima volta nell'opera *Historiarum adversus paganos libri septem* dello storico cristiano Paolo Orosio (I 2.26).

<sup>4</sup> Per un'analisi approfondita di storia, cultura e religione della Frigia cfr. Tsetskhladze, 2019.

frigie di Celene, Anava e Colosse, l'armata giunge a Kydrara, una località che, per Erodoto, sta – o è vicina – alla frontiera tra Frigi e Lidi. L'osservazione si basa sulla presenza di una stele che Erodoto ritiene eretta da Creso, e sulla quale Kydrara è qualificata, all'apparenza, come città al confine fra i due popoli (VII 30). È ipotesi discussa se alla Kydrara erodotea corrisponda o meno, con un diverso toponimo, la Karoura nominata da Strabone nella sua *Geografia*. In effetti, più che fra Lidia e Frigia, Karoura è individuata come paese di passaggio tra Caria e Frigia. Si tratta di un villaggio al quale si arriva risalendo il fiume Meandro dalla foce e lasciandosi alle spalle, in sequenza, le città di Magnesia, Tralles, Nisa e Antiochia (XIV 2.29). Un indizio a favore di questa identificazione è, a mio parere, la prossimità di Karoura al fiume Lico (XII 8.16–17). Secondo la descrizione di Erodoto, il Lico scompare in una voragine presso Colosse e risbuca in superficie cinque stadi più a nordovest (VII 30.1), a breve distanza dalla possibile localizzazione di Kydrara. Una piena sovrapposizione fra i due toponimi è forse una conclusione eccessivamente ottimistica. E tuttavia, l'insieme delle coordinate geoetnografiche ricavabili dai due autori delinea chiaramente una forma di spazialità percepita come luogo di interazione: poco importa che questa riguardi due o tre popoli.

Credo sia lecito affermare che la stele non sia stata commissionata per commemorare una fase puntuale di espansione. Creso è l'ultimo re della Lidia indipendente e, come tale, governa un territorio che include già Caria e Frigia e di cui egli porta avanti, piuttosto, il processo di unificazione amministrativa e fiscale, per esempio sottoponendo i Greci d'Asia, per la prima volta nella loro storia, al pagamento di un tributo. La funzione definitoria del cippo potrebbe così consistere nella separazione fra la parte più autentica e originaria dell'impero, circoscrivibile all'area di più stretta competenza della capitale Sardi, e le altre regioni, che ne rappresentano le aggiunte successive.

A questo proposito, giova ricordare che Erodoto menziona anche altre lastre di pietra infisse nel terreno da sovrani orientali. Lo storico è a conoscenza delle due stele che Dario ordinò di collocare sulla riva europea del Bosforo e sulle quali furono incisi i nomi di tutti i popoli condotti in guerra contro gli Sciti (IV 87)<sup>5</sup>; sa dell'ulteriore iscrizione con cui il medesimo re persiano intese lodare la dolcezza delle acque del fiume Tearo (IV 91); rievoca come, durante il movimento di espansione attraverso l'Asia e fino all'Europa, il faraone Sesostri innalzò stele per esaltare il coraggio o, al contrario, criticare la viltà dei popoli soggiogati nel corso della sua marcia (II 102.4–5). Queste ultime costituiscono la principale testimonianza storica dell'itinerario seguito dal sovrano egiziano, poiché l'assenza di iscrizioni oltre i Traci è proprio ciò che consente a Erodoto di giudicare la Tracia il punto terminale dell'avanzata (II 103.1). La notizia di queste stele è riportata nelle *Storie* in quanto si tratta di strumenti utili a sostanziare il progetto narrativo,

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<sup>5</sup> Cfr. Prandi, 2020: 32–34 e Prandi, 2021: 377.

ma la finalità originaria delle medesime non viene né ignorata né, tantomeno, taciuta.

Si può supporre che di fronte alla stele di Kydrara/Karoura sia avvenuto qualcosa di diverso.

Il problema della distinzione anacronistica fra realtà etnopolitiche non più autonome ha, a mio parere, due possibili soluzioni: o la stele non è stata innalzata da Creso ma da un re precedente, ancora in lotta per la supremazia su Caria e Frigia, oppure essa ha una funzione opposta a quella immaginata da Erodoto, cioè non separa ma mette in relazione. Questa seconda spiegazione non appare priva di fondamento, soprattutto alla luce di alcuni passaggi, frammentari ma preziosi, dello storico lidio Xanto<sup>6</sup>.

Secondo Dionigi di Alicarnasso, Xanto indicava come figli del sovrano lidio Atys Lydos e Torebos (I 28.2 = *BNJ* 765 F 16). Atys è eponimo della dinastia regale degli Atiadi, quella che Erodoto, il quale conosce Atys come padre di Lydos e di Tirseno, colloca nella fase della storia lidia anteriore alla salita al potere degli Eraclidi (I 7.3, 94.5)<sup>7</sup>. Il nome ‘Torebos’ ritorna, nella leggera variante ‘Torrebos’, in una voce degli *Ethnikà* di Stefano di Bisanzio – la cui fonte è ancora Xanto –, nella quale è riportato che Torrebos figlio di Atys è eponimo di una città della Lidia; qui si staglia un monte chiamato Cario e si erge un tempio dedicato a un individuo omonimo. Stefano chiude con un riferimento a Nicola di Damasco, per il quale questo Cario onorato nel tempio della *polis* di Torrebos era figlio di Zeus e della ninfa Torrebria (*BNJ* 765 F 16).

Subito dopo questa precisazione, la voce presenta una lacuna testuale di cui l’unico dato fuori di dubbio è il nome Torrebos, che Felix Jacoby leggeva come figura di chiusura di una serie genealogica da ricostruire e integrare, a suo avviso, nel modo seguente: Zeus-Torrebria → Cario → Manes → Atys → Lydos e Torrebos. Questa successione, sebbene sia quasi interamente frutto di congettura, ha una sua validità: in Erodoto Atys è figlio di Manes (I 94.3), mentre in Dionigi di Alicarnasso il secondo viene ritenuto nonno (e non padre) del primo (I 27). Le tradizioni sono differenti e, di conseguenza, si prestano a più interpretazioni. Al di là delle difficoltà di conciliazione, tuttavia, ciascuna declinazione genealogica appare motivata dall’esigenza di tracciare una trasmissione familiare del potere che riconosca i Lidi come eredi ed esecutori ultimi dell’autorità politica di Cari e Frigi. Il nome ‘Cario’, che rimanda alla provenienza etnica, e i nomi ‘Manes’ (o ‘Masnes’) e ‘Atys’, di derivazione frigia, delineano un rapporto di filiazione potenzialmente destinato a giustificare, nella prospettiva lidia, una nuova

<sup>6</sup> Sull’opera di Xanto cfr. Gazzano, 2009, 2009a, 2011. Si veda anche la voce curata da Annalisa Paradiso per il *BNJ*.

<sup>7</sup> Per Erodoto al trono di Lidia si succedettero tre grandi famiglie di regnanti: nell’ordine, gli Atiadi, gli Eraclidi e i Mermnadi. A quest’ultima apparteneva Creso, sotto il quale, nel 546, la Lidia fu sconfitta in battaglia da Ciro e inglobata nell’impero persiano. Per l’interpretazione erodotea della storia lidia cfr. Gazzano, 2017.



organizzazione della realtà. Tramite la forza simbolica della narrazione genealogica si ottiene la costituzione di un'ascendenza collettiva capace di rendere ragione di una situazione politica attuale.

Mi sembra ci siano buone ragioni, dunque, per ipotizzare che la stele di Cresos, concepita da Erodoto come cippo confinario, fosse destinata, invece, a ribadire una supremazia territoriale per il tramite del posizionamento in una zona di contatto attuale – la città di Kydrara/Karoura – fra vecchi e nuovi dominatori, tutti genealogicamente imparentati<sup>8</sup>. Del resto, il re Gige, colui che dà inizio alla dinastia mermnade a spese dell'ultimo re eraclide, Candaule, è, per Erodoto, figlio di Dascilo (I 8.1), un nome che rimanda a un'area geografica (il territorio a sudest dell'attuale Mar di Marmara) profondamente segnata, sia nel mito che nella storia, dagli stanziamenti dei Frigi. A ciò si aggiunga che l'elaborazione stessa della genealogia degli Atiadi è collocabile nel periodo di governo dei Mermnadi<sup>9</sup>: non è improbabile che questi ultimi abbiano inteso attribuire agli antichi dominatori, dopo la parentesi eraclide, un'ascendenza in un certo senso autoctona<sup>10</sup>. Infine, non bisogna trascurare alcune letture recenti dell'*Inno omerico ad Afrodite* che vedono nell'unione fra Anchise e la dea, la quale si finge una fanciulla giunta dalla Frigia, l'espressione mitica della rivendicazione lidia al comando sull'Anatolia nordoccidentale – e, in particolare, sulla regione di Troia – durante il VII secolo<sup>11</sup>.

### 3. Frigi e Persiani

Compatendo le sventure di Priamo, recatosi nella sua tenda a chiedere la restituzione del corpo martoriato di Ettore, Achille delinea i limiti del regno un tempo felicemente governato dal vecchio re (*Iliade* XXIV 543–546):

καὶ σὲ γέρον τὸ πρὶν μὲν ἀκούομεν ὄλβιον εἶναι:  
ὄσσον Λέσβος ἄνω Μάκαρος ἔδος ἐντὸς ἔεργει

<sup>8</sup> Erodoto racconta che i Cari si ritengono autoctoni della terraferma e consanguinei dei Lidi sulla base dell'esistenza di un tempio eretto anticamente nella città di Mylasa dai tre fratelli Mysos, Lydos e Car. La ricerca lidia di un legame con i Frigi è forse alla base della confusione in merito alla provenienza di Pelope (Strabone XII 8.2), che è frigio in Ecateo (*BNJ* 1 F 119), Erodoto (VII 8γ.1, 11.4), Ellanico (*BNJ* 4 F 76) e Sofocle (*Aiace* 1292), lidio in Pindaro (*Olimpica* I 24), genericamente 'asiatico' in Tuciddide (I 9). Per un quadro delle tradizioni greche in materia cfr. Fowler, 2013: 426–434.

<sup>9</sup> Talamo, 1979: 13–33.

<sup>10</sup> Mark Munn ha suggerito che il cosiddetto tumulo di Mida (il più grande tumulo funerario di Gordio) sia stato eretto proprio dai Lidi come tributo a una celebre figura frigia di regalità (Munn, 2008: 162).

<sup>11</sup> Per il dettaglio della dimostrazione rinvio a Munn, 2006: 106–120. Il peso politico dell'influenza lidia sulla regione si ricava anche da Strabone XIII 1.17 (il monte Peirosso, a sudovest di Cizico, fu riserva di caccia dei Lidi) e 1.22 (i Milesi devono chiedere l'autorizzazione di Gige prima di fondare Abido, sulla costa orientale dell'Ellesponto).

καὶ Φρυγίη καθύπερθε καὶ Ἑλλάσποντος ἀπείρων,  
τῶν σε γέρον πλούτῳ τε καὶ υἰάσι φασὶ κεκάσθαι

Questo passo è oggetto di una ripresa letterale da parte di Strabone (manca solo l'ultimo verso), che lo colloca al termine di una lunga discussione nella quale egli tenta di gettare luce sulla partizione geografica e politica della Troade deducibile dal catalogo omerico delle truppe troiane (XIII 1.7)<sup>12</sup>. L'autore è consapevole che vari motivi rendono la ricostruzione difficile e complessa: sulla distinzione geografica fra Eolide e Troade la tradizione letteraria si mostra tutt'altro che unanime; manca l'accordo sul ruolo definitorio da assegnare a montagne, fiumi e promontori; non è chiaro se tra l'Ilio omerica e l'Ilio attuale ci sia soluzione di continuità<sup>13</sup>; colonizzazioni e migrazioni compromettono ulteriormente la possibilità di un'armonica ricomposizione. Dopo la sconfitta dei Troiani e la distruzione della città, in particolare, i Frigi si insediarono fra Cizico e il fiume Practio, i Traci intorno ad Abido, Meoni e Misi nella pianura di Tebe Ipoplacia, presso le estreme propaggini sudorientali del monte Ida (XIII 1.8). La Troade fu caratterizzata, così, da un avvicendamento al potere di popoli differenti: a Frigi e Misi si sostituirono Lidi, Eoli e Ioni; in seguito e in ordine, si imposero Persiani, Macedoni e, da ultimi, i Romani (XII 4.6). Una conseguenza diretta di una stratificazione così confusionaria, nella quale ogni nuova dominazione si trova costretta a confrontarsi con residui di etnicità, è individuata da Strabone nell'errata tendenza, diffusa soprattutto nella produzione tragica ateniese, a chiamare 'Frigi' i Troiani (XII 8.7). Può essere interessante interrogarsi sulle ragioni di questo malinteso.

Uno scolio all'Iliade sembra ricondurre l'introduzione di questa consuetudine denominativa al tragediografo ateniese Eschilo<sup>14</sup>, sotto il nome del quale è in effetti tramandato un dramma dal titolo *Frigi o Il riscatto di Ettore*. L'opera trae ispirazione proprio dall'episodio con il quale si è aperto questo paragrafo, ossia la supplica accorata del sovrano di fronte all'omicida di suo figlio. L'opinione oggi prevalente, però, è che l'etnonimo, da riferire con ogni probabilità ai membri del coro, non fosse impiegato come sinonimo sostitutivo di 'Troiani' ma qualificasse, piuttosto, il carattere allogeno del corteo di accompagnamento del troiano Priamo: si tratterebbe, cioè, di schiavi autenticamente frigi, e la sinonimia sarebbe solo apparente<sup>15</sup>. Eppure, in un'altra tragedia eschilea, le *Supplici*, in cui viene descritto il tormentato viaggio di Io, la Frigia è menzionata in posizione incipitaria

<sup>12</sup> Sulla descrizione straboniana della Troade cfr. Ellis-Evans, 2019.

<sup>13</sup> Strabone è risolutamente a favore di questa ipotesi: a suo avviso la città che è ora chiamata Ilio non sorge sullo stesso sito della Ilio omerica ma in un luogo che è rimasto immutato dal tempo di Creso.

<sup>14</sup> Scolio I 348 Erbse (*Iliade* II 862). Non discuto qui l'integrazione Φρύγες proposta da Wilamowitz per il fr. 42 Lobel-Page di Alceo: la congettura, a ragione rifiutata già da Hall, 1988, implica una datazione troppo alta per la sovrapposizione Troia-Frigia, che non è attestata altrove nel VII secolo.

<sup>15</sup> Cfr. Staltmayr, 1991.

rispetto all'itinerario che, dopo il passaggio dell'Ellesponto<sup>16</sup>, la donna-giovenca compie attraverso la Misia e la Lidia, oltre i monti della Cilicia e della Panfilia e fino all'Egitto (544–546); in un'altra tragedia ancora, i *Persiani*, il fantasma di Dario ricorda che Ciro riuscì a impadronirsi di Lidia, Frigia e Ionia. In tali attestazioni la disposizione geografica della Frigia – verso est, dopo l'Ellesponto e prima della Misia; verso ovest, dopo la Lidia e accanto alla Ionia – avvalorava decisamente l'ipotesi di una piena identificazione fra Troade e Frigia. Forse non è ancora una prassi consolidata, come accadrà poi in Euripide<sup>17</sup>, e di certo Eschilo non ne è l'inventore. Sulle scelte espressive del poeta tragico, però, devono agire senza dubbio alcuni condizionamenti, anche alla luce della semplice considerazione per cui il pubblico raccolto nel teatro, per apprezzare e acclamare la performance, deve comprenderne e dividerne perlomeno gli aspetti essenziali.

A questo proposito, c'è da dire che l'epica omerica non poteva offrire un valido confronto mitografico né configurarsi come bagaglio culturale da cui attingere e sviluppare trame tragiche nelle quali i Troiani fossero chiamati 'Frigi'. Nell'*Iliade* Frigi e Troiani appartengono chiaramente a popoli differenti e, come le parole di Achille sui confini del regno di Priamo confermano, hanno competenze su territori distinti (II 862–863, III 182–190): i Frigi sono i potenti alleati che comandano, fuori della Troade, attorno all'area del fiume Sangario (l'attuale Sakarya) e del lago Ascanio (a sud dell'odierno golfo di Izmit)<sup>18</sup>. Neppure l'*Inno omerico ad Afrodite* offre possibilità di fraintendimento: la dea, che si dichiara, come già scritto, di provenienza frigia, si trova a dover giustificare la conoscenza e la padronanza della lingua parlata da Anchise, appresa durante l'infanzia grazie a una nutrice troiana (110–115)<sup>19</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> Più che lo stretto dell'Ellesponto, a Io è connesso lo stretto del Bosforo, che significa letteralmente *passaggio della giovenca*. Eschilo non si preoccupa tuttavia della possibilità di confusione topografica, e usa in maniera interscambiabile i due termini.

<sup>17</sup> L'*Aiace* sofocleo registra ancora qualche oscillazione nell'impiego del toponimo (488 e 1054); in Euripide l'assimilazione sembra strutturale (cfr., a titolo esemplificativo, *Andromaca* 291, 363, 435; *Troiane* 925–928). Peculiari sono i primi versi delle *Baccanti*, nei quali Dioniso proclama di essere giunto a Tebe dopo aver lasciato Lidia e Frigia e aver attraversato Persia, Battriana, Media e Arabia (15–20). Nel quadro di un movimento verso sudest, la Frigia appare correttamente posizionata tra Lidia e Persia. È possibile, però, che il dio abbia già viaggiato per l'Asia 'interna', e che Lidia e Frigia rappresentino soltanto le tappe dello spostamento verso occidente, la Grecia, la Beozia e, infine, Tebe. In questa prospettiva, la Frigia potrebbe corrispondere alla Troade. Per una raccolta completa dei passi tragici relativi alla questione Frigi/Troiani cfr. Bacon, 1961: 101–172.

<sup>18</sup> La zona coincide in parte con la regione che Strabone chiama variamente 'Frigia *epiktetos*', 'Ellespontica' o 'Piccola' (XII 3.7, 4.1–5, 8.1), e di cui il lago Ascanio segna il confine con la Misia.

<sup>19</sup> Cfr. Cassola, 1975. Cfr. anche *Iliade* II 803–804: Polite ricorda a Ettore che fra gli alleati di Priamo non esiste omogeneità né etnica né linguistica.

Una tradizione eolica risalente allo storico Ellanico appare attribuire ai Frigi un ruolo di primo piano nel ripopolamento della Troade. Dopo la fine della guerra, Enea viene a patti con gli Achei e ottiene la possibilità di abbandonare Troia illeso, senza altri scontri. Suo figlio, Ascanio, si allontana con una parte dell'esercito frigio verso la terra di Dascilio, vicina al lago Ascanio, dove rimane per poco tempo:

ἐλθόντων δὲ ὡς αὐτὸν Σκαμανδρίου τε καὶ τῶν ἄλλων Ἑκτοριδῶν,  
ἀφειμένων ἐκ τῆς Ἑλλάδος ὑπὸ Νεοπολέμου, **κατάγων αὐτοὺς** ἐπὶ τὴν  
πατρίαν ἀρχὴν εἰς Τροίαν ἀφικνεῖται (BNJ 4 F 31).

Credo che il pronome αὐτοὺς, oggetto del participio *κατάγων*, indichi specificamente gli Ettoridi che con Scamandrio sono giunti dalla Grecia su concessione di Neottolemo. Ascanio non riconduce a Troia *anche* i Frigi che con lui hanno lasciato la città e sono rientrati in patria, bensì solo il figlio di Ettore e i discendenti della principale famiglia reale troiana, desiderosi di ristabilire una genealogia legittima di sovrani.

L'episodio del ritorno di Scamandrio nella Troade è stato affrontato anche da Xanto, ma la considerazione d'insieme dei pochi frammenti, peraltro sparsamente distribuiti in più autori, non risolve del tutto la questione. La testimonianza di Strabone (XIV 5.29 = BNJ 765 F 14a), che riporta una citazione relativa all'arrivo dei Frigi da Ascania e dal paese dei Berecinti sotto la guida, appunto, di Scamandrio, è fortemente condizionata dalla critica del geografo all'opera del filologo omerico Apollodoro di Atene, accusato di non aver vagliato con la dovuta cautela il racconto xantiano. È una polemica molto articolata, che mescola tre 'voci' – quelle di Xanto, di Apollodoro e, naturalmente, di Strabone – e che, per ciò stesso, rende difficile isolare il dettato esatto e originario dello storico lidio. A un movimento di Scamandrio da Ascania accenna ugualmente Stefano di Bisanzio, il quale al lemma Ἀσκανία trasmette in maniera incompleta un estratto di Nicola di Damasco: dal monte Ida, da Dascilio e da Ascania, città troiana fondata da Ascanio, Scamandrio, figlio di Ettore e di Andromaca, si sarebbe mosso per compiere una non meglio definita impresa (BNJ 765 F 14b). All'oscurità del riferimento fanno eco i dubbi sulla paternità del medesimo, assegnato dagli studiosi moderni tanto a Xanto quanto a Ellanico. In sintesi, se è certo e accettato che Scamandrio abbia avuto un compito importante nel periodo postbellico, assai meno perspicui sono senso e funzione della partecipazione dei Frigi.

C'è poi un terzo frammento, contenuto in uno scolio all'*Andromaca* di Euripide. Lo scoliasta commenta il verso sull'uccisione di Astianatte (10) e precisa che il tragediografo non seguiva affatto Xanto nella propria rielaborazione delle vicende di Troia, ma fonti più utili e degne di fiducia, come Stesicoro (BNJ 765 F 21). Si tratta di un'informazione importante. Benché si riesca a leggere molto poco, nella leggenda accolta da Xanto Scamandrio/Astianatte sopravvive e si rende artefice della ricostituzione della casa di Priamo. In Euripide, al contrario, lo stesso personaggio non raggiunge mai l'età adulta, ma è fatalmente condannato

a esser precipitato dalle mura di Troia. Il ruolo di Scamandrio come eroe ri-fondatore, eventualmente coadiuvato dai Frigi di Ascanio, i quali si presenterebbero così come eredi dei Troiani, non sembra recepito né produttivo in ambiente ateniese. Questa discordanza costituisce, a mio giudizio, motivo sufficiente per negare che le tradizioni mitiche, di probabile matrice eolica, che sono note a Ellanico e Xanto siano mai state alla base della doppia assimilazione, verificata nelle tragedie ateniesi, tra Frigi e Troiani e tra Frigia e Troade. C'è bisogno di una diversa spiegazione.

Nell'ultimo quarto del VI secolo, proprio poco prima che prenda avvio la grande stagione del teatro attico, l'Asia minore si trova sottoposta a un processo di profonda trasformazione politico-amministrativa: il persiano Dario suddivide i popoli soggetti al suo controllo in venti distretti, chiamati satrapie<sup>20</sup>. Erodoto ne fornisce un elenco molto dettagliato (III 89–96), di cui, per comodità espositiva e necessità argomentative, mi limito a trascrivere, qui, solo la sezione iniziale:

1° satrapia: Ioni, Magneti d'Asia, Eoli, Cari, Lici, Miliei, Panfili;

2° satrapia: Misi, Lidi, Lasoni, Cabali, Itennei;

3° satrapia: Ellespontini, Frigi, Traci d'Asia, Paflagoni, Mariandini, Siri (III 90).

Ogni distretto dipendeva dal centro satrapico, ossia dalla *polis* di residenza del funzionario reale (il satrapo), nominato dal potere centrale: Magnesia sul Meandro per la prima satrapia, Sardi per la seconda e Dascilio per la terza. La scelta delle sedi di governo regionale mette in evidenza la valutazione gerarchica e il diverso peso politico delle componenti etniche di ciascun distretto, al punto che Erodoto non esita a parlare di distretto (solo) ionio, distretto (solo) lidio e distretto (solo) frigio (III 127.1)<sup>21</sup>. A tal riguardo, è utile confrontare il catalogo erodoteo con le liste di popoli – o, per usare il termine indigeno, *dahyu*<sup>22</sup> – desumibili dalle iscrizioni achemenidi e, in particolare, da quelle commissionate da Dario. Un esame del materiale tradito<sup>23</sup> rivela un dato interessante: mentre Ionia e Lidia hanno un preciso corrispettivo nelle parole persiane *Yauna* e *Sparda*<sup>24</sup>, la Frigia

<sup>20</sup> Sul sistema satrapico achemenide cfr. Petit, 1990.

<sup>21</sup> Per il terzo distretto cfr. anche III 120.2: Erodoto si riferisce a Mitrobate come governatore del distretto di Dascilio.

<sup>22</sup> Cfr. Dan, 2013: 101–106.

<sup>23</sup> Cfr. DB (Behistun), DNa/e (Naqsh-e Rostam), DPe (Persepoli), DSe (Susa). Su queste iscrizioni cfr. Lecoq, 1997: 188–189, 219–221, 225–228, 232–234.

<sup>24</sup> Sul significato di *Yauna* cfr. Dognini, 2000; sulla presenza dei Lidi nelle iscrizioni achemenidi cfr. Schmitt, 2003. In DH (Hamadan) *Sparda* è indicata come confine occidentale dell'impero, chiuso a nord dagli Sciti, a est dagli Indiani e a sud dagli Etiopi. È probabile, quindi, che la satrapia di Lidia includesse anche le regioni che Erodoto, invece, raggruppa a parte, nel primo distretto. Una spia dell'estensione autentica della *Sparda* persiana potrebbe essere la qualifica di Artaferne, che risiede a Sardi, come comandante di tutti i popoli costieri dell'Asia (Erodoto V 30.6).

non gode di un esonimo dedicato<sup>25</sup>. Si può supporre che l'assenza di una denominazione specifica sia dovuta alla caduta del regno frigio in un'epoca anteriore ai primi spostamenti persiani oltre l'Halys e verso occidente. Nel momento in cui Ciro decide di attraversare il fiume, la Frigia è già soggetta all'autorità di una potenza straniera: essa non è, infatti, propriamente conquistata dai Persiani, ma acquisita – ereditata, quasi – in quanto parte del regno dei veri avversari sconfitti, cioè i Lidi e la Lidia di Creso.

Naturalmente, sebbene lo Stato frigio si fosse ormai dissolto, il popolo frigio non cessava certo di esistere. Nella partizione etnica voluta da Dario i Frigi dovevano avere una loro collocazione. Se si prende in considerazione la lunga e famosa iscrizione di Behistun<sup>26</sup> e si escludono i nomi propri, che non sono fraintendibili, l'unica opzione disponibile sotto la quale appare possibile rubricare i Frigi è l'espressione *tayaiy drayahya*: letteralmente, *quelli che vivono sul mare* (DB 6). Questa formulazione ricorre in due ulteriori iscrizioni volute da Dario, nelle quali, tuttavia, svolge una chiara funzione discriminante rispetto alle diverse collocazioni geografiche di un medesimo popolo: gli Ioni che *vivono sul mare* sono distinti dagli Ioni *della terraferma* (DPe 2) e dagli Ioni *al di là del mare* (DSe 3)<sup>27</sup>. La peculiarità dell'attestazione di Behistun, invece, consiste proprio nell'assenza di una determinazione etnica, che ha indotto gli studiosi a suggerire più identificazioni: inserito dopo gli Egiziani (*Mudraya*) e prima dei Lidi, il sintagma è stato variamente inteso come un riferimento ora a Cipro, ora alla costa meridionale dell'Asia Minore (la Cilicia), ora all'Anatolia nordoccidentale<sup>28</sup>.

Il criterio di successione geografica che motiva le prime due proposte esegetiche non mi appare pienamente convincente<sup>29</sup>. In DB lo sguardo dell'imperatore, che parla in prima persona e menziona i *dahyu* sottomessi, sembra muovere dal cuore del regno verso ovest, per poi spostarsi a est; in DPe il movimento è analogo, ma i Medi, per esempio, non sono citati tra i Greci e gli Armeni, ma tra gli Elamiti e i Babilonesi; infine, in DSe Dario ammira il suo impero da est verso ovest, oltre a nominare i Medi per primi. Non c'è marcata casualità, ma neppure ordine definito.

A mio parere, dunque, è la terza interpretazione di *tayaiy drayahyai* a essere la più fondata, soprattutto alla luce della posizione incipitaria che Erodoto riserva, nel terzo distretto, agli Ellespontini che abitano sulla riva orientale dello stretto e che, ovviamente, vivono sul mare. Mi sembra probabile che i Frigi fossero inclusi nella satrapia *tayaiy drayahyai*, e che quest'ultima fosse così chiamata per una sorta di riconoscimento al valore delle *poleis* che più si erano opposte all'espans-

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<sup>25</sup> Cfr. Schmitt, 2014.

<sup>26</sup> Cfr. Lecoq, 1997: 84–96.

<sup>27</sup> Cfr. Sancisi-Weerdenburg, 2001.

<sup>28</sup> Cfr. Schmitt, 1972.

<sup>29</sup> Cfr. Lecoq, 1997: 141.

sione persiana<sup>30</sup>. Erodoto conserva traccia della disposizione distrettuale achemenide ma interviene, con un atto creativo, sulla preminenza dei singoli popoli. Nell'opera di un Greco d'Asia che si propone di rivolgersi a un pubblico di Greci, etichettare come 'frigia' la satrapia sul mare significa agganciare la narrazione a un organismo politico sì scomparso, ma ancora famoso e familiare. La notizia di una circoscrizione 'frigia' estesa fino al Sigeo potrebbe aver raggiunto Atene e aver innescato un processo di sostituzione denominativa, ulteriormente accelerato non solo dalla effettiva prossimità geografica fra Troade e Frigia, ma anche dalla condizione servile cui i Frigi erano soggetti sia in Asia Minore che nella *polis* ateniese<sup>31</sup>. L'identificazione dei Troiani con un popolo reso schiavo su entrambe le sponde bagnate dall'Egeo poteva ben soddisfare le esigenze di una propaganda politica che puntava a legittimare le proprie mire espansionistiche verso est e sul suolo asiatico.

#### 4. Conclusioni

Al dubbio di apertura – la diffusione e l'efficacia di fattori di connessione – credo sia opportuno rispondere in termini positivi. L'aspetto prevalente è, di fatto, quello dell'interazione: fra due popoli, i Lidi e i Frigi, fisicamente contigui e resi partecipi di una storia genealogica collettiva; fra un organismo statale sovranazionale e le sue partizioni regionali, organizzate in raggruppamenti che favoriscono, altrove nel tempo e nello spazio, elaborazioni culturali specifiche<sup>32</sup>. Ovviamente, non si tratta di negare l'insorgenza di situazioni di conflitto, ma di sottolineare i caratteri di un tessuto politico ed etnico che manifesta assetti informi e rispetto al quale la delimitazione corografica non risulta essere preoccupazione preminente.

#### Abbreviazioni

BNJ: *Brill's New Jacoby* (edizione online)

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<sup>30</sup> Lampsaco, per esempio, cade in maniera definitiva sotto il controllo di Dario solo dopo la fine della rivolta ionica, a inizio V secolo.

<sup>31</sup> Cfr. le seguenti commedie di Aristofane: *Uccelli* 1244–1245, 1326–1329; *Lisistrata* 908; *Pace* 1146–1148; *Vespe* 433.

<sup>32</sup> Cfr. il contributo di Luisa Prandi in questo stesso volume.

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# *From the ends of the earth you are come*

Greek Perceptions of the Boundaries of the Near Eastern Empires.  
A Brief Journey

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## **Abstract**

The present contribution will focus on a few case studies from the Archaic and Classical periods (the seer Mopsos, Alcaeus and his brother Antimenidas, the Greek mercenaries in Egypt, Aristagoras of Miletus, and the hero Memnon) in order to investigate the way according to which the Greeks perceived and defined the boundaries of some Near Eastern imperial formations, *i.e.* Assyria, Babylon, Egypt, and Persia. The analysis aims to understand how different factors such as imperial ideology, geographical knowledge, and personal experience contributed to shape Greek views on the imperial space.

It is not always possible to draw the boundaries of an empire. Quite often an empire perceives itself in an ecumenical dimension in which its boundaries coincide with those of the known world or at least with what is regarded as possible or worth conquering. From the archaic stages of its history, the Greek world had been contemporary with large Near Eastern imperial formations. The exact degree and type of interactions between them are not easy to trace. Archaeological and documentary sources show that Near Eastern motifs and influences in art, myth, and epic poetry are an undeniable presence and demonstrate that they had penetrated and had been reworked by the Greeks either through direct contact or through one or more intermediaries. Quite recently, Mary Bachvarova has provided new insights on this matter showing the importance, during the Late Bronze Age, of the long-distance relations between *élites* of Greek and Anatolian courts.<sup>1</sup> It is more difficult to understand how these Near Eastern powers were perceived in terms of their spatiality. If Assyrian sources show the Ionians as occupying a peripheral position in their mental map of the world and connected to the maritime dimension (they “stand in the middle of the sea”),<sup>2</sup> for the Greeks of the Archaic period the Neo-Assyrian empire is an almost nonexistent entity at least from the point of view of the written record. Indeed, the sources are often in a fragmentary

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<sup>1</sup> See Bachvarova, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Rollinger, 2011: n° 239 and 240. On textual and archaeological evidence about the encounter between the Greek and the Near-Eastern worlds see Brinkman, 1989: 53–71; Lanfranchi, 2000: 7–34; Niemeier, 2001: 11–32; Rollinger, 2001: 233–264; Luraghi, 2006: 21–47; Leichty, 2011: n° 1 and 60; Rollinger, 2011: 311–346; Heller 2015: 331–348; Gabrieli 2021: 339–343.

condition and their quantity is uneven. Explicit references to the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian empires are absent, while they are relatively more abundant for certain imperial formations such as Egypt and Persia. In the following pages, I will focus on some case studies that can provide us with some clues as to how the Greeks of the Archaic and early Classical periods pictured the geographical space occupied by these empires. To this end, modern research on the perception and representation of space offers us some interpretive tools useful for the purpose.

Here we can mention two strands of research: the first one is Common Sense Geography, which can be defined as an aspect of historical geography concerned with implicit or tacit knowledge in ancient cultures. It denotes a “low” geographical knowledge as distinct from professional geography. In essence, Common Sense Geography refers “to a naïve perception and description of space and the use of intuitive arguments in geographic contexts”.<sup>3</sup> The second strand of research is represented by Ethnophysiography, which is defined as

The investigation (for any particular language) of categories of landscape features, especially those denoted by common words (usually nouns or noun phrases) [...] But an understanding of the landscape vocabulary also provides foundations for understanding other important dimensions of ethnophysiography, including the study of knowledge systems, beliefs, and customs of a people concerning landforms and landscapes. Thus, ethnophysiography is related to the study of place, sense of place, and place attachment. Ethnophysiography examines how these significances are tied into traditional beliefs, such as those embedded in creation stories, which help to make sense of the world, of its physiographic entities, and of the relationship of such entities to everyday activities, including traditional cultural practices (ceremonies, music, art, etc.).<sup>4</sup>

It is also necessary to take into account another typology of testimonies that may be used as evidence of Greek perceptions of the ancient Near Eastern space, namely Archaic Greek lyric. The view that we can grasp from these poetic compositions is the expression of an elite whose perception of the other was shaped within a narrow social sphere but also depended on the networks of relationships woven with those regions by the authors and individuals mentioned in the poems. The breadth of their geographic horizons varied across the different segments of the population. According to the biographical details we possess, the geographical space of Alcaeus and his brother Antimenidas extended as far as the Syro-Palestinian belt and Egypt; for her part, Sappho’s geographical perception could range from the Western Greek world to Naucratis in Egypt, where her brother had suffered various vicissitudes while sojourning there for trade. It seems that also Ar-

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<sup>3</sup> Geus / Thiering, 2014: 5–15.

<sup>4</sup> Mark *et al.*, 2011: 7.

chilochus may have spent some time in Egypt.<sup>5</sup> In addition, we should pay attention to the set of popular traditions around the biography of several tyrants. If we are to judge by onomastics, Periander's network of interests spanned not only Greece but also Phrygia and Egypt since his brother's name was Gordias – a reference to the founder of the kingdom of Phrygia – and his nephew was called Psammeticus, which is a clear reference to the Saite dynasty ruling in Egypt.<sup>6</sup> The same can be said of Polycrates of Samos, whose relations with the pharaoh Amasis and Achaemenid Anatolia (see for instance his dealings with the satrap Oroetes in Sardis) tell a great deal about the wide territorial extent of his political and diplomatic agenda.<sup>7</sup>

### Assyria and Babylon

The set of myths about the seer Mopsus and his settlement in Cilicia may provide some hints on the Greek perception of the geographical position of the Neo-Assyrian empire.<sup>8</sup> The name Mopsus, whose etymology is pre-Greek, is already attested in Mycenaean as *Mo-qa-so*.<sup>9</sup> The mythical traditions about him show him at first establishing the oracle of Claros in western Asia Minor and then moving to Lycia and Pamphylia and then to Flat Cilicia. This shift from west to east, as shown by Baldriga,<sup>10</sup> would follow the path of Greek expansion into Anatolia and seems to exploit the memory of local heroic figures such as the priest-warrior Moxos in Lydia and the neo-Hittite dynast of Hiyawa known from the Hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions from Karatepe and Çineköy as *Muksa-*, and *MPŠ* according to the Phoenician version.<sup>11</sup> *MPŠ* was a Cilician national hero whom the Greeks appropriated by identifying him with the mythical Mopsus. The latter was also credited with the foundation of Mopsuestia, a toponym which is nothing but a calque of the Phoenician form *BT-MPŠ*, “house of Mopsus”, known from the abovementioned epigraphic records from Karatepe.<sup>12</sup> The kingdom over which the house of *MPŠ* exercised its power was called Que by the Assyrians to whom it was tributary. During the reign of Sennacherib (705–681), Que rebelled against the Assyrians but was defeated in 696.<sup>13</sup> A fragment of Berossus mentioning a naval battle between Ionians and Assyrians off the Cilician coast during Sennach-

<sup>5</sup> Tandy, 2004: 183–194.

<sup>6</sup> Morgan, 2016: 65.

<sup>7</sup> Morgan, 2016: 104–105. Hdt I.70 (Sparta); III.39–43 (Amasis); III.120–126 (Oroetes).

<sup>8</sup> A fragment of poetry long attributed to Phocilides of Miletus and thought to witness that between the late VII and mid-VI centuries BCE news about the fall of Nineveh had reached Ionia is quite probably a later work by a Hellenized Jew from Alexandria during the early Imperial period, see Korenjak / Rollinger, 2001: 195–202.

<sup>9</sup> References in Simon, 2021: 183; see Ponchia, 2021: 305.

<sup>10</sup> Baldriga, 1994: 35–71; on the campaign of Sennacherib see Dalley, 1999: 73–80.

<sup>11</sup> Simon, 2021: 182–196.

<sup>12</sup> On the Cilician house of Mopsus see Novák / Fuchs, 2021: 397–466.

<sup>13</sup> Gabrieli, 2021: 337.

erib's reign is to be related to this historical phase in which we see the resurgence of local dynasties against Assyrian power.<sup>14</sup> To celebrate his victory against the Ionians, Sennacherib had Tarsus built according to the model of Babylon and had his deeds carved on a stele. Berossus' witness suggests that Greeks took part in the conflict as mercenaries for this kingdom or took advantage of the war between Cilicians and Assyrians to engage in piracy. We should also add that a cuneiform tablet from Tarsus dated to the mid-VII century BCE mentions three individuals bearing Greek names, which could suggest the existence of a Greek speaking community in a period chronologically not too far from Sennacherib's Cilician campaign.<sup>15</sup> In any case, the myth of Mopsus and its evolution show how in the Archaic period Cilicia became a frontier of the Greek expansion into the east and that in the mythical imagination this region was no longer perceived as a boundary between the kingdom of Hiyawa and the Assyrians, but between the latter and the Greeks.<sup>16</sup>

As for the Neo-Babylonian empire, scholars have often called into question some famous fragments of Alcaeus of Mytilene in which the poet recalled the return of his brother Antimenidas after having served as a mercenary in the East.

From the ends of the earth you are come, with your sword hilt of ivory bound with gold [...] fighting beside the Babylonians you accomplished a great labour, and delivered them from distress, for you slew a warrior who wanted only one palm's breadth of five royal cubits (Alcaeus, fr. 350 Voigt, trans. Page 1955)

... the sea / to be carried / ... from where he might be carried / ... destroys / of / from holy Babylon / ... Askalon / ... to stir up chilling (war<sup>2</sup>) / ... from the summit / ... and good / ... (to<sup>3</sup>) the house of Hades / ... to think / ... wreaths for us / ... all these / ...-selves (Alcaeus fr. 48, P. Oxy. 1233, fr. 11)

It is important to note that recent archaeological research has pointed out that from the Late Bronze Age into the Archaic Period, cultural relations of the society of Lesbos (on which Mytilene was located) with Anatolia and the East were stronger than those with the Greek mainland and the east Aegean islands.<sup>17</sup> The surviving

<sup>14</sup> Berossus in Abydenos *BNJ* 685 fr. 5; see also Lanfranchi, 2003: 86 ; Heller, 2015: 337–338; Rutherford, 2020: 76.

<sup>15</sup> Schmitz, 2009: 127–131; Gabrieli, 2021: 342.

<sup>16</sup> As Ponchia, 2021: 307 notes: “Aegean people variously participated in and were in contact with this world during the evolving situation of the IA, and Greek polities seemingly took part in the Anatolian and eastern Mediterranean system of communication when affirming their identity and defining their relations, both friendly and hostile. They contributed with their own histories, memories and interpretations and their own linguistic, institutional and symbolic codes”.

<sup>17</sup> Dale, 2011: 21–22.

fragments of Alcaeus mention Babylon, the city of Ascalon, and a soldier of prodigious height who was allegedly killed by Antimenidas. The traditional interpretation that Antimenidas served in Nebuchadnezzar II's army and in particular took part in the 604 BCE campaign against Ascalon has been challenged by Fantalkin and Lytle with good arguments, and it is more likely that the brother of Alcaeus was in the service of Egypt rather than Babylon.<sup>18</sup> In any case, the issue here is secondary to our purpose. What is essential to note is that in Alcaeus' view, the scenario in which his brother acts is located on the edge of the known world, and this mirrors the perception that cuneiform sources provide us about the peripheral position of the land of the Ionians. The marginal location of this world is accentuated by descriptions that emphasize its exotic character and wealth. Examples of the exoticism of this perception are given by the extraordinary height of the soldier killed by Antimenidas, a giant 5 royal cubits tall,<sup>19</sup> and by the fine material of the sword, ivory and gold, with which Alcaeus' brother returns home. If Antimenidas served in a Greek garrison in the pay of Egypt that had been placed in defense of the vassal state of Ascalon, the image he took of the Neo-Babylonian empire and later passed on to his brother Alcaeus is just as vague as those concerning the Neo-Assyrian empire found in Greek sources. Again, it seems that the empire is identified with its "capital" and its function as a religious center, "holy Babylon" in the words of Alcaeus. Later, Pindar will also show that in his imagery Babylon is symbolic of a faraway place of fabulous riches.<sup>20</sup>

If we turn to examine the case of Egypt, we see that in the Mycenaean age Memphis and the surrounding region of Lower Egypt were called Aigyptos (based on a personal name, mic. *Á-ku-pi-ti-jo*), while a term derived from the West Semitic *Misr* (mic. *Mi-si-ra-jo*) was used for the whole country. Later on, Hesiod knew of the existence of a great river in Egypt called Neilos,<sup>21</sup> which, however, was not the proper name of the watercourse but that of an Egyptian description of

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<sup>18</sup> Fantalkin / Lytle, 2016: 90–117.

<sup>19</sup> This story may have influenced the anecdote about the Persian giant Artachaeus (Hdt. VII.117), but a parallel with equally strong similarities can be found in the story of Goliath (I *Sam* 17:4), see Fantalkin / Lytle, 2016: 105.

<sup>20</sup> Pindar, *Paeon* 4, 11–16, fr. 52d :

[...] time, it arouses  
 [...] very famous Delos  
 [...] with the Graces, Karthaia  
 [...] a narrow ridge of land.  
 [...] I will (not) trade it for Babylon  
 [...] of plains  
 [...] of the gods

(trans. William H. Race, 1997).

<sup>21</sup> Hesiod, *Theogony*, 338 "And Tethys bore to Ocean eddying rivers, Nilus, and Alpheus, and deep-swirling Eridanus" (trans. Hugh G. Evelyn-White, 1914)

it, *n-jrw-c3*, “the great currents”.<sup>22</sup> In Homer’s *Odyssey* (XIV.252–258), this Hesiodic toponym is not known, but the river is called Aigyptos. In other words, he took an old Mycenaean name and used it as a hydronym. From the VII to VI centuries BCE we have more data available due to the westward reorientation of Egyptian foreign policy under the Saite dynasty. We can mention two rather well-known pieces of epigraphic evidence. The first one is Pedon’s votive dedication found near Priene.<sup>23</sup>

Pedon, son of Amphinnaeos, dedicated me, having brought me from Egypt; to him the Egyptian king Psammeticus gave as a reward of valor a golden bracelet and a city, on account of his virtue.

This document provides us with information about the perception of Egypt on several levels. The idea that the place where Pedon made his fortune as a soldier was at the edge of the known world is visually suggested by the exotic character of the dedication, which takes the form of an Egyptian statue-cube that was itself a type unknown to the Greek world.<sup>24</sup> At the linguistic level, it is interesting to note another element concerning spatiality, namely, the specification that the statue was brought from Egypt (ll. 2–3, ἐξ Αἰγύπτῳγαγών) in order to emphasize the long journey and distance accomplished by the offering and its dedicator. However, in the inscription, Pedon does not specify the name of the city whose administration had been bestowed on him by Pharaoh Psammeticus II. A reason for this may be due to the limited space available on the epigraphic surface or the fact that the reader would have been unfamiliar with Egyptian toponymy. Even the vagueness of the references though served to heighten the perception of a very distant place. In addition, the precious and unusual gifts that Pedon received from Psammeticus helped to stimulate in the reader a view of Egypt as a remote country full of fabulous riches in the same way that Antimenidas could proudly display the gold and ivory sword he had received as a reward for his valor.

The second epigraphic document that I wish to take into account is the graffito carved by the Greek mercenaries Archon and Peleqos on the leg of one of the statues of Ramesses II at the famous temple in Abu Simbel.

When King Psammeticus came to Elephantine, those who sailed with Psammeticus, the son of Theokles wrote this; and they came above Kerkis, as far as the river allowed: Potasimto had the command of those of foreign speech, and Amasis of the Egyptians. And Archon, the son of Amoibichos,

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<sup>22</sup> Burstein, 2009: 134–138.

<sup>23</sup> Recent analysis and bibliography in Agut-Labordère, 2012: 293–294, 296–298, 302–304.

<sup>24</sup> For a similar Egyptian statue offered by Smyrdes from Camirus, see Jacopi, 1932: 236; see also Boardmann, 1999: 142.



wrote us, and Peleqos, the son of Eudamos.<sup>25</sup>

This inscription is important because it provides us with more precise geographical points of reference than the other sources we have seen so far. The historical context of the inscription refers to Psammeticus II's campaign in Nubia against the Kushites, who threatened the south of the country (592–591 BCE).<sup>26</sup> Egyptian sources say that the pharaoh stopped at Elephantine, Egypt's southern political border, and from there he pushed his army south against the Kushites. The inscription specifies the geographical point beyond which navigation could go no further. The toponym Kerkis, though not yet identified, suggests that the Egyptian penetration southward went as far as Dongola or even Napata. The graffito of the Greek mercenaries tells us that the southern limit of Egyptian expansion was imposed by a geographical obstacle, the outcropping rocks of the fourth cataract beyond which navigation could not be continued.

The work of authors such as Scylax of Carianda, Anaximander, and Hecataeus of Miletus provided the Greek world with geographical knowledge on the extent of the Achaemenid Empire. Scylax's navigation along the Indus and from there to the Persian Gulf provides insight into the empire's eastern borders,<sup>27</sup> as does the long series of toponyms that survive in the extant fragments of Hecataeus. In the latter's work we find traces of places marking the boundaries of Persian expansion, as in the case of Boryza,<sup>28</sup> a city on the Black Sea coast of which, contrary to his usual method, he provides the ethnic designation of "Persian". The reason may be that this settlement did not exist before Darius I's campaign against the Scythians. Other examples are the Persian Gulf island of Kyre and the Mykoi people in the Strait of Ormuz, or even the peoples along the Caspian and Chorasnia coasts.<sup>29</sup> Ionian geographers were also able to provide a graphic representation of the known world in the form of maps, as in the case of Anaximander, who is considered to be the first Greek to draw a map of the known world around the mid-VI century BCE. A few decades later, Anaximander's fellow countryman Hecataeus did the same, possibly in order to refine his predecessor's map and use it as a visual tool for his geographical work.<sup>30</sup>

Here I will focus on the bronze map of the world that Aristagoras of Miletus is said to have presented to Cleomenes of Sparta to persuade him to wage war against the Persians in the context of the outbreak of the Ionian revolt (499 BCE). It is quite probable that the creator of the map of Aristagoras drew on the geographical knowledge developed by Anaximander and Hecataeus. In Herodotus'

<sup>25</sup> For the text see Meiggs / Lewis, 1969: 12–13; for a commentary, see Struffolino, 2018: 7–17.

<sup>26</sup> See Agut-Labordère, 2012: 294–296, 298–302.

<sup>27</sup> Pirozzi, 2017: 145–169.

<sup>28</sup> See *Hekataios of Miletos*, BNJ 1 F 166.

<sup>29</sup> *Hekataios of Miletos*, BNJ 1 F 281

<sup>30</sup> See Branscome, 2010: 6–7.

account of the meeting with the Spartan king, Aristagoras does not present the Persian empire to its full extent but rather he adopts a west-to-east direction by showing to Cleomenes only the territories from the Ionian coast to the city of Susa. From Aristagoras' description, one gets the impression that Susa constitutes the eastern border of the Persian empire. Yet we have seen that Ionian geographers knew that Persian possessions were much more extensive, and Herodotus himself describes the easternmost territories in Central Asia as places to which defeated enemies could be banished at the edge of the known world.<sup>31</sup> Aristagoras omits these data just as he omits to say at first that the journey from Ionia to Susa takes 3 months because he wants to convince the Spartans that their potential campaign against the Persians will not take too much time in order to be successfully accomplished. However, this image of Susa as a city located at the eastern border of the Achaemenid Empire also corresponds to a geopolitical and diplomatic perception. In fact, Susa, according to the Greek perspective, is the place where the great king stays most often and where his treasuries are located.<sup>32</sup> In Herodotus and other authors, we also find several accounts of Greek ambassadors having Susa as their final destination:

- 511 BCE Histiaeus of Miletus (Hdt V.23–25)
- 477 BCE the Spartan Sperthias and Boulis (Hdt VII.134)
- 464 BCE the Athenian Callias son of Hipponicus (Hdt VI.151) and the Argivian delegation as well.<sup>33</sup>
- 450/49 BCE second mission of Callias to Susa (Diod. XII.4.5)
- 437/6 BCE the Athenian Diotimus, son of Strombichus (Strabo I.3.1)

Among other things, the latter case is of particular interest for our knowledge of ancient mobility as Strabo has preserved the itinerary followed by the Athenian embassy to Susa. Building on the data provided by Strabo, it is possible to conclude that Diotimus and his entourage landed in Cilicia and reached the Euphrates overland. Then they sailed from Thapsacus to reach lower Mesopotamia and from there reach Susa through the available network of navigable canals.<sup>34</sup>

From the Greek perspective, the Persian Wars and the importance of Susa as a final destination for diplomatic missions probably helped to reorient the myth of the hero Memnon. Indeed, it is from Aeschylus and Herodotus onward that the hero originally hailing from a land at the far corners of the known world such as

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<sup>31</sup> See for example Hdt IV.200–204; VI.9.4.

<sup>32</sup> Branscome, 2010: 16–17. The centrality of Susa in the Greek perception of the Persian world may also be assessed when we observe that they used the local toponym to name Susa, but they always ignored that of Persepolis, which is a generic compound meaning “city of the Persians”.

<sup>33</sup> See also Diodorus XII.4.5, who attests to a second mission of Callias to Susa in 450/49 and Aristodemus *FGrHist* 104 f 13; *Suida* s.v. Kallias 214 (A).

<sup>34</sup> See Briant, 2002: 382–383.

Ethiopia is given a new homeland, namely Susa.<sup>35</sup> While originally Memnon was the son of Aurora and Tithon, was born in Ethiopia and was king of the Ethiopians, in the fragments of the lost *Memnon* of Aeschylus (Strabo XV.3.3) the hero's mother is called Cissia, a name identical to the region in which Susa is located. That we are dealing with a reference to Susa seems clear from two other passages in the *Persians* in which the adjective κίσσιος, "from Cissia", is associated with Susa and the Persian world (*Pers.* 7 and 120). Herodotus (III.89) for his part notes that Susa and Cissia form a single administrative unit, but even more specifically says that the fortress of Susa is called "Memnonion" and that Susa is the city called "Memnonia" (V.53, V.54, cf. VII.151). Later, Strabo will report that the foundation of Susa is attributed to Tithon father of Memnon, the acropolis was called "Memnonion", and the inhabitants of Susa were also called "Cissians" (XV.3.2).

What conclusions can we draw from this brief journey? In general, the perception of Near Eastern empires is marked by an exoticist and paradoxographical approach. Those places are located at the farthest edges of the known world, and only their "capitals" are perceived as religious centers or places where incredible wealth is hoarded. It is the world of Eldorado. In some cases, the definition of the boundaries between the Greek world and a Near Eastern empire is modeled through the filter of mythological elaboration, as with Mopsus and Memnon. In fact, elements of local traditions appear to be reworked in order to become part of a Greek narrative about a given area (e.g. Cilicia, Susa). The Greek geographical view of the Achaemenid Empire in the Archaic and Classical periods provides us with an interesting case study. Two levels of space perception are detectable: on the one hand, a "scientific" geographical image based on the works of professional geographers. On the other hand, we may detect a "geopolitical" perception of the Persian empire according to which it is located at the eastern limits of the known world, a perception that is justified by the fact that the city of Susa is pictured as the seat of the king, the location of the royal treasury, and the final destination of diplomatic missions from the Greek world to Persia. In addition, Susa's origins are re-shaped and made the object of Hellenic appropriation through the myth of Memnon. This is also the operation that Hecataeus had performed with Egyptian history by reconnecting the Egyptian past and world to the history of the Greeks.<sup>36</sup>

### Abbreviations

*BNJ*: Brill's New Jacoby <https://scholarlyeditions.brill.com/bnjo/>

FGrHist: Jacoby, F., 1923–1958: *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*. Berlin / Leiden.

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<sup>35</sup> Potts, 2017: 15–35.

<sup>36</sup> Burstein 2009, 133–146.

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# Alcune considerazioni sull'iscrizione luvio-geroglifica TELL AHMAR 2 e sull'episodio erodoteo di Gige e Candaule

I *verba videndi* e le connotazioni etico-sociali della  
vergogna connessa alla nudità\*

Claudia Posani

## Abstract

A specific curse formula occurs in the hieroglyphic Luwian inscription TELL AHMAR 2 §16. This formula is a protasis of an if clause and it deals with “looking at (the king’s) wife as (if she were) a concubine”. Such an expression is unparalleled within the Iron age Luwian *corpus*. As it often happens with regard to hieroglyphic Luwian texts, the translation of this formula is at some extent tentative. Nevertheless, the aforementioned meaning can be considered fairly reliable: as such, the whole expression is worth being in-depth analysed.

In fact, the underlying imagery seems to present close analogies with the famous Herodotus’ tale of Gyges and Candaules. In both cases the historical framework is an interdynastic conflict involving a serious threat to the kingdom. In both cases the usurper will seek a divine legitimation.

A special investigation is devoted in this paper to the use of *verba videndi* both in the Luwian text and in the Herodotean passage. The relevant considerations enable me to reflect on the concepts of nakedness and shame. According to Herodotus, nakedness seems to play an interesting role in differentiating the Greeks from the Lydians (at least male nakedness, which for the Greeks is not a taboo, while for the barbarians it is). Being seen naked is therefore analysed as an aspect of the broader topic of shame, which represents a very significant theme of the archaic Greek culture. The topic is therefore explored wondering if social shame might be considered an element of boundary and separation, or a transboundary and transcultural aspect.

## 1. L'iscrizione TELL AHMAR 2

L'iscrizione luvio-geroglifica TELL AHMAR 2 proviene dal piccolo stato siro-anatolico di Masuwari, la cui capitale Til-Barsip, l'odierna Tell Ahmar, sorgeva sulla sponda orientale dell'Eufrate, una ventina di chilometri più a valle della città

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di Karkemish, a sua volta capitale dell'omonimo regno.

A Tell Ahmar sono state rinvenute alcune iscrizioni redatte in luvio geroglifico, databili per lo più alla fine del X o alla prima parte del IX secolo a.C. circa. Da un punto di vista storico, queste iscrizioni testimoniano l'esistenza di una dinastia che regnò a Til-Barsip per circa un secolo in un periodo precedente l'occupazione aramaica della città instaurata da Ahuni, un capo tribale arameo, o da un suo successore. La conquista della città da parte del re assiro Salmanassar III, attestata in fonti assire, avvenne durante la dominazione di tale Ahuni ed è attribuibile con certezza all'anno 856 a.C. (in quest'occasione il sovrano assiro rinominò la città Kar-Salmanassar, "fondaco di Salmanassar"). Questa data costituisce quindi un sicuro *terminus ante quem* per l'attribuzione cronologica delle iscrizioni in luvio geroglifico.

Il monumento che reca l'iscrizione TELL AHMAR 2 è un'ampia stele; il suo scadente stato di conservazione rende difficile la lettura di una parte consistente del *verso*, mentre sul *recto* è presente la raffigurazione di Tarhunzas, il dio della Tempesta, rivolto verso destra, con elmo dotato di corna. Il dio regge con la mano sinistra, davanti a sé, il fulmine a tridente, con la destra, sollevata dietro di sé, l'ascia. L'immagine di un sole alato sovrasta la sua figura.

L'iscrizione contiene la dedica della stele stessa al dio della Tempesta da parte di Hamiyatas, che si definisce sovrano di Masuwari. Hamiyatas era il secondo esponente di una dinastia che vide succedersi tre sovrani, che si trasmisero il potere per via ereditaria. La dinastia era salita al trono in maniera illegittima, usurpando il trono del precedente sovrano. Il figlio di Hamiyatas, poi, venne spodestato da un personaggio non meglio noto che si definisce "figlio di Ariyahinas", il quale restituì il regno alla precedente dinastia.

Il testo dell'iscrizione è purtroppo molto lacunoso. Dopo il nome e le titolature, una sezione del testo è dedicata ad illustrare la preferenza divina accordata al sovrano. Sempre in contesto lacunoso l'iscrizione sembra poi fare riferimento alla dedica della stele; viene quindi descritto l'insediamento del paese di Ana(ita), in riferimento, probabilmente, alla realizzazione di alcuni distretti territoriali.<sup>1</sup> Dopo una lacuna ricorre una prima serie di formule protettive, seguita da un'ulteriore lacuna e da un riferimento al dio della Tempesta del Cielo; un'altra maledizione, ancora in contesto lacunoso, costituisce l'ultima parte conservata dell'iscrizione.

## 2. La maledizione al §16 e l'analogia con l'episodio di Gige e Candaule (Hdt Hist. I, 8–12)<sup>2</sup>

La prima serie di maledizioni (§§12–19), in parte lacunosa, è volta a proteggere il nome del sovrano, la sua persona, suo figlio, sua moglie, suo fratello e il figlio

<sup>1</sup> Per una discussione sull'ipotesi che Ana (o Anaita) rappresenti un luogo ultraterreno di pace eterna cfr. Bunnens, 2006: 95–96.

<sup>2</sup> Edizione Asheri, 1991.



del fratello. Particolarmente rilevante ai fini della presente indagine è la formula che ricorre al §16:

§16 rr.7–8 [NEG<sub>2</sub>]-a-pa-wa/i-ti \*a-mi-i-na FEMINA-ti-i-na |LI-  
TUUS-PA-la-ni-ia|-i |(FEMINA.FEMINA)á-ma-na-  
sa<sub>5</sub>+ra/i-i-na  
§16 o guarderà (?) mia moglie (come) una sua concubina (?)

Questa formula è un *unicum* nel panorama delle iscrizioni luvio-geroglifiche, né essa ricorre, a mia conoscenza, in altri *Corpora* dell'Età del Ferro. La traduzione proposta è in accordo con quella offerta da Hawkins pur con qualche dubbio.<sup>3</sup> Un'altra possibile traduzione del passo è proposta da Yakubovich,<sup>4</sup> che interpreta la forma verbale come legata non al significato di “vedere” ma bensì a quello di “girare”, e quindi anche a quello di “trasformare”, offrendo la seguente resa del passo: “O trasformerà mia moglie in una concubina”.<sup>5</sup>

Qui di seguito ci si baserà sulla traduzione della forma verbale come legata al significato di “vedere”. Conseguentemente, si attribuirà alla formula “guardare la moglie del re come una concubina” il significato figurato di esercitare una forte minaccia nei confronti del regno. In ogni caso, anche qualora si ritenesse più attendibile attribuire al verbo il significato di “trasformare”, l'espressione manterrebbe comunque in larga parte quel significato figurato.

Assumendo per il verbo una traduzione legata al significato “vedere”, la formula presenta a mio avviso alcune affinità con l'episodio di Gige e Candaule, considerato nella sua versione erodotea (Hdt I, 8–12),<sup>6</sup> che qui di seguito sinteticamente si riassume.

Il re dei Lidi Candaule, che a quanto afferma Erodoto i Greci chiamavano “Mirsilo” (cioè Mursili, un nome di chiara origine ittita),<sup>7</sup> esorta Gige, il capo

<sup>3</sup> Hawkins, 2000: 228.

<sup>4</sup> Yakubovich eDiAna, ultimo accesso 2022–05–22.

<sup>5</sup> La resa in italiano è mia.

<sup>6</sup> Altre versioni della vicenda di Gige e Candaule si trovano in Platone (*Repubblica* II, 359d–360a), in Nicolao di Damasco (*FGrHist* 90F47: cfr. Pedley, 1972: 16 n. 35) ed in Plutarco (*Quaestiones Graecae* 45 [302A]: cfr. Pedley, 1972: 7 n. 4). Il racconto è stato poi ricordato e ripreso da diversi autori antichi e moderni. Per le riprese moderne cfr. Lombardi, 2021.

<sup>7</sup> A parere di Evans, per quanto il nome dell'ultimo esponente della dinastia degli Eraclidi molto probabilmente fosse “Myrsilos”, Erodoto avrebbe preferito attribuirgli il nome “Candaule” perché quest'ultimo, all'orecchio del pubblico greco del V secolo a.C., sarebbe suonato come un nome autenticamente lidio, mentre “Myrsilos” poteva sembrare un nome di origine greca. Secondo lo studioso, deve essere senz'altro esistita presso i Greci orientali una tradizione in cui Candaule era chiamato “Myrsilos”, ma non possiamo dire con certezza che la narrazione erodotea rifletta tale tradizione. La precisazione contenuta nel passo di Erodoto (“Candaule, che i Greci chiamano Myrsilo”) implica comunque che lo storico greco considerasse autenticamente lidia la sua fonte (Evans, 1985: 231–

della sua guardia armata, a guardare di nascosto la propria moglie nuda affinché si convinca appieno della sua straordinaria bellezza. Nonostante la riluttanza di Gige, Candaule alla fine lo convince. La donna, dopo essersi denudata, scorge però Gige ma fa finta di nulla; il giorno successivo, tuttavia, lo convoca e lo costringe ad una scelta: o ucciderà Candaule e avrà lei e il regno, oppure dovrà morire subito, per averla contemplata nuda e aver fatto cose non lecite. Gige sceglie di sopravvivere e si impadronisce del regno. Riceve poi la legittimazione anche da parte dell'oracolo di Delfi (Hdt I, 13).

Come si accennava, anche nel testo luvio, considerato il contesto di formule protettive in cui è inserita, l'espressione "guardare la moglie del re come una concubina" sembra chiaramente sottintendere una minaccia al regno.

Come spesso accade nei testi in luvio geroglifico dell'Età del Ferro, la maledizione è costituita da un periodo ipotetico formato da una serie di protasi atte ad illustrare tutti i possibili gesti empì e sanzionabili e da un'apodosi conclusiva cui è delegata la rappresentazione della punizione divina. Nel caso specifico, la formula in esame è una delle protasi del periodo ipotetico interessato, e come tutte le altre all'interno del medesimo periodo è connessa con il tema dell'usurpazione del potere. Innanzitutto ricorre al §12 la formula "cancellare il nome": come è noto, alla sopravvivenza del nome era legata la sopravvivenza eterna del sovrano anche dopo la sua morte. Tale formula è poi seguita al §13 dall'espressione "desiderare il male": come è stato proposto in un lavoro dedicato all'analisi di un'al-

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232). A parere di Lanfranchi, invece, "Myrsilos" rappresenta il patronimico in lingua epicorica dell'ultimo re eraclide (Lanfranchi, 2006: 337–340).

Anche l'origine del nome stesso "Candaule" è stata ampiamente dibattuta (cfr. Hawkins, 2013 per una dettagliata rassegna delle ipotesi via via formulate). L'ipotesi più accreditata oggi è quella secondo cui esso deriva dal luvio *hantawati-*, licio *xñtawati-*, "re": Lanfranchi, 2006: 340–353 con ulteriore bibliografia; Hawkins, 2013: 181; Oettinger, 2021: 119 e, per un'analisi etimologica, 121–122 nota 20. Si noti inoltre che la possibile derivazione dell'etnonimo Λυδός dal toponimo *Luwīya* (implicante un passaggio *-y- > -d-*) è una questione dibattuta. Pur nell'incertezza relativa a questa etimologia, che si riflette anche sulle ipotesi relative all'epoca, alla collocazione geografica ed alle modalità del contatto tra Lidi e Luvi, proprio "Candaule" è uno dei nomi propri lidi di origine luvia che testimoniano comunque tale contatto: cfr. Yakubovich, 2008: 130.

Oettinger indaga inoltre anche l'origine del nome *Kuka-*, "Gige": lo studioso riconduce l'etimologia di tale nome proprio al PIE *\*h<sub>2</sub>auh<sub>2</sub>o-* che si ritrova anche nell'ittita *huhha-*, "nonno", nel luvio *hūha-* e nel licio *xuga-* (Oettinger, 2021: 119–120).

Infine, ricordiamo che Dale, 2020 postula l'esistenza di un'iscrizione dedicatoria lidia ad opera, probabilmente, di Aliatte, dietro la definizione di "Γυγάδας", termine con cui sono designati dagli abitanti di Delfi i doni votivi di oro e di argento dedicati all'oracolo di Delfi da Gige (Hdt I, 14.3). A parere di Dale Γυγάδας rappresenterebbe la traduzione in greco (o un calco) di *\*kukalis*, un patronimico lidio che indicherebbe un figlio o, meglio, un discendente di Gige. Tale patronimico avrebbe designato il dedicante dell'iscrizione.

tra iscrizione proveniente dal medesimo regno, TELL AHMAR 1,<sup>8</sup> questa formula sembra essere connessa ad una sottrazione di beni o benefici da parte di una dinastia alla dinastia avversaria. Segue poi la formula al §16, oggetto della presente indagine, con l'allusione al *guardare* la moglie del re *come* una concubina o al *trasformare* la moglie del re *in* una concubina. Spesso le maledizioni, in questi testi, presentano i possibili misfatti nella forma della *climax*, e anche in questo caso si può forse cogliere una scala di gravità delle colpe elencate. Il testo proporrebbe quindi una serie di anatemi contro chi minacciasse la stabilità del regno.

In relazione ad un'interpretazione del §16 come formula di minaccia al regno si sviluppano nel prosieguo di questo paragrafo alcune osservazioni, a partire dalla voce verbale LITUUS-PA-la-ni-ia-i e dal sostantivo (FEMINA.FEMINA)á-ma-na-sas+ra/i-i-na. A proposito del verbo, viene messo in rilievo il rapporto tra la sfera semantica del vedere e la concezione del potere nella cultura di riferimento. A proposito del sostantivo, si è cercato di analizzare l'etimologia della parola, che tuttavia rimane ampiamente problematica.

### 2.1 Il verbo LITUUS-PA-la-ni-ia-i

La forma verbale LITUUS-PA-la-ni-ia-i viene tradotta come indicativo presente/futuro, III persona singolare del verbo /zal(l)aniya-/. La presenza del logogramma LITUUS,<sup>9</sup> che denota verbi di percezione e del “vedere” (oltre che del “conoscere”), e un paio di occorrenze accostabili alla presente che ricorrono in altre iscrizioni,<sup>10</sup> consentono di ritenere molto attendibile l'interpretazione della sua sfera semantica come quella di “guardare”.<sup>11</sup>

A proposito del logogramma LITUUS, il verbo (LITUUS)áza-<sup>12</sup> è attestato diffusamente nelle titolature reali che aprono le iscrizioni dei sovrani redatte in luvio geroglifico. Esso ricorre spesso nelle forme *masanati azamis* o (DEUS)X-ati *azamis*, tradizionalmente tradotte come “amato dagli dei / dal dio X”. A parere di Melchert<sup>13</sup> LITUUS)áza- è un verbo transitivo che copre il campo semantico del “vedere” e significherebbe “guardare benevolmente, favorire”. Ciò è evidente anche per il fatto che, nelle forme attestate, soggetti dell'azione sono sempre gli dei ed oggetto gli esseri umani. Sembra quindi che il favore divino in questo contesto culturale si eserciti nelle forme di uno sguardo benevolente. A questo proposito giova menzionare la formula ittita secondo cui gli dei guardano il re, la

<sup>8</sup> Posani, 2018.

<sup>9</sup> Posani, 2021: 48 n. 143; Payne, 2018: 103; Klock-Fontanille, 2011: 203–204.

<sup>10</sup> TELL AHMAR 1, §17 e AKSARAY, §6: cfr. Hawkins, 2000: 229 §16.

<sup>11</sup> Come si diceva, un'altra possibile traduzione del verbo è “girare / trasformare”: Yakubovich eDiAna, ultimo accesso 2022–05–22.

<sup>12</sup> Gerard, 2004.

<sup>13</sup> Comunicazione personale; cfr. anche Rieken, 2019: 314–315. Per un approfondimento su LITUUS come determinativo di verbi di “vedere” cfr. Melchert, 2010.

regina ed il paese “con occhi benevolenti”.<sup>14</sup>

Inoltre, è generalmente accettata l’interpretazione secondo cui il segno geroglifico DEUS (L.360) rappresenterebbe in forma stilizzata un occhio, mentre il segno SOL (L.191), che indica la divinità solare, rappresenterebbe un triplo occhio.<sup>15</sup> Oltre a ciò, la documentazione ittita testimonia che il re ideale ha uno sguardo d’aquila.<sup>16</sup>

Ancora, in luvio cuneiforme sono attestati il verbo *manā-* “vedere” e la sua forma reduplicata, *mimma-*, “guardare, riconoscere”,<sup>17</sup> che è parallela all’ittita *ganes(s)-*, *kanes(s)-* usato spesso nel senso positivo di “riconoscere, favorire”.<sup>18</sup> Ricordiamo inoltre il luvio cuneiforme *māmmanna-* “guardare con favore”,<sup>19</sup> attestato anche in ittita nella forma *mamanna-* preceduta da segno marcante parola luvia.<sup>20</sup> Insomma a livello di significato il verbo *mimma-*, attestato in luvio cuneiforme, sembra accostabile al geroglifico (LITUUS)*áza*, il favore divino essendo a quanto pare manifestato da uno sguardo benevolente.

A quanto detto aggiungerei anche un riferimento all’iscrizione KARKAMIŠ A21 §11, in cui è possibile riconoscere OCULUS nel segno, non chiaro, che precede il verbo *tiyari(ya)-* “guardare/sorvegliare/proteggere” (con omissione di *ra/i*), in un contesto di benevolenza della dea Kubaba nei confronti del re. Tale lettura è peraltro confermata anche dall’occorrenza di (OCULUS)*ti-i+á-ta* nel Frammento 3<sup>21</sup> associato al medesimo testo.

Vi è inoltre un possibile legame fra lo stesso logogramma LITUUS, così definito per la sua somiglianza con l’attributo regale del bastone ricurvo, ed il logogramma OCULUS. Solo per fare qualche esempio riguardante il nome dell’autore dell’iscrizione KARATEPE 1 (Azatiwadas), ai §§28 e 49 del testo del Portale sud (Ho), la forma (OCULUS)*áza-* compare al posto del consueto (LITUUS)*áza-* presente nel testo del Portale nord (Hu); al §28, inoltre, il segno

LITUUS è rappresentato come uno scettro fatto a forma di occhio (cfr. fig. 1).



Fig. 1. Da Çambel, 1999: plate 68 (particolare).

<sup>14</sup> Cfr. CHD s.v. *šakui-* 1 d 5' a'; 1 d 5' e. 2' *aššu-*.

<sup>15</sup> Laroche, 1983: 311–312.

<sup>16</sup> Cfr. CHD s.v. *šakui-* 1 a 7' b.

<sup>17</sup> Melchert, 1993 s.v. *mimma-*; cfr. anche Kloekhorst, 2008 s.v. *manā-* e, per *mimma-*, s.v. *mimmami-*, *memmami-* (Luwianism).

<sup>18</sup> Puhvel, 1997 s.v. *ganes(s)-*, *kanes(s)-*.

<sup>19</sup> Melchert, 1993 s.v. *māmmanna-*.

<sup>20</sup> Kloekhorst, 2008 s.v. *mamanna-*.

<sup>21</sup> Hawkins, 2000: 163 Frag. 3.

Una rappresentazione grafica del segno molto simile a quest'ultima si trova anche nell'iscrizione KARAHÖYÜK §3.<sup>22</sup>

La somiglianza tra i segni LITUUS ed OCULUS è tale che Oreshko<sup>23</sup> propone di trascrivere LITUUS come OCULUS<sub>2</sub>.

Se dunque sussiste nella cultura luvia dell'Età del Ferro uno stretto legame tra il guardare e l'aver potere, acquista maggior forza l'idea che guardare la moglie di un re come una concubina possa essere inteso come una minaccia al regno.

Giova inoltre citare alcuni passaggi delle lettere di ASSUR, documenti redatti in luvio geroglifico, risalenti alla fine dell'VIII secolo a.C. circa. Queste missive rappresentano una rara testimonianza di corrispondenza privata tra uomini d'affari; sono state rinvenute nella città sacra assira di Assur dove probabilmente furono portate come bottino di guerra dopo la conquista di qualche potentato siro-anatolico, forse la stessa Karkemish. La comprensione di questi testi è resa estremamente difficile dalla presenza di numerose parole di significato ignoto e dagli aspetti formali totalmente diversi da quelli impiegati nella documentazione ufficiale. Tuttavia, in alcuni passi di queste lettere sembra che si faccia riferimento ad accordi pre-matrimoniali. In particolare, almeno un passaggio della lettera *f+g*<sup>24</sup> pare alludere al fatto che nessuno deve vedere la promessa sposa prima del futuro marito. Sebbene non vi sia totale accordo sulla connotazione sessuale del verbo *\*mana-*, “vedere”, impiegato in questo passo, è comunque evidente che nella cultura che ha prodotto questi testi vedere la promessa sposa di qualcun altro fosse quantomeno problematico: di conseguenza, si può ragionevolmente dedurre che per un uomo vedere la moglie di un altro nuda, come accade nel resoconto erodoteo, sarebbe stato ugualmente disdicevole.

## 2.2 Il sostantivo (FEMINA.FEMINA)*á-ma-na-sa<sub>5</sub>+ra/i-i-na*

Questo sostantivo pone ulteriori problemi: le uniche certezze filologiche risiedono infatti nel determinativo che indica il genere femminile (FEMINA.FEMINA) e nel suffisso *-s(a)ra/i*, che è un suffisso femminile, mentre il significato di “concubina, prostituta” viene dedotto principalmente dal contesto. La parola luvia è */amanasr(i)-/*.<sup>25</sup>

La parola viene analizzata da A. H. Bauer<sup>26</sup> come nome composto, formato da *\*/aman<sup>o</sup>/* e *\*/asr(i)-/*: mentre per il secondo elemento il significato di “donna” è accertato, il primo elemento non risulta attestato in altri nomi composti in luvio

<sup>22</sup> Payne, 2017: 226 Table 4, (A).

<sup>23</sup> A parere di Oreshko il segno L.378 LITUUS rappresenta una forma in corsivo del segno L.25 OCULUS e fa riferimento alla sfera delle emozioni: Oreshko, 2020: 364–366; 2016: 7 nota 18.

<sup>24</sup> f3 §17 *|wa/i-na |ni-i |REL-sà-ha LITUUS+na-ri+i-* “let no one see (*\*mana-*) her!” (Hawkins, 2000: 536).

<sup>25</sup> Yakubovich eDiAna, ultimo accesso 2022–05–22.

<sup>26</sup> Bauer eDiAna, ultimo accesso 2022–05–22.

geroglifico e la sua radice, pertanto, non è chiara. A parere di Bauer, potrebbe trattarsi di un prestito dal babilonese *āmānû* “chiacchierona, pettegola” (“talker, gossip” secondo CAD A2: 3), alludendo eufemisticamente ad una concubina o prostituta. Quest’ipotesi mi sembra però poco convincente, soprattutto perché contemplerebbe la presenza di una parola accadica in contesto luvio. Inoltre, anche sul piano semantico l’accostamento non mi sembra calzante. La studiosa riporta anche un’ipotesi formulata da I. Yakubovich (nella forma di un commento personale), secondo cui il primo elemento potrebbe derivare dall’aggettivo ugaritico *āmn*, “fedele”, (“faithful”, DUL A/I/U-K:69), in quanto una relazione non legale quale quella di concubinato si deve basare esclusivamente sulla fiducia.

Per parte mia, vorrei con grandissima cautela suggerire l’ipotesi, suggestiva, che tale parola possa significare “concubina” nel senso di “colei che non deve essere vista”, cioè “che non deve essere mostrata in pubblico” e quindi “che non deve essere riconosciuta”: in questo modo l’immagine di “vedere ciò che non deve essere visto”, cioè “riconosciuto”, applicata in senso figurato al potere, diverrebbe molto potente. Etimologicamente,<sup>27</sup> un’ipotesi molto teorica è che la parola possa essere un composto privativo di una forma derivata dalla radice indoeuropea per “vedere” (\**mneh<sub>2</sub>-*), cioè qualcosa come /a(:)mna(:)-/; ma quest’ipotesi è molto difficile da dimostrare. Infatti, in luvio non sembra esservi traccia del morfema negativo protoindoeuropeo (\*N-); ipotizzarne la presenza sarebbe molto problematico. Bisognerebbe inoltre supporre una lettura passiva della forma verbale (come avviene in “a-tomo”, “non divisibile”). E infine, -s(a)ra/i è chiaramente suffisso femminile in luvio, ma esso di solito segue dei nomi o delle radici nominali (un composto negativo indurrebbe peraltro ad aspettarsi una componente nominale). Al momento quindi si può solo ipotizzare un composto privativo (\**n-mn(h<sub>2</sub>)-o-*) dal significato di “non riconosciuta” o “non guardata con favore” con annesso il suffisso femminile -s(a)ra/i: solo a livello di possibilità, questo potrebbe aver prodotto il significato di “sfavorita, spregevole donna”, ma devo riconoscere che questa costruzione è molto ipotetica.

### 3. In cerca di legittimazione

Da ultimo, va notato il fatto che l’autore di TELL AHMAR 2, Hamiyatas, in altre due sue iscrizioni fa riferimento ad un profeta (*massanam(i)-*) del dio che gli riferisce dei messaggi della divinità nella forma del discorso diretto: TELL AHMAR 6 §§22–23 (in questo caso il “profeta” di Tarhunzas dell’Esercito è definito DEUS-*na-mi-i-sa*) e TELL AHMAR 5 §§11–12 (in cui il “profeta” di Tarhunzas di Aleppo è designato come CORNU+CAPUT-*mi-i-sa*).<sup>28</sup> Queste sono le uniche

<sup>27</sup> Ho discusso dell’analisi etimologica di questo significato con H. C. Melchert e A. Nussbaum, ai quali va il mio ringraziamento.

<sup>28</sup> L’insieme dei due logogrammi CORNU+CAPUT è reso oggi come PROPHETA: cfr. Yakubovich eDiAna, ultimo accesso 2022–05–22.

occorrenze di “profeti” nelle fonti luvio-geroglifiche.<sup>29</sup> Lo stretto legame con il dio della Tempesta che Hamiyatas proclama nei suoi testi è stato interpretato come un modo di assicurarsi quella legittimità che dinasticamente egli non possedeva. Orbene, anche il regno di Gige sarà legittimato solo dopo il responso dell'oracolo di Delfi (Hdt I, 13).

In entrambi i casi, infatti, il contesto storico è quello di un conflitto interdinastico. Il testo luvio è scritto da un sovrano di una dinastia illegittima il quale, da quanto si può desumere in particolare dall'iscrizione TELL AHMAR 1, manteneva comunque rapporti stretti con uno degli eredi legittimi (il “figlio di Ariyahinas”), cui probabilmente doveva per qualche motivo concedere dei favori. L'episodio di Gige e Candaule a sua volta spiega la fine della dinastia degli Eraclidi e il passaggio di potere, frutto di usurpazione e violenza, a quella dei Mermnadi.

#### 4. Analisi dei verba videndi e delle espressioni legate al vedere in Hdt I, 8–12

Si ritiene opportuno a questo punto esaminare attentamente anche il brano erodoteo (Hdt I, 8–12). L'episodio narrato dallo storico greco presenta una grande complessità di livelli semantici e narrativi, in riferimento a *folk motifs* ed a pratiche di *storytelling*, greche e non.<sup>30</sup> Esso è ricco di *verba videndi*, che qui elenco e corrodo di una specifica analisi.

##### ὄραω + composti di ὄραω + εἶδον: 6 volte.

3 volte soggetto è la regina:

1 passivo: la regina è vista da Gige:

- ὀφθεῖσσαν I, 9.1

2 attivi: la regina vede Gige:

- ὄψεται I, 9.3
- ἐπορᾷ I, 10.2

2 volte soggetto è Gige (attivo) ma oggetto non è la regina:

- ἴδης I, 11.2

<sup>29</sup> Prechel, 2008: in particolare 219–220.

<sup>30</sup> Cohen, 2004 individua in particolare tre motivi caratteristici della *folk narrative* nell'episodio erodoteo di Gige e Candaule: “*The boastful husband*”, “*The voyeur*” e “*The wronged wife bent on vengeance*”. È interessante che tali motivi siano squisitamente erodotei, in quanto essi non sono presenti nelle altre versioni dell'episodio di Gige e Candaule forniteci da autori antichi (Nicolao di Damasco, Platone e Plutarco). Il racconto di Erodoto combina motivi tratti dal mito con altri che appartengono alla storia del folklore e, man a mano che la storia si sviluppa, introduce elementi drammatici che avvicinano la figura di Gige a quella di un eroe tragico (il conflitto interiore, la costrizione, la scelta inevitabile). Il racconto in questione presenta quindi temi, quali l'immagine del despota orientale, le caratteristiche della tirannide ed una tensione tragica che informa la visione degli eventi storici che stanno alla base dell'intera narrazione storica di Erodoto.

- ἑώρα I, 11.4

1 volta passivo: soggetto generico (per un uomo è vergogna essere visto nudo):

- ὀφθῆναι I, 10.3

**θεάομαι: 5 volte.** Sempre usato con Gige come soggetto (o esplicito, o ricavabile dal contesto) e la regina come oggetto (o esplicito, o ricavabile dal contesto):<sup>31</sup>

- θεήσαι (I, 8.2)
- θεήσασθαι (I, 8.3)
- θεήσασθαι (I, 9.2)
- ἐθηεῖτο (I, 10.1)
- θεησάμενον (I, 11.3)

**σκοπέω: 1 volta.** Nel proverbio “che ognuno guardi le proprie cose” con connotazione intellettuale (ponderare, esaminare):

- σκοπέειν I, 8.4

Analizzando questi dati, si può osservare che:

- il verbo θεάομαι è usato con valore anche connotativo: la visione della donna da parte di Gige è presentata come “spettacolo” da fruire in primo luogo con la vista (θέα), come se Gige fosse uno “spettatore” (θεατής). Anche sul piano delle scelte semantiche il presente passo sembra quindi rimandare al mondo del teatro (θέατρον).<sup>32</sup> Lo “spettacolo” a cui assiste Gige assomiglia quindi ad una rappresentazione teatrale.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Cfr. Travis, 2000: 337.

<sup>32</sup> Aristotele nella *Poetica* individua l'ὄψις come uno degli elementi fondamentali della tragedia: Arist. *Poetica* 50<sup>d</sup>, 9 e *passim* (edizione Kassel, 1965).

<sup>33</sup> Cfr. Chiasson, 2003: 19–24. Evans, 1985: 229 affronta la questione delle fonti di Erodoto e di Nicolao di Damasco, e sottolinea come quest'ultimo possa aver attinto a Xanto di Lidia ed essersi basato su fonti più autentiche di quelle di Erodoto (il tema è invero estremamente complesso: cfr. Gazzano, 2009: 346–350). La questione delle fonti e della loro datazione è stata oggetto di ampio dibattito, in particolare da quando è stato pubblicato il Papiro di Ossirinco XXIII 2382 (Lobel, 1949, 207–216), un testo letterario in tre colonne. La seconda di esse reca 16 trimetri giambici che sembrano con ogni verosimiglianza appartenere ad un discorso in cui sono menzionati sia Gige che Candaule; inoltre, la moglie di Candaule sembra rivolgersi ad un coro: il testo è stato con largo consenso identificato come un frammento di tragedia, confermando quello che gli studiosi da tempo sospettavano, e cioè che il *logos* di Creso potesse ben rappresentare una trilogia tragica. Se la tragedia fosse più antica dello scritto erodoteo ed Erodoto l'abbia utilizzata come sua fonte, o se l'autore della tragedia fosse più tardo di Erodoto ed abbia a sua volta attinto alla narrazione contenuta nelle *Historiae* (tesi ritenuta più probabile da Chiasson, 2003) è una questione aperta. Per un'ampia discussione sui significati dell'atto di “vedere” nei versi del Papiro di Ossirinco 2382 e nell'episodio erodoteo si veda Travis, 2000.



- il verbo ὀράω è usato tre volte per definire l'azione del “vedere” dal punto di vista della donna. La regina “è vista” da Gige e la regina “vede” Gige. Anche nell'occorrenza (una volta) in cui il soggetto è generico, il verbo indica l'azione dell'essere visto nudo da parte di un uomo, ma il significato della scena è analogo: afferma Erodoto che presso i barbari “È molto vergognoso, anche per un uomo, essere visto nudo” (Hdt I, 10.3), proprio come lo è per la donna. Quando invece il soggetto di ὀράω è Gige (2 volte), il significato perde l'accezione strettamente legata al “vedere” la donna: in un caso l'oggetto è “ciò che non devi vedere”, nell'altro il verbo significa “capire, comprendere”, ed il suo oggetto è una proposizione completiva. Il verbo ὀράω sembra quindi identificare l'azione del “vedere” senza la componente “spettacolare”, teatrale, che caratterizza l'azione quando a compierla è Gige (θεάομαι), ma sembra collegarsi di più con l'etimologia (ὄπ-, da cui deriva anche il termine ὄφθαλμός, “occhio”) e con la semplice percezione sensoriale.

Quest'analisi consente a mio avviso di evidenziare come ὀράω sembri denotare un'azione visiva non volontaria, mentre θεάομαι presupponga volontarietà e quasi ammirazione: Gige quindi guarda proprio volontariamente la regina.

Nel brano sono inoltre citati tre proverbi: tutti tre hanno a che fare con il vedere.

- 1) “Le orecchie sono più infide degli occhi”<sup>34</sup> (Hdt I, 8.2): quindi vedere è più importante che ascoltare; questo peraltro è emblema del metodo erodoteo stesso.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Per un approfondimento su parola e immagine nella cultura della Grecia antica, a partire anche dal presente passo di Erodoto, cfr. Spina, 2015.

<sup>35</sup> Come sottolineato da Asheri, Erodoto stesso (II, 99.1) pone l'ἱστορίη accanto alla conoscenza diretta (ὄψις) e al ragionamento, o opinione, (γνώμη) tra gli strumenti metodologicamente superiori alla semplice raccolta di “dicerie” (τὰ λεγόμενα) di cui non si assume alcuna responsabilità (Asheri, 1991: XVII–XVIII). L'*historiē* erodotea ha quindi lo scopo di avvicinarsi ad una conoscenza che è principalmente quella della vista. L'intero episodio di Gige e Candaule, essendo basato sul motivo della “vista” come strumento di conoscenza, contiene una riflessione sul metodo dello storico. Anche se pronunciate da un personaggio all'interno del racconto, le parole di Candaule possono infatti essere lette in termini di meta-*historiē*, perché è proprio l'ὄψις a garantire il valore di prova (Hartog, 1992: 222–224). L'autopsia erodotea, inoltre, si iscrive perfettamente nel contesto culturale indoeuropeo. *Histōr* infatti era, nel mondo indoeuropeo, il testimone, cioè colui che sapeva in quanto aveva visto. Il valore della radice *wid* è condiviso dal greco con altre lingue indoeuropee (Benveniste, 1981: 414; Hartog, 1992: 223).

Sul rapporto tra l'atto del vedere e l'*historiē*, in riferimento all'episodio di Gige e Candaule, si veda anche Travis, 2000. Nel corso dell'ampia discussione sul tema, l'autore pone in rilievo come il ruolo di *histōr*, nell'episodio di Erodoto, sia ricoperto da Gige. e come anche il lettore, man mano che il racconto procede, sia forzato, proprio come Gige, a “guardare” ciò che accade nella camera da letto reale e ad esporsi così al rischio di tra-

- 2) “Una donna, che si spoglia della veste, allo stesso tempo si spoglia del pudore” (Hdt I, 8.3); in questo proverbio il verbo “vedere” non è presente ma è in qualche modo implicito.
- 3) Il terzo proverbio prevede “Che ognuno guardi le proprie cose” (Hdt I, 8.4).

Oltre a questi tre proverbi, nel brano, come si è già detto, ricorre la constatazione che presso i Lidi, come presso quasi tutti i barbari,

- 4) “È molto vergognoso, anche per un uomo, essere visto nudo” (Hdt I, 10.3).

In riferimento, in particolare, al terzo proverbio, Candaule sbaglia perché, invece di tenere esclusivamente per sé il guardare la propria moglie, la fa guardare da chi non deve, così la perde e viene ucciso. A questo proposito ricordiamo, con Chiara Lombardi,<sup>36</sup> che in questa vicenda si assiste ad uno spostamento dell’idea del potere e del possesso dall’ambito politico a quello erotico.<sup>37</sup> Gige ha fatto cose non lecite (I, 8.4).<sup>38</sup> La moglie poi non grida di vergogna, come evidentemente c’era da aspettarsi, solo perché medita di vendicarsi.<sup>39</sup>

Erodoto, da etnografo, sottolinea come la nudità fosse motivo di grande vergogna per i Lidi e per i barbari, per i quali era un *nomos* evitare di guardare nudo

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sgredire, almeno nella fantasia, il *nomos* di “guardare le proprie cose”: l’atto di “guardare” diviene così metafora dell’universalità dell’*historiē*, che si pone a fondamento della tecnica narrativa così come del modo di apprendimento dell’insegnamento della storia stessa: Travis, 2000: 344, 348–349, 353.

<sup>36</sup> Lombardi, 2021: in particolare 141.

<sup>37</sup> Per un’interpretazione psicoanalitica dell’episodio di Gige e Candaule si veda Travis, 2000: 339 nota 18. Per una discussione sulla retorica del maschile/femminile in Erodoto cfr. Gray, 1995. L’autrice argomenta come diversi episodi erodotei rappresentino, oltre all’implicita alterità del modello regale barbarico rispetto a quello democratico greco, un’ulteriore alterità, interna al modello orientale, delle figure reali rispetto a quelle dei personaggi sottoposti, di estrazione non reale. Queste polarità rappresenterebbero il vero fulcro della narrazione erodotea, molto più dell’apparente polarità maschile/femminile.

<sup>38</sup> Per i barbari il tabù della nudità rappresenta quindi un vincolo umano che può spingere a scelte estreme. Le scelte che Gige deve compiere nel corso della vicenda sono state spesso paragonate alle scelte tragiche dei personaggi eschilei (Chiasson, 2003: in particolare 19–24). Tuttavia, i personaggi di Eschilo sono costretti a compiere scelte dal volere della divinità (Lesky, 1966), mentre Gige è obbligato alle scelte dalla sottomissione ad altri esseri umani (Chiasson, 2003: 22–24). Infatti, Gige deve prima ubbidire al suo re, poi alla regina, che lo minaccia in quanto egli ha violato una norma socialmente non trasgredibile.

<sup>39</sup> Come sottolineato da Travis, l’antropologia erodotea sul tema della nudità fornisce la ragione per accedere al mondo interiore della regina, in cui l’*aidōs*, inteso come “pudore”, menzionato da Gige si trasforma in *aischýnē*, la “vergogna” nel senso di “disonore”, che costituisce il motivo della sua vendetta: Travis, 2000: 341. Su *nomos* e *aidōs* nell’episodio di Gige e Candaule si veda anche Cohen, 2004: 61–63, 67 con ulteriore bibliografia.

anche un uomo: per i Greci, evidentemente, non era così. In questo si può quindi individuare una discriminante.

### 5. Nudità e vergogna

Prendendo in esame i precedenti anatolici sul tema della vergogna connessa alla nudità,<sup>40</sup> ricordiamo che nel testo ittita KUB XIII 4 Vo III 31–34 (= CTH 264, Istruzioni al personale templare) trasportare acqua al tempio nudi è previsto come pena alternativa alla pena capitale. Anche in KBo III 34 Ro II 33–35 (= CTH 8, Cronaca di palazzo) attingere acqua nudi rappresenta un'umiliante punizione per chi non si dimostrasse abbastanza abile da poter entrare a far parte della milizia del re. Lo stesso aspetto umiliante si può cogliere nel testo di Madduwatta (CTH 147). Inoltre a parere di Melchert<sup>41</sup> gli Ittiti, che non portavano biancheria intima, facevano il gesto di alzare la veste in segno di maledizione. Quindi la nudità, anche nella cultura ittita, aveva alcune connotazioni molto forti. E l'aspetto umiliante di tale condizione rende esplicita la sua connotazione in termini di vergogna sociale.

### 6. Conclusione

Come è noto, l'episodio erodoteo di Gige e Candaule è estremamente ricco di livelli semantici e narrativi. In esso si possono ravvisare alcuni motivi riconducibili al mito ed altri tipici del *folktale*, sapientemente organizzati da Erodoto che, man a mano che gli eventi si sviluppano, introduce anche elementi che conferiscono tensione tragica alla sua narrazione.<sup>42</sup> Alcuni *folk motifs*, come ad esempio quello del re barbaro che si fa vanto della bellezza della moglie, sembrano autenticamente orientali.<sup>43</sup>

Nell'ambito degli studi volti ad investigare i rapporti tra le fonti orientali e la narrazione erodotea, in questo studio si è approfondito come l'episodio di Gige e Candaule sembri recepire la metafora orientale del guardare la moglie di un sovrano come insidia al suo potere. In questa metafora il tema della vista è centrale. Naturalmente, non vi è sufficiente evidenza documentaria per provare che lo sto-

<sup>40</sup> De Martino, 1985.

<sup>41</sup> Melchert, 1983: 141–143.

<sup>42</sup> Cohen, 2004.

<sup>43</sup> In relazione al motivo, proprio della *folk narrative*, del “boastful husband”, Cohen evidenzia l'analogia tra l'episodio erodoteo di Gige e Candaule e quello biblico riguardante il re Persiano Assuero e sua moglie Vashti, narrato nel libro biblico di Esther (1, 10–12) e successivamente ampliato nel *Second Targum*. A parere di Cohen non vi è influenza del racconto greco su quello biblico, bensì entrambi attingerebbero ad un medesimo serbatoio di motivi narrativi in cui i Persiani sono tratteggiati secondo stereotipi convenzionali quali il voyeurismo, gli eccessi e la licenziosità. Sebbene l'episodio di Gige e Candaule sia ambientato in Lidia, il fatto che abbia luogo presso la corte di una nazione che aveva dominato i Greci dell'Asia Minore avrebbe indotto Erodoto ad impiegare motivi di *storytelling* propri di popoli assoggettati dai Persiani: Cohen, 2004: 58–60, 66–67.

rico greco abbia potuto attingere ad una specifica tradizione di matrice orientale, o più precisamente luvia, né per ipotizzare quando o attraverso quali vie possa essere venuto in contatto con tali fonti orientali. Di certo, però, il passo erodoteo testimonia con buona probabilità un elemento di contatto tra i Lidi e altre culture orientali.<sup>44</sup>

Sicuramente, “guardare (nuda) la moglie del re” sia nel passo di Erodoto che nell’iscrizione TELL AHMAR 2 equivale a rovesciare il potere e assumere il regno. Nell’episodio di Gige e Candaule si assiste ad un utilizzo molto sapiente dei verbi di “vedere”. L’impiego insistito di *θεάομαι*, in riferimento a Gige, a mio avviso è volto a denotare anche volontarietà dell’azione. Questo tratto risulta coerente con l’intero quadro di usurpazione che da tale sguardo si genera. Infatti, come si è osservato, il contesto storico che fa da sfondo ad entrambi i passi in cui la metafora viene impiegata è quello di un conflitto inter-dinastico e di un passaggio di potere violento da una dinastia all’altra: sia Hamiyatas che Gige necessitano infatti di legittimazione.

Nel passo erodoteo assume poi grande rilievo il tema della nudità. L’analisi dell’episodio di Gige e Candaule, tuttavia, fa emergere una differenza tra i Lidi, o generalmente i barbari/orientali, e i Greci nel modo di guardare alla nudità maschile. Evidentemente, per i Greci l’uomo poteva essere visto nudo, almeno nei giochi, mentre per i barbari essere visti nudi sembra rimanere elemento di forte vergogna.<sup>45</sup> Questa attitudine verso la nudità, anche maschile, propria del mondo lidio/orientale si sviluppa sulla scorta, probabilmente, del medesimo *background* culturale che si può scorgere dietro le scarse testimonianze ittite, in cui la nudità era fortemente connotata in termini di vergogna sociale.

Quanto alla nudità femminile, anche per un pubblico di Greci il fatto di vedere la moglie di un altro nuda doveva essere molto disdicevole. Infatti, il motto sulla donna che, spogliandosi della veste, si spoglia anche del pudore (*aidōs*) è ricondotto da Diogene Laerzio (*Vitae Philosophorum* VIII, 43) a Theano, moglie o allieva di Pitagora, quindi alle origini della sapienza greca stessa.

La connotazione di vergogna connessa alla nudità femminile è quindi condivisa dalle due culture. Forse non è un caso, tuttavia, che nel testo erodoteo si assista ad un’oscillazione tra i termini “pudore” (*aidōs*) e “vergogna” (*aischynē*).<sup>46</sup> L’uno può forse riflettere maggiormente l’attitudine culturale greca verso la nudità femminile, mentre il secondo è utilizzato da Erodoto in qualità di etnografo, per spiegare le ragioni della vendetta della regina asiatica.

Pur nelle differenze culturali che distinguono il mondo barbaro/orientale da quello greco in merito alla prospettiva assunta nei confronti della nudità, la meta-

<sup>44</sup> Cfr. *supra*, nota 7 in relazione all’etimologia di “Mirsilo”, “Gige” e “Candaule” ed al contatto tra Lidi e Luvi.

<sup>45</sup> V. Gray individua in tale diversità un elemento che marca la distinzione tra Lidi e Greci e, ancor più, tra figure di rango reale e sudditi: Gray, 1995: 208–209.

<sup>46</sup> Su *aidōs* e *aischynē* cfr. *supra*, nota 39.

fora di “guardare la moglie (del re) *come* una concubina” sembra impiegata, sia nel testo orientale analizzato che in quello erodoteo, con la medesima funzionalità narrativa, legata al suo significato di insidia al potere.

### Abbreviazioni

- Bauer eDiAna: *eDiAna Digital Dictionary – Hieroglyphic Luwian s.v. /ama-nasr(i)-/ ‘concubine’* (by Bauer, A.H.). URL: <https://www.ediana.gwi.uni-muenchen.de/dictionary.php?lemma=2382> (ultimo accesso 2022-05-22).
- CAD: *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*. Chicago. 1956–2010.
- CHD: Güterbock, H.G. / Hoffner, H.A. / Van Den Hout, Th.P.J. (eds.): *The Hittite Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*. Chicago.
- CTH: Laroche, E., 1971: *Catalogue des textes hittites*. Paris.
- DUL: del Olmo Lete, G. / Sanmartín, J., 2003: *A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language in the Alphabetic Tradition*. Leiden.
- KBo: *Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazköy*. Leipzig / Berlin. 1916–.
- KUB: *Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköy*. Berlin. 1921–1990.
- Yakubovich eDiAna: Yakubovich, I. (ed.), *Provisional Annotation of the Hieroglyphic Luwian Corpus*. URL: <https://www.ediana.gwi.uni-muenchen.de/corpus.php> (ultimo accesso 2022-05-22).

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# “Yauna across the Sea?”

Northwest Boundaries of Achaemenid Expansion  
(Anatolia and the North Aegean)

Sarah P. Morris

## Abstract

Beyond the most distant western Persian satrapy (Daskyleion), Achaemenid expansion aspired to the territory of Thrace, rich in minerals and timber, but famously failed to establish a permanent outpost of empire at or beyond the Danube and Strymon Rivers. Instead, an area and people termed “Skudra” appear numerous times, in regions conquered or subject to Persia,<sup>1</sup> while the kingdom of Macedon was engaged as an ally through diplomacy, marriage and tribute.<sup>2</sup> My paper examines the background to Achaemenid ambitions in the north Aegean (Thrace and Macedonia) as the heritage of Lydian (if not earlier, Phrygian) deployment of Ionians from western Asia Minor (“Yauna by the sea”?) to the north Aegean (“Yauna across the sea”). Archaeological and epigraphic evidence may serve as proxy data for Achaemenid and pre-Achaemenid activity in the north Aegean.

*“... one cannot understand the ancient Greeks without understanding the ancient Achaemenid Empire ...”*

Balcer, 1991: 57.

In my contribution to the shaping of boundaries across the Eastern Mediterranean in the first millennium, within the time and space of the Achaemenid Empire, I seek to explore how vital areas beyond strictly political regions defined by satrapies or provinces engaged with a dynamic imperial power. In particular, I will focus on the north Aegean, home to both Thrace and Macedon (Figure 1), and introduce the evidence of material culture as proxy data for relationships of power and exploitation that are often invisible in texts. I also hope to demonstrate that these relationships may predate historically documented interventions during the reigns of Darius and Xerxes, and may even have developed prior to the rise of Cyrus. Finally, I propose to consider these relations as early steps in ‘Perserie,’ beyond more explicit Achaemenid influence in luxury vessels or their imitations, bullae and seals, or fashion in modes of reclining and drinking.<sup>3</sup> While I have raised this possibility in several papers over the past two decades<sup>4</sup> this is my first opportunity

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<sup>1</sup> Lerner, 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Wiesehofer, 2017.

<sup>3</sup> Most recently, Miller / Paspalas, 2021; Poggio, 2019.

<sup>4</sup> Morris, 2006a; 2006b; 2022; see also Paspalas, 2004, 2006; Weissl, 2022.

to focus on it and flesh it out, for a Melammu audience.

Although the northwestern-most point of administrative Achaemenid control lay at the satrapy of Daskyleion in northwest Asia Minor, Persian interests extended considerably farther, once Darius intended “to turn the Aegean into a Persian lake”<sup>5</sup>. If his Scythian campaign remains largely a Greek narrative,<sup>6</sup> in its aftermath Thrace certainly came under Achaemenid control. This transpired through both force and foundations in Thrace (e.g., Doriskos), while Macedonia accepted a subordinate relationship with the Great King – as vassals or clients (earth and water, marriage alliances), and eventually Darius collected tribute as far as Thessaly.<sup>7</sup> Persia’s westward expansion of its largely land-based empire gained access to essential natural resources in the north Aegean (timber and metals), and secured both sides of the straits to the Black Sea. But more importantly, I would argue, these strategies were likely inherited from Lydian predecessors who commanded a similar land empire in Anatolia and held earlier interests in the north.<sup>8</sup>

The regions bordering the north Aegean were rich in two primary resources, minerals and timber, essential not only to Achaemenid rulers and infrastructure (Hdt. 5.23)<sup>9</sup>, but to a succession of earlier ambitions in the east and south, beginning with Mycenaean Greece, as I have argued.<sup>10</sup> Here I will only reach back as far as the Lydian empire, a land-based power whose Anatolian territory was inherited by Persia after Cyrus’ defeat of Croesus in 546 B.C. The Lydians may have established a partnership with the Greek cities of the Ionian coast (in particular, with Miletus), comparable to the earlier Assyrian dependency on seafaring Phoenicians for supplies of timber and silver from distant lands.<sup>11</sup> Since at least the treaty between Alyattes and Miletus in the late 7<sup>th</sup> century (Hdt 1.22)<sup>12</sup>, the maritime Milesians may have served as explorers, entrepreneurs, and naval force around the Aegean and into the Black Sea, on behalf of the Lydian throne.<sup>13</sup> Even earlier, Midas of Phrygia is said to have married the daughter of a coastal Greek tyrant, Agamemnon of Kyme (Aristotle fr. 611, an account compromised chronologically by its anachronistic references to coinage).

This relationship was explored by David Hill at a 2013 workshop interrogating the definition and historical reality of premodern boundaries and borders in Ana-

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<sup>5</sup> Lerner, 2017: 7; Röllinger 2020a, 2020b, 2021; Ruffing 2021.

<sup>6</sup> Tuplin, 2010; Vasilev, 2015: 41–76; Röllinger, 2021: 371; Röllinger / Degen 2021.

<sup>7</sup> Balcer, 1988; Rehm, 2010; Morgan, 2016; Boteva-Boyanova, 2021; Burstein, 2021.

<sup>8</sup> Rehm, 2010: 141.

<sup>9</sup> Xydopoulos, 2000: 224.

<sup>10</sup> Morris, 2009–2010; Tsifaki, 2020.

<sup>11</sup> Frankenstein, 1979; Morris, 2006a: 78; Sherratt, 2022.

<sup>12</sup> Wallace, 2016.

<sup>13</sup> Balcer, 1995: 56–57.

tolia,<sup>14</sup> a theme that has inspired this Melammu conference, but that begins for Hill with Frederik Barth’s 1969 work (*Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*). Adopting Barth’s approach, Hill urges us to see a fragmented coastline of Ionian settlements, whose history has been over-determined by Classical Greek political interests, as a “fuzzy border zone that performed an important and mutually beneficial role between the Aegean and inland Anatolia”.<sup>15</sup> Borrowing from Revere’s 1957 “no man’s coast” to describe the maritime regions and relationships of the Late Bronze Age, and Polanyi’s later “ports of trade” model, Hill argues that landlocked Lydia – at times neighbor, enemy, or master of the Ionians – benefitted from a maritime network headed by Miletus, and vice versa.<sup>16</sup> Others have suggested that the peace treaty between Lydia and Miletus might have included conditions for colonization, to allow Milesians and their ships to protect coastal sites (from the Troad to Sinope) at the edge of Lydian control: “The Ionian Greeks accept Lydian supremacy and the loss of full political independence in exchange for Lydian military power and commercial gain”<sup>17</sup>. This relationship would have transpired via other mutual services,<sup>18</sup> not only through military campaigns for control of coastal cities<sup>19</sup> or exactment of tribute. Earlier Lydian support of internal parties within East Greek cities aimed at coastal control: Alyattes supplied the *φωγάδες* of the party of Pittacus on Lesbos with 2,000 talents [of silver] (Alcaeus fr. 69), perhaps to secure island allies north of Miletus and thereby the coastal route to the Black Sea,<sup>20</sup> prior to his reconciliation and treaty with Miletus. This kind of strategy is echoed under Achaemenid rule, when Otanes seized coastal cities in the Hellespont and Troad, as well as Lemnos and Imbros (with Greek ships: Hdt. 5.25–28).

Let us examine this model of Ionian activity more closely, as it could bear on Lydia’s imperial successor, Persia.

Remembered as “colonization” of the Black Sea in our exclusively Greek sources, which credit Miletus with an improbable 90 foundations (Pliny NH 5.122), this relationship profited the Milesians as suppliers to inland Lydians, and the Lydians in the form of security along the Black Sea coast. This relationship may date to an early era: Strabo reports (13.1.22; Thuc. 8.61) that Gyges of Lydia “allowed” the Milesians (*ἐπιτρέψαντος Γύγου τοῦ Λυδῶν βασιλέως*) to establish a colony at Abydos on the Hellespont, a coastal point far beyond Lydian lands

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<sup>14</sup> Baysal / Karakatsanis, 2017.

<sup>15</sup> Hill, 2017: 89.

<sup>16</sup> Hill, 2017: 92.

<sup>17</sup> Portalsky, 2021: 44.

<sup>18</sup> Lydian sponsorship of Greek temples at Ephesus and Miletus, Greek mercenary service for Lydia, and marriage alliances: Roosevelt, 2012: 902.

<sup>19</sup> Lydian sieges of Smyrna and Ephesus, if not an invention of Herodotus? Portalsky, 2021: 42.

<sup>20</sup> Günther, 2006: 50.

(but which retained the name of Gygas for one of its local promontories, Strabo adds). If more than an etymological device to explain the name of the promontory, his account suggests a relationship between inland Lydian power and coastal Greek explorers at least a century before Alyattes<sup>21</sup> or Croesus, implying further spheres and phases of “Ionian” activity abroad. Two questions arise: did other regions of the Aegean attract similar alliances for exploration and colonization, and did the expanding Achaemenid Empire inherit and activate these arrangements?

Let us recall that it is likewise Strabo (17.1.18) who recast the foundation of Naukratis in Egypt, remembered by Herodotus (2.178) as a pan-Hellenic settlement authorized by the Egyptian pharaoh Amasis II in the 6<sup>th</sup> c. Instead, the Greek trading post may have been an arrangement brokered via Lydian alliance with and between Miletus and Egypt<sup>22</sup>. As early as Gyges, the Lydians assist Egyptian pharaohs (Psammetichus II) against the Assyrians, with mercenaries identified as Ionians and Carians as well as Lydians, and ships supplied by Greek coastal cities (Hdt. 1.14; cf. Jeremiah 46: 9)<sup>23</sup>. As known from the Pedon inscription allegedly found near Priene, as well as from historical accounts, foreign kings could reward Greek military service or alliance with the gift of “a city”, as Psammetichus did for Pedon<sup>24</sup>, and Amyntas I for Hippias in Thrace (Hdt. 5.94)<sup>25</sup>. These relationships provide a model for imperial deployment of power beyond formal territorial control, through concessions to clients, just as Darius later empowered Megabyzus as *strategos* in Thrace, where he also rewarded the Milesian tyrant Histiaios with the city of Myrkinos (Hdt. 5.11, before admonished by Mardonius: 5.23–24), as did his son Xerxes to Amyntas (Hdt. 8.136).

Behind the literary and archaeological record of some 90 “colonies” founded by Miletus, from the northeast Aegean (Hellespont) deep into the Black Sea, may lie arrangements that made Greek coastal entrepreneurs into maritime partners to their inland, non-Greek overlords<sup>26</sup>. If so, as archaeologists we should view the trail of Greek pottery along the shores of the Hellespont and the Black Seas<sup>27</sup> as indirect evidence of Lydian or later Persian interests in the region, and not only of Milesian sailing and trading initiatives. This encourages us to view ceramic exports as a trail of activity that indicates more than its place of manufacture.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Wallace, 2016; Kroll, 2020: 543.

<sup>22</sup> In contrast, Haider, 1996, Günther, 2006, and Fantalkin, 2014, see coastal Miletus as broker between Lydia and Egypt.

<sup>23</sup> Kahn, 2022: 140.

<sup>24</sup> Moyer, 2006.

<sup>25</sup> Xydopoulos, 2012.

<sup>26</sup> Rather than land-deprived refugees from Lydian or Persian rule, as in Tsetsekh-ladze, 1994; Greaves, 2007.

<sup>27</sup> Aeolian as well as Ionian: Handberg, 2013.

<sup>28</sup> As argued in Morris, 1984: 100–103.

For example, the Milesian colony of Sinope, founded in the late 7<sup>th</sup> c. according to both literary testimony<sup>29</sup> and archaeological evidence<sup>30</sup>, might be both an outpost of Greek entrepreneurship but also a sign of Lydian exploration of distant resources and secure harbors. Like the modern Chinese “Silk Road” marked by emplacements of ports and factories around Africa and the Mediterranean, the key strategy is to establish a network of willing clients, partners and agents, without political interference or obligations. As an archaeologist, I suspect that we may need to track ancient versions of these initiatives – Lydian or Persian interests – through a balance of material culture and texts as proxy data for undisclosed relations.

However we view these relationships, Cyrus’ conquest of the Lydian empire (and the annexation of Ionia by Harpagus) also brought under his control the Ionian coastal cities at the western edge of Lydian power. As part of this process, Persia adopted the Lydian institution of coinage (and continued to mint “croesids” in Anatolia), which probably contributed to the “silverization” of the Achaemenid economy.<sup>31</sup> How should we imagine the next phase of Greco-Persian relations in Anatolia, if they could have inherited some aspects of this Ionian-Lydian partnership posited by Hill?

The Greek version of this story, well known from Herodotus, focuses on individual Ionian cities and their leaders, and their colorful relationship with Achaemenid power, culminating in a failed revolt against Persia in the reign of Darius that precipitated what is remembered as the “Persian wars.” Thus various arrangements brokered and manipulated by Greek tyrants and cities to their own advantage backfired, or failed, by 494 BC, but these events are heavily backlit in Herodotus by the conflict of 490–479 BC. Christian Marek (2021) has recently summarized the limits on understanding Achaemenid administration in Anatolia from a Persian, documentary perspective, although the material evidence from Daskyleion to Lycia is well explored by now.<sup>32</sup> What lies ahead is the exploration of more marginal regions and secondary materials that may trace Persian interests farther to the west.

Here I turn to the focus of my arguments, the north Aegean (Figs. 1–2). Beyond the debate over what precisely was “Skudra” for Achaemenid rulers, and whether there actually was a Scythian campaign as Herodotus describes it,<sup>33</sup> in its aftermath Darius founded fortified coastal sites like Doriskos in Thrace, relocated natives, and left Megabyzus in charge of 80,000 troops; the latter sent envoys to Macedon, and extended Persian authority (including tribute obligations) as far as Thessaly. After the Ionian revolt, Mardonius took control of Thrace, and by the

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<sup>29</sup> Tsatskhladze, 2021.

<sup>30</sup> East Greek pottery: Doonan, 2016.

<sup>31</sup> Tuplin, 2014; Hoernes, 2021: 796–797.

<sup>32</sup> Dussinberre, 2013; Dahlén, 2020; Poggio, 2019.

<sup>33</sup> Tuplin, 2010; Rehm, 2010: 147.

time of the invasion of Xerxes, Persian ὑπαρχοι were appointed throughout Thrace (Hdt. 7.106). But these events unfolded on ground already fertile for interaction with the East, as I shall now suggest.

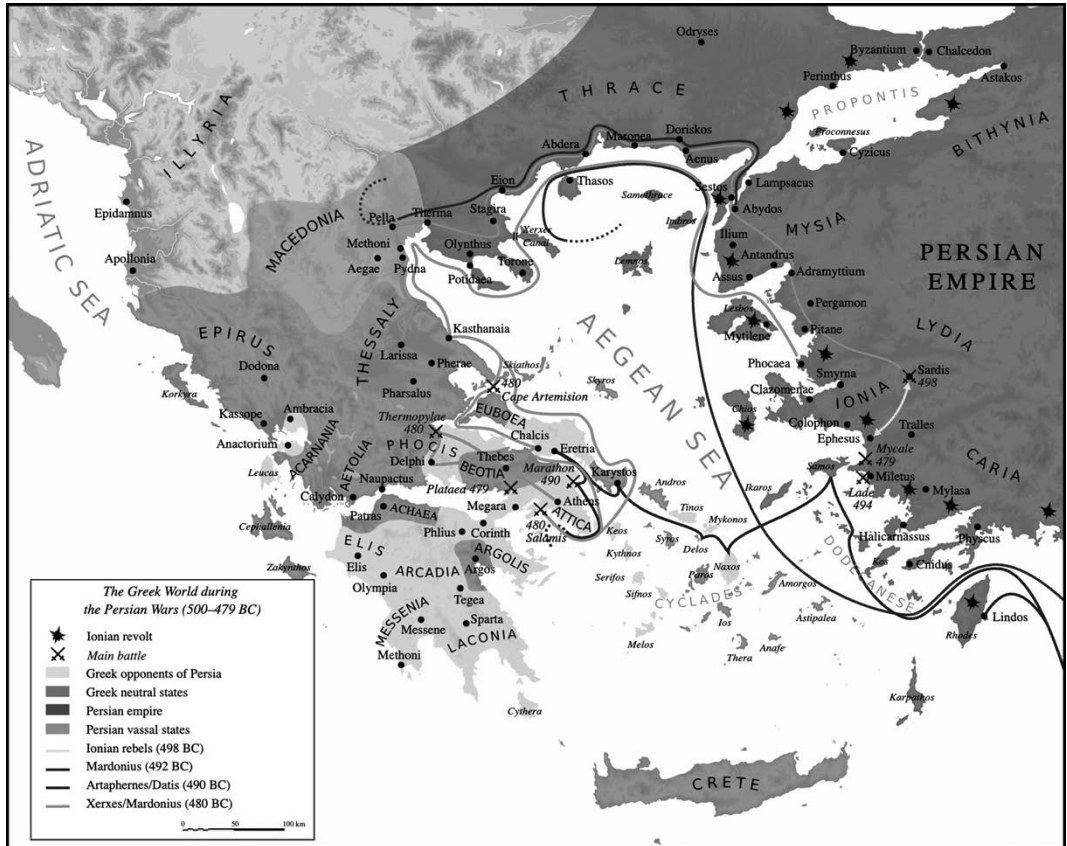


Fig. 1: Map of the Aegean during the Greco-Persian Wars (500-479 BC)

([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Map\\_Greco-Persian\\_Wars-en.svg#/media/File:Map\\_Greco-Persian\\_Wars-en.svg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Map_Greco-Persian_Wars-en.svg#/media/File:Map_Greco-Persian_Wars-en.svg)).

Persian initiatives among the *Yauna para draya*<sup>34</sup> may have followed Ionian interests already established in Thrace and Macedonia, themselves a possible extension of Lydian exploitation of the north Aegean via Ionian agents. East Greek interest in the north Aegean is explicit in the foundation of Abdera by Teos and Klazomenai, and Maroneia by Chios. Most of the other northern colonies were founded by southern Greek islands<sup>35</sup>, but, as we shall see, their main actors were

<sup>34</sup> First named by Darius: Balatti, 2021: 144; cf. Klinkott, 2001, 2021; Sancisi-Weerdenburg, 2001a, 2001b.

<sup>35</sup> Eretria, Andros or Paros: Stefani *et al.*, 2020; Tsiafaki, 2020.

Ionians. Here I am informed in part by my fieldwork at Methone in Pieria, one of many sites founded by southern Greeks, but dominated by East Greek material evidence since the late 8<sup>th</sup> c. B.C.

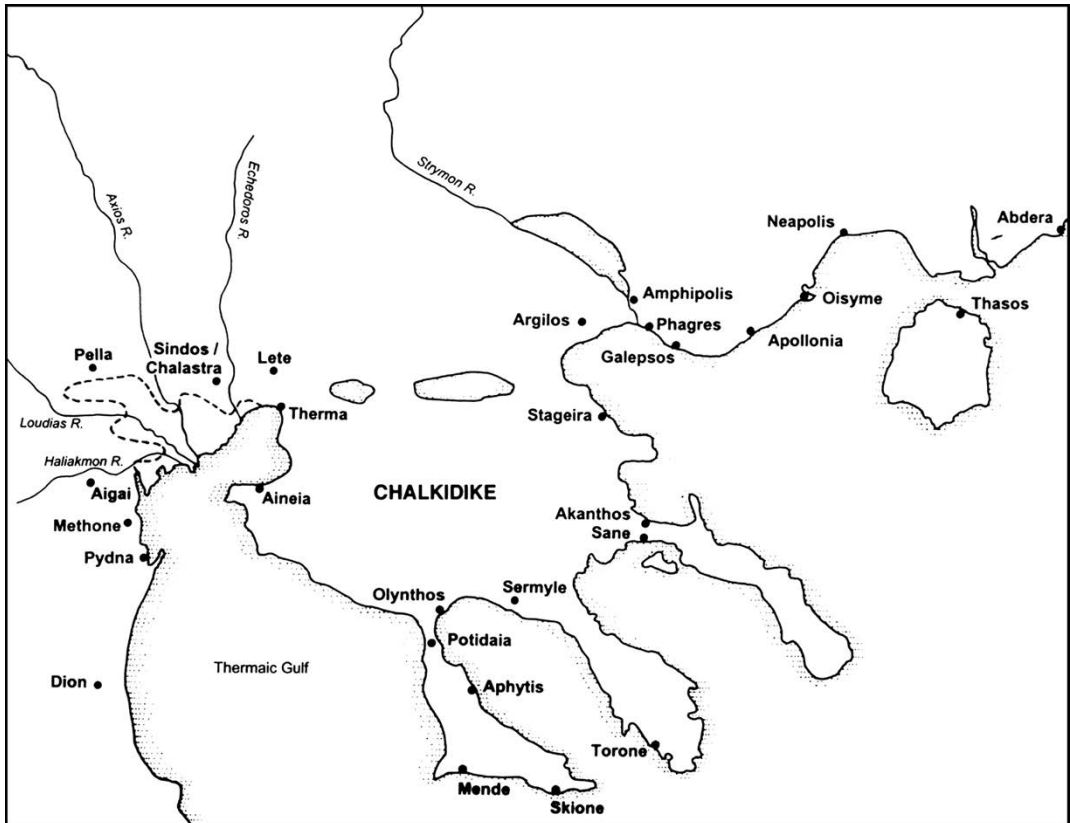


Fig. 2: Colonies and other cities of Northern Greece (Central Macedonia – Thrace). Source: Paspalas, 2006, Fig. 1 (A. Hooton).

Since the Early Iron Age, southern cities had founded colonies in northern Greece (Figure 2). Methone, an Eretrian colony, was receiving goods from the East, including Phoenician and Milesian amphoras, since the late 8<sup>th</sup> or early 7<sup>th</sup> c.<sup>36</sup> Along the coast of the Chalkidike in particular, and east past the Strymon river, these colonial sites are full of East Greek imports, and close commercial relations are reflected in their use of Eastern standards of weight in coinage (see below). At Akanthos, a colony on the east coast of the Chalkidike founded by the island of Andros near Attica, a cemetery that houses thousands of tombs embraced sarcophagi from Klazomenai, and East Greek pottery; its coin device, a lion at-

<sup>36</sup> Tiverios, 2012, Kasseris, 2012.

tacking a bull, has obvious resonance with Achaemenid monumental art.<sup>37</sup> By the Archaic period, northern Greece (Thasos, Stageira, Neapolis, and possibly Therme) is home to the kind of monumental temples and sculpture in Ionic style that we associate with East Greek cities such as Chios, Miletus, Ephesus and Samos, as well as ivory figurines and marble sculpture more at home in Ionia than in the mother cities of these northern colonies.<sup>38</sup>

Perhaps the most direct evidence of Eastern influence in the north Aegean survives in the numismatic record. For these northern Greek cities, founded by southern centers, struck their first coins, in the case of the metal-rich Chalkidike, on standards of weight from Ionia, especially the (reduced) Milesian and Chian standards.<sup>39</sup> In fact, the north Aegean is the first Greek region to mint coinage after its Lydian invention, and perhaps for related reasons (the involvement of Lydia, via Ionians, in the northern mineral region?). This includes early electrum coinage, which makes its first appearance outside of Anatolia in northern Greece,<sup>40</sup> far in advance of the development of coinage by Euboea and then Attica, itself perhaps stimulated by the involvement of Euboea in northern Greece via its colonies.<sup>41</sup> Thus the northbound wave of Ionians, possibly driven by and with Lydian financing and infrastructure, may have introduced the use of minted metal to their new trading partners.

Finally, the Persian invasion of the early fifth century left some unmistakable signs of Eastern traffic in casual graffiti scratched on clay vessels found around the Thermaic Gulf (Figure 3, found near Toumba Thessaloniki) and in coastal Thrace (Argilos): some letters have been identified as Carian, Lydian, or Lycian, some in Greek spell out Median names (“Astyages”), presumably those of traders or merchants, if not mercenaries.<sup>42</sup> More sensational are some images of Easterners in Achaemenid-style headgear and non-Greek inscriptions (Anatolian, or Near Eastern?) incised into local fabrics, again perhaps a direct sign of troops involved in the late Archaic and early Classical military campaigns between Greeks and Persians in the north (Figure 3: Kefalidou / Xydopoulos, 2018), if not part of Xerxes’ army as it passed through northern Greece (Hdt.7.121–130, 179, 183). They complement images of Greeks from Persepolis at the heart of the realm that survive in graffiti and scratched drawings.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Paspalas, 2006.

<sup>38</sup> Paspalas, 2006.

<sup>39</sup> Psoma, 2015.

<sup>40</sup> Wartenberg, 2018.

<sup>41</sup> Van Alfen, 2015.

<sup>42</sup> Adiego *et al.*, 2012; Boufalis *et al.*, 2021; Xydopoulos, 2021.

<sup>43</sup> Boardman, 2000: 131–133.





Fig. 3: Roof-tile fragment with graffito: MΘ 34362, Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki. Hellenic Ministry of Culture & Sports, Hellenic Organization of Cultural Resources Development. Photo: O. Kourakis / D. Karolidis.

In the final act of this historical drama, Greeks lose the north Aegean to Persia as a result of the Ionian revolt in 494 BC, then regain it after Darius and Xerxes are defeated by Greeks on land and sea. As Herodotus narrates in detail, the Ionian cities in western Anatolia failed to get satisfaction in their relations with Persian satraps and launched a revolt that failed, before one that succeeded, when mainland invasion by Persian armies and navies met with successful Greek resistance. Famously, the north Aegean, territory of Greek tyrants and Argead monarchs, did

not resist, but stayed loyal to its agreements with Persia, even joining the army from Asia (Hdt. 7.185, 9.31.5), although their role is whitewashed in Greek sources.<sup>44</sup> Some coastal cities in the north still harbored Persian sympathies, implied when Themistocles, ostracized and exiled from Athens, defected to Achaemenid Anatolia via the Macedonian port of Pydna in Pieria (Plut. *Them.* 25.2). And while Macedon removed the *akinakes* symbol from its coinage, once a tribute to Persia,<sup>45</sup> their sympathies endure in the archaeological record, if effaced in our sources (even Athens had once sought alliance with Persia: Hdt. 5.73).

In other ways, after 480/479 BC, Persia extended a short-lived presence in the north, at least in the Chersonesos along the Hellespont, before its final eviction post-Eurymedon in 466 BC. A recent re-study of the so-called Miltiades coinage in use at Kardia reveals that it was minted on the Persian *siglos* standard (under the influence of nearby Ainos?) after the defeat of Persia, a sign of continued strong Achaemenid interests in commerce and trade in the north.<sup>46</sup> These material testimonia help shift the story of prominent Greeks such as Peisistratos and the Philaids (Miltiades, Cimon) from one largely centered on Athenian politics<sup>47</sup> to an account of their activities in the north that sees them as another wave of Greek tyrants, attracted to the same overseas opportunities and economic colonization that flourished in Ionia. As in western Anatolia, coastal Greeks and inland monarchies in northern Greece interacted with Persia, whether aggressions or overtures, in highly individual (if equally opportunistic) ways.

To sum up my arguments in terms of a proposal for further research:

East Greek and Anatolian material culture and inscriptions in northern Greece during the Archaic period may be viewed as signs not only of Ionian exploration but more broadly of Lydian interests; after the mid-6<sup>th</sup> c, Achaemenid Persia inherited some of these interests as it developed and maintained control in the same region, through vassal or client relationships with Thracian and Macedonian rulers, as far as Thessaly, and eventually with southern Greeks like the Philaids of Athens. Famously and historically, these relationships did not survive the ambitions of East Greek tyrants and poleis that culminated in the Ionian revolt and the Persian wars of the early fifth century. In other settings home to monarchs – notably Lycia and Caria – Achaemenid power reached some kind of equilibrium with local autonomy and shaped Persian styles in art and architecture.<sup>48</sup> While northern Greek cities may have remained friendly/er to Persia, Achaemenid power withdrew its reach to the straits of the Hellespont after 480/79 BC. Only when a new generation of Macedonian kings in the later fourth century reversed the direction

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<sup>44</sup> Scaife, 1989; Karavites, 1997; Brosius, 2003: 230–231; Zahrt, 2011; Vasilev, 2015; Wiesehöfer, 2017: 57–60; Tsolaki, 2018; Von Bredow, 2018.

<sup>45</sup> Heinrichs / Müller, 2008; Kosmidou 2011.

<sup>46</sup> Davis / Sheedy, 2019.

<sup>47</sup> Van den Eijnde, 2020.

<sup>48</sup> LaBuff, 2017; Strootman / Williamson, 2020.

of imperial ambitions and invaded Asia Minor, ultimately defeating Persia, can we begin to consider a new wave of Persian influence – “Persia in Europe”<sup>49</sup> or *Persia capta?* – in Macedonian art and court culture.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Boardman, 2011.

<sup>50</sup> Paspalas 2005.

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# I fiumi nell'impero achemenide

Frontiere naturali o mezzi di espansione imperiale?

Ennio Biondi

## Abstract

This study analyzes the significance of waterways, especially rivers, within the political ideology of Achaemenid rulers to define its nature as frontiers or means of communication between regions of the Persian Empire. We analyse some case studies through Greek sources and Persian inscriptions; the results are read in the perspective of the perception of the spaces of the empire by the Great King.

## 1. Introduzione<sup>1</sup>

Con questo breve studio intendo proporre qualche riflessione sul significato dei fiumi nell'impero achemenide, in particolare come questi erano percepiti all'interno dei processi di costruzione e rappresentazione degli spazi imperiali: se cioè i fiumi fossero concepiti dalla comunicazione ufficiale dei sovrani come elementi divisori e di separazione o se piuttosto non costituissero un mezzo capace di garantire la connessione tra le varie regioni dell'impero da una parte e ancor di più tra ciò che era considerato parte effettiva dell'impero e ciò che (ancora) non lo era; da questo punto di vista l'iscrizione di Behistun è sicuramente l'esempio più organico e prezioso relativo all'autocoscienza imperiale di sovranità universale<sup>2</sup>. Le fonti di riferimento sono costituite da una parte dalle fonti greche e dall'altra dalle iscrizioni achemenidi: in generale, come nota acutamente P. Briant, gli autori greci e romani, che non mancano mai di esprimere esplicitamente la loro ammirazione per l'organizzazione del sistema stradale e postale dell'impero, non trasmettono molte notizie sulle vie di comunicazione fluviali e marittime all'interno del sistema persiano<sup>3</sup>. È molto probabile, conclude lo stesso studioso francese, che la prospettiva prevalentemente militare dei resoconti degli storici greci por-

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<sup>2</sup> Su questo aspetto da ultimo Rollinger / Degen, 2021.

<sup>3</sup> Briant, 1996: 391.

tasse gli stessi autori a considerare fiumi e canali come ostacoli all'azione di conquista delle truppe imperiali<sup>4</sup>; più di una volta infatti le fonti greche riferiscono di episodi in cui il re persiano e il suo esercito si trovano di fronte a un corso d'acqua, o a un braccio di mare, che svolge un vero e proprio ruolo di frontiera divisiva tra l'impero achemenide e la terra di imminente conquista.

## 2. I fiumi nell'impero achemenide: qualche considerazione generale

In generale, i fiumi che scorrevano all'interno dell'impero achemenide costituivano a tutti gli effetti una rete di comunicazione strettamente interconnessa che andava ad integrare le vie di terra. Per trasportare i prodotti pesanti delle regioni interne i fiumi erano con ogni probabilità la migliore via di trasporto: bisognava utilizzare i fiumi vicino la costa e il cabotaggio fino alla bocca di un altro fiume. A testimonianza di ciò, si può ricordare che molte città greche dell'Asia Minore coniano monete del tipo di un dio-fiume, spesso rappresentato nell'atto di sorreggere una prua, una poppa o il timone di una nave<sup>5</sup>. Nella descrizione della strada reale che da Sardi conduceva a Susa, Erodoto non manca di enumerare i fiumi che questa attraversava: si tratta dell'Halys, dell'Eufrate, del Tigri, del grande e piccolo Zabato, del Ginde e del Coaspe<sup>6</sup>. Sono corsi d'acqua che i Persiani attraversavano normalmente grazie a dei ponti. Gli esempi a questo proposito sono molteplici restando al solo Erodoto: basterà citare i celeberrimi casi dell'attraversamento del fiume Ginde durante la conquista di Babilonia da parte del re Ciro<sup>7</sup> o ancora il passaggio del fiume Arasse durante la campagna dei Massageti guidata dallo stesso sovrano<sup>8</sup>. Per quanto riguarda il re Dario va ricordato senz'altro l'attraversamento dell'Istro durante la campagna di Scizia<sup>9</sup>; ancora va citato il passaggio dello Strimone da parte del re Serse in terra trace durante la campagna antiellenica<sup>10</sup>. Oltre a questi fiumi non bisogna dimenticare il caso dell'Halys, il cui passaggio ricopre un ruolo importante nel I libro delle *Storie*, pur non concernente un sovrano persiano nello specifico, ma comunque connesso al contesto di espansione di Ciro contro Cresò. Questo fiume fu infatti attraversato dal re lidio, grazie all'aiuto del filosofo Talete, per giungere presso una zona della Cappadocia chiamata Pteria<sup>11</sup>. Molto celebre, anche se si tratta più specificamente di un braccio di mare, è l'attraversamento del Bosforo da parte del re Dario, con la costruzione di un ponte di barche progettato dall'architetto greco Mandrocle di Samo<sup>12</sup>;

<sup>4</sup> Briant, 1996: 391

<sup>5</sup> Briant, 1996: 392.

<sup>6</sup> Hdt. 5.52. Cf. Nenci, 1994: 233–234.

<sup>7</sup> Hdt. 1.189–190; cf. 5.52.5.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *infra*.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *infra*.

<sup>10</sup> Hdt. 7.113.2.

<sup>11</sup> Hdt. 1.75–76.

<sup>12</sup> Hdt. 4.88.

così come il passaggio dell'Ellesponto da parte dell'armata persiana guidata dal re Serse, anche questo grazie alla costruzione di ponti sul mare<sup>13</sup>. È interessante notare che i fiumi su citati e gli stretti dell'Egeo del nord sia in Erodoto, sia in Eschilo sono indicati dagli stessi termini, *πόρος* e *ποταμός*<sup>14</sup>.

Tornando ora alla questione del rapporto tra i fiumi e la percezione di questi come fattori di separazione territoriale, mi sembra di poter individuare almeno due casi studio, ciascuno rintracciabile nelle *Storie* erodotee. Sono casi particolari, cui abbiamo appena accennato, che vanno inquadrati in diversi momenti della storia achemenide: si tratta dell'attraversamento dell'Arasse da parte del re Ciro e del fiume Istro ad opera del re Dario. L'analisi di questi episodi singoli permetterà di proporre qualche riflessione in merito alla questione che ci riguarda.

### 3. Ciro e l'Arasse

Il primo di questi casi si trova nel I libro ed è relativo alla spedizione del re Ciro il Grande contro i Massageti, un popolo che probabilmente abitava una regione compresa tra i fiumi Oxus e Iaxartes, corrispondenti oggi ai fiumi Amu Dar'ja e Syr Dar'ja<sup>15</sup>. Secondo le fonti di Erodoto, i Massageti costituivano un *ethnos* grande e valoroso, forse di origine scitica, situato ad oriente, al di là del fiume Arasse, di fronte agli Issedoni, su cui lo storico si sofferma nel libro IV<sup>16</sup>. Proprio l'Arasse, e il suo attraversamento da parte delle truppe persiane, gioca un ruolo significativo nella struttura del racconto della spedizione che si conclude, com'è noto, con la morte del sovrano persiano<sup>17</sup>. L'identificazione di questo fiume è ancora oggi problematica<sup>18</sup>: secondo Erodoto, il fiume Arasse scorre dal paese dei Ματιηνοί e sfocia con quaranta bocche che finiscono tutte, tranne una, in stagni e pantani, dove si racconta che vivono uomini che si nutrono di pesci crudi e si vestono con pelli di foca.<sup>19</sup> Una sola bocca del fiume appunto sfocia nel mar Caspio (Κασπία θάλασσα)<sup>20</sup>, che fa parte a sé, non mescolandosi con altri mari, attraverso terreni aperti<sup>21</sup>. Erodoto sottolinea inoltre che l'Arasse è più grande o più piccolo dell'Istro, e che sul suo corso si trovano molte isole simili per grandezza a quella di Lesbo.<sup>22</sup> Quest'ultimo dettaglio mostra con ogni probabilità che, secondo Erodoto, l'Arasse era un fiume di vasta portata, uno dei maggiori dell'Asia,

<sup>13</sup> Hdt. 7.33-7. Cf. Vannicelli / Corcella, 2017: 342 ss.

<sup>14</sup> Approfondimento in Dan, 2015a: 194.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Biondi, 2020b: 32.

<sup>16</sup> Sui Massageti vedi ora Schmitt, 2018.

<sup>17</sup> Hdt. 1.214.3.

<sup>18</sup> Approfondimento e bibliografia in Biondi, 2020: 32, n.6.

<sup>19</sup> Hdt. 1.202.3.

<sup>20</sup> Sul mar Caspio vedi Hdt. 1.203.1.

<sup>21</sup> Hdt. 1.202.4

<sup>22</sup> Hdt. 1.202.1.

“which is almost as mighty as the ‘sea’”<sup>23</sup>. Nella visione erodotea questo fiume costituisce, insieme al mar Caspio, la frontiera a nord dell’Asia orientale<sup>24</sup>. Come hanno di recente osservato R. Rollinger e J. Degen, l’Arasse doveva assolvere con ogni probabilità ad una triplice funzione di frontiera: geografica, come confine dell’Asia orientale, politica, in quanto confine a nord-est dell’impero persiano, ed etnica, perché è al di là del suo corso che vivono i Massageti<sup>25</sup>. Da questo punto di vista la rappresentazione dell’Arasse non sfugge alla visione erodotea in cui è rintracciabile la tendenza a identificare confini naturali e confini etnici, “o in altre parole a far coincidere la rappresentazione dell’individualità geografica con la sua omogeneità etnica”<sup>26</sup>. Il caso del fiume Istro<sup>27</sup>, a tal proposito, è carico di significato, come si vedrà poco oltre.

Si è pensato che l’Arasse erodoteo corrisponda al fiume Amu Dar’ja, il quale in antichità sfociava nel mar Caspio; bisogna tuttavia tenere in considerazione il fatto che la descrizione che di questo fiume fornisce Erodoto menziona alcune caratteristiche che appartengono in realtà ad un altro o ad altri fiumi. Per questo motivo l’Arasse è stato identificato anche con il fiume Aras, che si immette nel fiume Kura che a sua volta sfocia nel mar Caspio. Meno probabili appaiono le ipotesi che il fiume in questione possa corrispondere all’attuale Volga o Syr Dar’ja<sup>28</sup>. Il nome di questo fiume non si ritrova chiaramente nelle iscrizioni reali achemenidi, ma è possibile individuare la zona di collocazione dello stesso nella regione cui Dario accenna nell’iscrizione di Behistun §§74–75<sup>29</sup>. Un altro passo di Erodoto conferma il ruolo di frontiera asiatica a oriente assolto da questo fiume:

Le terre oltre Persiani, Medi, Saspiri e Colchi, verso oriente e il sorgere del sole, sono delimitate da un lato dal mare Eritreo e verso Borea dal mar Caspio e dal fiume Arasse, che scorre in direzione di levante<sup>30</sup>.

La decisione di Ciro di muovere guerra ai Massageti, dopo che la mediazione con la di loro regina era fallita<sup>31</sup>, viene sancita proprio dall’attraversamento di questo fiume; Erodoto infatti afferma che Ciro, dopo aver ascoltato i pareri contrapposti sull’invasione del paese dei Massageti, marciando verso l’Arasse, mosse guerra contro di loro: gettò dei ponti di barche sul fiume per far passare i soldati

<sup>23</sup> Rollinger / Degen, 2021: 211.

<sup>24</sup> Hdt. IV 40.1.

<sup>25</sup> Rollinger / Degen, 2021: 210.

<sup>26</sup> Prontera, 2011: 23

<sup>27</sup> Hdt. 4.99.1–2.

<sup>28</sup> Approfondimento in Bravo, 2018: 76–77.

<sup>29</sup> Sieberer, 2017: 26 ss. con approfondimento.

<sup>30</sup> Hdt. 4.40.1. τὰ δὲ κατῴπερθε Περσέων καὶ Μήδων καὶ Σασπεύρων καὶ Κόλχων, τὰ πρὸς ἡῶ τε καὶ ἥλιον ἀνατέλλοντα, ἔνθεν μὲν ἡ Ἐρυθρὴ παρήκει θάλασσα, πρὸς βορῶν δὲ ἡ Κασπίη τε θάλασσα καὶ ὁ Ἀράξης ποταμός, ῥέων πρὸς ἥλιον ἀνίσχοντα. Trad. it. A. Frascetti, Milano, 1993.

<sup>31</sup> Hdt. 1.205–206.

e sulle barche fece costruire delle torri a difesa di quelli che passavano.<sup>32</sup> Anche nel discorso rivolto da Creso a Ciro, un discorso che perorava la causa dell'invasione<sup>33</sup>, il re lidio afferma come fosse necessario passare il fiume e avanzare<sup>34</sup>; lasciata la parte più debole dell'esercito, l'altra parte dello stesso esercito doveva ritirarsi verso il fiume<sup>35</sup>. È dopo il passaggio dell'Arasse che Ciro ha una visione che gli preannuncia la fine del suo regno a favore di Dario, il maggiore tra i figli di Istaspe<sup>36</sup>; allorché Ciro gli racconta dei sospetti nei confronti del figlio Dario, Istaspe “dopo aver attraversato l'Arasse se ne andò in Persia, tenendo sotto custodia per Ciro il figlio Dario” (Υστάσπης μὲν τοῦτοισι ἀμειψάμενος καὶ διαβὰς τὸν Ἀράξεια ἦε ἐς Πέρσας φυλάζων Κύρω τὸν παῖδα Δαρεῖον)<sup>37</sup>. Infine, è dopo che Ciro e la parte valida dell'esercito tornano indietro verso l'Arasse che avviene il primo scontro tra Massageti e Persiani<sup>38</sup>: mi sembra evidente che le vicende legate all'invasione del paese dei Massageti da parte di Ciro siano significativamente segnate dai movimenti dell'esercito persiano in relazione all'Arasse, siano essi di avvicinamento, passaggio o allontanamento<sup>39</sup>.

Ora, è evidente che il fiume svolge un ruolo di frontiera tra la regione dei Massageti e la regione da cui inizia l'assalto dei soldati persiani, ancora parte integrante dell'impero; attraversare il fiume in un senso o nell'altro significa automaticamente essere in guerra contro i Massageti o non esserlo e segna anche il confine tra impero e terra straniera. Va inoltre sottolineato che, alla luce della triplice funzione di frontiera svolta da questo fiume, cui si accennava prima, il passaggio dell'Arasse non esaurisce il suo significato nel semplice ingresso in guerra di un popolo contro un altro, ma acquisisce un significato peculiare e al tempo stesso più ampio che si risolve sia nell'ideologia politica dell'impero persiano, sia nella visione erodotea dell'οἰκομένη<sup>40</sup>. L'attraversamento dell'Arasse sancisce la capacità di Ciro di oltrepassare il confine tra le terre dell'impero e una regione non ancora soggetta al suo dominio: si tratta di un gesto che si carica senz'altro di significati molteplici e complessi e che costituisce in qualche modo il primo momento dell'atto di conquista da parte del re della regione dei Massageti, così come accade ad esempio nel caso dell'attraversamento del fiume Ginde durante la presa di Babilonia. Tuttavia, e questo costituisce la sostanziale differenza rispetto al passaggio del Ginde, l'esito dell'impresa contro i Massageti non sarà felice come nel caso precedente.

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<sup>32</sup> Hdt. 1.205.

<sup>33</sup> Hdt. 1.207.

<sup>34</sup> Hdt. 1.207.5.

<sup>35</sup> Hdt. 1.207.7.

<sup>36</sup> Hdt. 1.209.1.

<sup>37</sup> Hdt. 1.211.1; trad. it. V. Antelami (A. Fraschetti), Milano, 1988.

<sup>38</sup> Hdt. 1.211.2.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Biondi, 2020: 46.

<sup>40</sup> Sieberer, 2017: 26–27.

#### 4. Dario e l'Istro

Il secondo caso degno di attenzione ai fini del nostro discorso si trova nel IV libro delle *Storie* ed è riconducibile alla campagna scitica di re Dario: il gran re decide di intraprendere una spedizione punitiva nei confronti degli Sciti, come dice Erodoto, per vendicarsi del torto da loro perpetrato a seguito dell'invasione del regno dei Medi durata ventotto anni: gli Sciti infatti avevano vinto sul campo coloro i quali avevano cercato di opporsi<sup>41</sup>. Partito da Susa, il sovrano, con il suo esercito in marcia giunse nei pressi di Calcedonia sul Bosforo

Dove era costruito il ponte, di qui imbarcatosi su una nave, fece vela verso le isole chiamate Cianee (...); e seduto su un'altura ammirò il Ponto<sup>42</sup>.

Particolare risalto nell'economia della spedizione scitica di Dario assume il ruolo del fiume Istro<sup>43</sup>: questo era noto ai Greci sin dal VII secolo<sup>44</sup> e indicava in origine il nome del solo corso inferiore del Danubio. Come afferma A. Dan, l'Istro era già parte integrante di una carta mentale della memoria collettiva greca che a partire dai poemi epici e fino al VI secolo riproduceva graficamente il mondo allora conosciuto<sup>45</sup>. Di questa carta l'Istro, anche in seguito alle prime installazioni dei Greci nel Ponto Eusino, divenne un vero e proprio *marker* politico a settentrione così come il Nilo, parallelamente, lo era a sud. Questo schema fu assorbito anche nella rappresentazione geografica dell'impero persiano da parte dei sovrani achemenidi<sup>46</sup>. A proposito di questo fiume Erodoto riporta notizie controverse: nascerebbe nell'area iberico-pirenaica per poi volgere il suo corso dall'Europa settentrionale verso sud-est arrivando a lambire la Scizia settentrionale dal lato occidentale<sup>47</sup>.

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<sup>41</sup> Hdt. 4.1.1.

<sup>42</sup> Hdt. 4.85.1. ἐνθεῦτεν ἐσβὰς ἐς νέα ἔπλεε ἐπὶ τὰς Κυανέας καλευμένας (...) ἐζόμενος δὲ ἐπὶ ρίφῃ ἐθηεῖτο τὸν Πόντον ἔοντα ἀξιοθέητον.

<sup>43</sup> Sul fiume Istro in Erodoto e nella letteratura greca arcaica vedi Dan 2011; cf. Dan, 2015b: 135–136.

<sup>44</sup> Hes. *Theog.* 337–345.

<sup>45</sup> Dan, 2011: 31.

<sup>46</sup> Dan, 2011: 30–31. Che Erodoto fosse a conoscenza di una carta persiana dell'impero di Dario, riconducibile a Scilace di Carianda, vedi Myres 1983, 123.

<sup>47</sup> Vedi Hdt. 2.33–34; 4.99–101. Con ogni probabilità il percorso dell'Istro, così come presentato da Erodoto, si spiega alla luce delle rotte transcontinentali che seguivano i mercanti che, risalendo il corso del Danubio sino alla foce, giungevano, tramite la Sava e i suoi affluenti, nella pianura padana e da qui in Europa occidentale. Per questo si veda Corcella, 2007: 650–651. Non così Dan, 2011: 56, la quale definisce l'Istro di Erodoto una "construction intellectuelle" che trova posto nella carta mentale dell'ecumene erodoteo e che si spiega alla luce di un sostanziale parallelismo con il corso del Nilo (cf. Hdt. 2.26). Più di recente la stessa studiosa suggerisce che il parallelismo tra Istro e Nilo fu in origine esterno alla scuola milesia: Dan, 2018: 58.



Lo storico di Alicarnasso riferisce che Dario, appena passato in Europa, ordinò agli Ioni alleati di far vela nel Ponto fino al fiume Istro e, una volta giunti presso il fiume medesimo, di aspettarlo lì costruendo un ponte sul fiume<sup>48</sup>. E così l'armata navale, attraversate le Cianee, navigò direttamente sull'Istro, risalì il fiume per due giorni di navigazione dal mare e costruì un ponte sulla parte stretta del fiume, là dove poi si dividono le sue foci<sup>49</sup>. Dario, a questo punto, attraversato il Bosforo sul ponte di barche, marciò attraverso la Tracia e, giunto alle sorgenti del fiume Tearo, si accampò lì per tre giorni<sup>50</sup>. Erodoto afferma poco oltre che Dario, una volta passato l'Istro insieme all'esercito di terra, ordinò agli Ioni di distruggere il ponte di barche e di seguirlo sul continente<sup>51</sup>, ma Coe mitilenese, figlio di Erxandro, scongiurando l'imminente distruzione del ponte, consigliò al sovrano di conservare il ponte sull'Istro lasciando a guardia quelli che l'avevano costruito. Coe parlò così:

“O re, stai per portare guerra a un paese dove non si vedranno né un campo coltivato né una città abitata; consenti dunque che questo ponte rimanga sul posto, lasciandone a guardia coloro che l'hanno costruito. Da un lato, se agiremo secondo i nostri piani e troveremo gli Sciti, abbiamo una via di ritorno; d'altro lato, anche se non riusciamo a trovarli, una via di ritorno ci è comunque garantita. Infatti io non ho mai temuto che gli Sciti ci sconfiggano in battaglia, ma piuttosto che, non riuscendo a trovarli, subiamo danni vagando<sup>52</sup>”.

Le motivazioni di Coe erano sostenute dalla proverbiale imprevedibilità degli Sciti, su cui lo stesso Erodoto si sofferma a più riprese nel IV libro<sup>53</sup>: così se i Persiani non fossero riusciti nel loro intento punitivo avrebbero comunque potuto disporre di una via di ritorno intatta, piuttosto che restare a vagare in cerca dei nomadi delle steppe esponendosi ai loro attacchi<sup>54</sup>. A Dario piacque molto il parere di Coe e decise di ascoltarlo<sup>55</sup>.

<sup>48</sup> Hdt. 4.89.1

<sup>49</sup> Hdt. 4.89.2.

<sup>50</sup> Hdt. 4.89.3.

<sup>51</sup> Hdt. 4.97.1.

<sup>52</sup> Hdt. 4.97.3–4. ‘ὁ βασιλεῦ, ἐπὶ γῆν γὰρ μέλλεις στρατεύεσθαι τῆς οὔτε ἀρηρομένον φανήσεται οὐδὲν οὔτε πόλις οἰκεομένη: σύ νυν γέφυραν ταύτην ἔα κατὰ χώρην ἐστάναι, φυλάκους αὐτῆς λιπῶν τούτους οἵπερ μιν ἔξευξαν. καὶ ἦν τε κατὰ νόον πρῆξωμεν εὐρόντες Σκύθας, ἔστι ἄποδος ἡμῖν, ἦν τε καὶ μὴ σφεας εὐρεῖν δυνάμεθα, ἢ γε ἄποδος ἡμῖν ἀσφαλῆς· οὐ γὰρ ἔδεισά κω μὴ ἐσωθῶμεν ὑπὸ Σκυθέων μάχῃ, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον μὴ οὐ δυνάμενοι σφέας εὐρεῖν πάθωμεν τι ἀλώμενοι.’ Trad. it. A. Fraschetti, Milano, 1993.

<sup>53</sup> Sul nomadismo e l'inafferrabilità degli Sciti vedi Hdt. 4.46; cf. Biondi, 2020a: 38–45; vedi anche Hdt. 4.127, in cui è proprio un re scitico, Idantirso, a ribadire al messaggero del re Dario l'inafferrabilità del popolo scitico.

<sup>54</sup> Hdt. 4.97.4.

<sup>55</sup> Hdt. 4.97.5.

Ora, secondo Erodoto, il corso dell'Istro segnava il confine tra la Scizia e la Tracia<sup>56</sup>: esso fissava il limite settentrionale dell'azione politica della dinastia trace degli Odrisi, quindi di un ultimo *ethnos* trace appartenente in una certa misura al mondo egeo. Questa notizia è riportata *mutatis mutandis* anche da Tucidide<sup>57</sup>. Ma nella narrazione erodotea questo fiume assume un ruolo di frontiera anche più complesso e generale: esso infatti segna una separazione tra sedentari e nomadi, tra ciò che è alla portata del gran re e ciò che non lo è, tra ciò che è abitabile e ciò che è desertico<sup>58</sup>.

In effetti il passaggio di questo fiume, così come per quanto concerne il caso dell'Arasse, costituisce un momento molto significativo, nell'ottica della narrazione erodotea, della spedizione punitiva di Dario contro gli Sciti. L'avanzata sicura dell'esercito persiano entra infatti in una nuova fase fatta di incertezze, attraversamenti di regioni e di altri fiumi sconosciuti e meravigliosi che disorientano e spazientiscono lo stesso Dario di fronte ad un nemico che non si decide ad attaccare battaglia e continua a fuggire per le steppe sterminate<sup>59</sup>. Da questo punto di vista gli studiosi sono convinti che il racconto erodoteo sulla spedizione scitica sia segnato da inverosimiglianze e incongruenze notevoli<sup>60</sup>: Erodoto seguì probabilmente delle fonti che lo avevano informato sul passaggio dell'esercito persiano dell'Istro; sapeva inoltre che dopo un certo lasso temporale lo stesso esercito era ritornato al punto di partenza<sup>61</sup>. Su quanto però era avvenuto nel frattempo è probabile che lo storico disponesse di poche e non molto approfondite informazioni che forse ricalcavano racconti orali di provenienza scitica che presentavano le vicende della guerra contro Dario in termini epici e novellistici<sup>62</sup>. Va comunque osservato che il recente rinvenimento dell'iscrizione frammentaria di Dario presso Phanagoria, nella penisola di Taman', se quest'ultimo fu il reale luogo dell'erezione della stessa iscrizione, ha rafforzato le posizioni di chi sostiene l'attendibilità storica del racconto erodoteo; vero è comunque, come affermano Rollinger e Degen, che nessuna delle posizioni degli studiosi può essere esclusa con facilità: "All of them are perfectly 'possible' though entirely hypothetical"<sup>63</sup>.

Dopo aver preso coscienza della difficoltà di avere la meglio sugli Sciti, che avevano mostrato non solo di non temere l'esercito di Dario, ma addirittura di

<sup>56</sup> Hdt. 4.99.1–2. Cf. 4.80, 118. Vedi Corcella, 2007: 651; Dan, 2011: 56.

<sup>57</sup> Thuc. 2.97.1.

<sup>58</sup> Hdt. 5.9–10.

<sup>59</sup> Hdt. 4.102–142.

<sup>60</sup> Per un approfondimento recente sulla questione vedi Tsatskhladze, 2019; cf. Gaetano, 2020: 60–62. Per i termini del dibattito si veda da ultimo anche Rollinger / Degen, 2021: 199; sulla campagna scitica di Dario cf. Tuplin, 2010; tuttavia non manca chi ritiene degno di attenzione il racconto erodoteo da un punto di vista storico: cf. Tsatskhladze, 2019: 115, 142–145.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Gaetano, 2020: 60–62.

<sup>62</sup> Su questo aspetto si veda già Dumézil, 1980: 323–332.

<sup>63</sup> Rollinger / Degen, 2021: 199.

prendersi gioco dei soldati persiani<sup>64</sup>, il gran re decise di ascoltare il consiglio del fido Gobria, secondo il quale era meglio battere in ritirata e raggiungere in fretta proprio l'Istro per evitare che gli Sciti vi arrivassero prima di loro e, in combutta con gli Ioni, distruggessero il ponte sul fiume e decretassero la rovina dell'esercito persiano<sup>65</sup>.

Il passaggio a ritroso del fiume sancisce quindi l'insuccesso della missione promossa da Dario e decreta simbolicamente il momento della sconfitta del re. Così come per l'Arasse, il passaggio in un senso o nell'altro di un fiume si carica di significati simbolici che, al di là del contesto narrativo erodoteo in cui si trovano, sono testimoni della mentalità achemenide e della percezione che i Persiani avevano dei fiumi soprattutto in ottica politica e strategica. Ora, come si è visto, la questione della plausibilità storica della missione di Dario in terra scitica costituisce una problematica per molti versi complessa: a questo bisogna aggiungere che nell'iscrizione di Behistun Dario parla di una spedizione contro i *Sakā tayai xaudām tigrām baranti*,<sup>66</sup> notoriamente 'gli Sciti che portano il copricapo appuntito', i quali vengono citati come *Sakā tigraxaudā* nelle iscrizioni di Dario e Serse comprendenti le liste dei popoli inclusi nell'impero persiano<sup>67</sup>. Va detto che la tendenza più recente tra gli studiosi è quella di considerare non 'sovrapponibile' la spedizione scitica dell'iscrizione di Behistun con quella erodotea partita dalle coste del mar Nero<sup>68</sup>; piuttosto si pensa con maggiore convinzione che la spedizione di Behistun faccia riferimento ad uno o più interventi dell'esercito persiano nelle regioni a est e a nord-est ai confini dell'impero – zone, come si diceva, abitate dai Massageti<sup>69</sup>. Se si volesse invece vedere nel racconto erodoteo un riferimento a quanto detto da Dario nell'iscrizione in questione, come in passato non si è mancato di fare<sup>70</sup>, si potrebbe scorgere un accenno all'attraversamento dell'Istro in un passaggio dell'iscrizione di Behistun. In DB §74 si legge della rivolta dei Sakā guidati da Skunkha e pesantemente sconfitti dal sovrano achemenide e dal suo esercito.

Parla re Dario: dopodiché io partii con un esercito per Sakā, dietro ai Sakā che portano il cappuccio a punta. Questi Sakā mi vennero contro. Quando al mare (*drayah*) ar[rivai, oltre ad esso allora con l'esercito] tutto passai (*viyatarayam*).<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Hdt. 4.134.1–2.

<sup>65</sup> Hdt. 4.134.3.

<sup>66</sup> DB §74.

<sup>67</sup> Briant, 1996: 185–194.

<sup>68</sup> Per questo si veda Rollinger / Degen 2021, 188.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> Vedi ad esempio Lecoq, 1997: 214.

<sup>71</sup> Trad. it. D. Asheri, Milano 1993.

Questo passo presenta problemi di integrazione e interpretazione, così come tutto il testo relativo alla quinta colonna dell'iscrizione, che costituisce, secondo la *communis opinio*, un'aggiunta posteriore al resto dell'iscrizione, e della quale possediamo il testo solo in anticopersiano poiché mancano le versioni in elamico e babilonese<sup>72</sup>. Per quanto riguarda nello specifico il nostro discorso, è in particolare la traduzione del termine *drayah* a presentare le difficoltà maggiori; il termine può voler dire tanto “mare”, che è il significato comune delle iscrizioni achemenidi, tanto “fiume”, senso che ritroviamo nel termine *darya* nel persiano dell'Afghanistan, ma che con ogni probabilità era così inteso già nell'antichità. Bisogna comunque affermare che la prima ipotesi, anche per criteri di coerenza con le altre iscrizioni achemenidi che possediamo, resta la più probabile, anche se non bisogna dimenticare che il testo in questione fa parte di un'aggiunta posteriore per di più soggetta a deterioramento e quindi bisognosa di integrazione: di fatto si tratta di una questione che resta (leggermente) aperta. Se si accetta che il termine vada tradotto con “mare”, bisognerà pensare che si tratti del mar Caspio e di conseguenza i Sakā in questione erano situati nella Transoxiana; se si accetta invece che si tratti del “fiume”, quest'ultimo potrebbe essere identificato proprio con l'Istro: Dario si riferirebbe allora agli Sciti abitanti della regione del Ponto Eusino<sup>73</sup>. Ma forse, sulla scia di Rollinger e Degen più che cercare a tutti i costi un'identificazione precisa è più opportuno inquadrare il problema nella prospettiva generale della costruzione mentale dello spazio imperiale e dei confini dello stesso che si attesta nelle iscrizioni achemenidi<sup>74</sup>: restando al solo Erodoto però i due studiosi pensano che l'Arasse delle *Storie*, descritto come un fiume di enorme portata, possa essere apparso agli occhi di Erodoto come un vero e proprio mare: “it becomes plausible to identify Herodotus' Araxes with the drayah crossed by Darius and his troops, as well as the Sakā tigraxaudā with the Massagetae”<sup>75</sup>. Tuttavia, al di là di questi aspetti relativi alla questione della storicità del racconto erodoteo e al suo rapporto con l'iscrizione di Behistun, mi preme sottolineare un aspetto che costituisce il *fil rouge* di questo lavoro: è evidente come il re abbia l'intenzione di sottolineare il buon esito del passaggio del mare o del fiume.

## 5. Il passaggio dei fiumi

Da quanto è emerso in questi casi esemplificativi, il passaggio del fiume rappresenta un momento che tanto le fonti greche quanto le iscrizioni dei sovrani achemenidi mettono in risalto: non si tratta di un semplice atto militare all'interno di una spedizione contingente, ma è a tutti gli effetti un momento altamente significativo nella mentalità reale achemenide, sia come simbolo ideologico di affermazione dell'autorità sovrana, sia come impresa che sancisce il passaggio nella terra

<sup>72</sup> Approfondimento in Rollinger / Degen, 2021: 187–188 con ampia bibliografia.

<sup>73</sup> Lecoq, 1997: 214.

<sup>74</sup> Rollinger / Degen, 2021: 203–207.

<sup>75</sup> Rollinger / Degen, 2021: 211.

di conquista. In relazione all'attraversamento dei corsi d'acqua da parte dei sovrani persiani nelle *Storie*, non si tratta a mio avviso solo di un aspetto della narrazione connesso alle dinamiche della preparazione alla guerra; da questo punto di vista è carico di senso il fatto che Erodoto senta la necessità di comunicare al lettore una vera e propria istanza dei re persiani, cioè quella di mettere in risalto l'atto del passaggio del fiume (o del mare)<sup>76</sup>.

Già alcuni studiosi si sono chiesti quale 'genuino' significato iranico si celi dietro al racconto erodoteo: sul solco tracciato da G. Dumézil, D. Briquel e J.-L. Desnier hanno cercato di interpretare il passaggio del fiume come un atto dai significati ben precisi all'interno dell'ideologia politico-religiosa iranica<sup>77</sup>. Nella religiosità iranica le acque infatti costituiscono il regno del dio Apām Napāt, colui che detiene lo *Xvarənah* (prop. "luce della Gloria"): la legittimità del sovrano infatti si fonda sul possesso dello *Xvarənah*, comprovato dalla sua capacità di dominare le acque. Tuttavia, e per ammissione degli stessi studiosi, l'interpretazione del dominio delle acque da parte del re alla luce della padronanza dello *Xvarənah* resta niente più che un'ipotesi sulla quale si può lavorare "pour qu'elle reçoive un degré suffisant de probabilité"<sup>78</sup>. Ma su questo tornerò a breve.

Più di recente e con maggior convinzione Rollinger ha dimostrato che il tema del passaggio del fiume da parte del re si ritrova già nella cultura mesopotamica<sup>79</sup>: anche questo aspetto rientrerebbe nella volontà di confronto con le precedenti realtà imperiali di cui si trova traccia nelle iscrizioni achemenidi, su tutte quella di Behistun<sup>80</sup>. Al di là dell'aspetto tecnico del superamento del corso d'acqua si tratta di un tema epico-eroico legato alla figura del sovrano frequentemente attestato nelle iscrizioni reali neo-assire. I re assiri avevano la consuetudine di contare le volte in cui avevano attraversato un fiume nel corso degli anni dei loro regni; così Shalmanassar III ricorda di aver attraversato l'Eufrate ventitré volte in altrettanti anni di regno<sup>81</sup>, mentre il re Tiglath-Pileser I afferma di aver passato lo stesso fiume ventotto volte, due volte in un anno<sup>82</sup>. È vero che nelle iscrizioni achemenidi i sovrani non mostrano un interesse paragonabile a quello dei re assiri; tuttavia, alla luce di quanto emerso, non si può negare che il motivo dell'attraversamento dei fiumi sia penetrato, sebbene in misura minore, nella propaganda politica achemenide.

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<sup>76</sup> Cf. Biondi, 2020b: 45–51.

<sup>77</sup> Briquel / Desnier, 1983; Desnier, 1995.

<sup>78</sup> Desnier, 1995: 166.

<sup>79</sup> Rollinger, 2013.

<sup>80</sup> Rollinger / Degen, 2021: 187–188.

<sup>81</sup> RIMA–3, 79; A.0.102.16:181b–182.

<sup>82</sup> RIMA–2, 43, A.0.87.4:34.

## 6. Il gran re e le acque

Vorrei tornare adesso sulla questione del rapporto tra il gran re e le acque, sulla capacità cioè del sovrano di ‘manipolare’ corsi d’acqua o bracci di mare rendendosi gestore in qualche modo delle stesse, sia per motivi legati all’espansione territoriale, sia per fattori di controllo idrico o ancora per dinamiche legate alle vie di comunicazione e trasporto all’interno dell’impero. In questo senso mi sembra che tanto Erodoto quanto le iscrizioni achemenidi possano dirci qualcosa in merito.

Erodoto racconta nel III libro un episodio tanto emblematico quanto interessante: c’è una pianura in Asia, ai confini tra Corasmi, Ircani, Parti, Saranghei e Tamanei, chiusa tutta intorno da una catena montuosa, e in questa catena ci sono cinque gole<sup>83</sup>. Da questa catena montuosa scorre un grande fiume, l’Aces, forse da identificare con l’Oxus o, meglio, con l’odierno Atrak, che segna i confini tra il Turkmenistan e l’Iran orientale<sup>84</sup>; prima che i Persiani si impadronissero di queste terre il fiume irrigava i territori, andando attraverso ogni gola in ciascuno di loro<sup>85</sup>. Ma dopo che i Persiani si impadronirono di questi territori

Il re ha ostruito le gole dei monti ed ha posto chiuse a ciascuna gola; una volta sbarrata la via d’uscita dell’acqua, la pianura all’interno dei monti diventa un mare: il fiume vi sbocca, ma non può uscire da nessuna parte. Coloro che in precedenza erano soliti servirsi dell’acqua, non potendo più servirsene subiscono un grave danno: poiché, se durante l’inverno il dio fa piovere per loro come per gli altri uomini, d’estate, quando seminano miglio e sesamo, hanno penuria d’acqua. Quando dunque non viene loro assolutamente concessa, essi e le loro mogli si recano in Persia, si mettono davanti alla porta del re e si lamentano con grandi grida; il re, per quanti soprattutto ne hanno bisogno, dà ordine allora di aprire le chiuse che immettono nella loro direzione. Quando la loro terra si è imbevuta d’acqua a sazietà, queste chiuse sono sbarrate, e il re dà disposizioni di aprirne altre per quanti restano e ne hanno soprattutto bisogno<sup>86</sup>.

<sup>83</sup> Hdt. 3.117.1

<sup>84</sup> Asheri, 2007: 505.

<sup>85</sup> Hdt. 3.117.2.

<sup>86</sup> Hdt. 3.117.3–6. τὰς διασφάγας τῶν ὀρέων ἐνδείμας ὁ βασιλεὺς πύλας ἐπ’ ἐκάστη διασφάγι ἔστησε• ἀποκεκλημένον δὲ τοῦ ὕδατος τῆς ἐξόδου τὸ πεδίον τὸ ἐντὸς τῶν ὀρέων πέλαγος γίνεται, ἐνδιδόντος μὲν τοῦ ποταμοῦ, ἔχοντος δὲ οὐδαμῆ ἐξήλυσιν. οὗτοι ὄν οἱ περ ἔμπροσθε ἐώθεσαν χρᾶσθαι τῷ ὕδατι, οὐκ ἔχοντες αὐτῷ χρᾶσθαι συμφορῇ μεγάλῃ διαχρώνται. τὸν μὲν γὰρ χειμῶνα ὕει σφι ὁ θεὸς ὥσπερ καὶ τοῖσι ἄλλοις ἀνθρώποισι, τοῦ δὲ θέρος σπεύροντες μελίην καὶ σήσαμον χρῆσκονται τῷ ὕδατι. ἐπεὶ ὄν μὴδὲν σφι παραδιδῶται τοῦ ὕδατος, ἐλθόντες ἐς τοὺς Πέρσας αὐτοὶ τε καὶ γυναῖκες, στάντες κατὰ τὰς θύρας τοῦ βασιλέως βοῶσι ὠρυόμενοι, ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς τοῖσι δεομένοις αὐτῶν μάλιστα ἐντέλλεται ἀνοίγειν τὰς πύλας τὰς ἐς τοῦτο φερούσας. ἐπεὶ δὲ διάκορος ἢ γῆ σφῶν γένηται πίνουσα τὸ ὕδωρ, αὗται μὲν αἱ πύλαι ἀποκληθῶνται, ἄλλας δ’

Erodoto conclude il racconto affermando che l'apertura delle chiuse fa ricavare al re grandi ricchezze che sono da annoverare in più rispetto al tributo<sup>87</sup>. Ora, quanto dice Erodoto, al di là delle problematiche legate sia alla localizzazione della regione in questione<sup>88</sup>, sia al carattere della narrazione<sup>89</sup>, conferma a mio avviso un elemento importante: il sovrano achemenide rivolge una particolare attenzione alla gestione dei fiumi e non esita a intervenire direttamente sui loro corsi, quando questi costituiscono un mezzo per la sua affermazione politica. In questo caso l'affermazione del sovrano è legata in verità alla gestione economica dell'Aces e delle sue acque. Interessante è anche il fatto che i popoli sottomessi si recano direttamente in Persia a supplicare il re perché restituisca loro l'acqua: evidentemente riconoscono anch'essi la capacità, se non addirittura il diritto, di Dario di dominare le acque e di disporne a proprio piacimento.

La volontà da parte del sovrano achemenide di piegare i corsi d'acqua ai propri scopi è rintracciabile anche nel caso, molto celebre in verità, del canale che collegava il Nilo al mar Rosso. Erodoto afferma che il faraone egizio Neco, figlio di Psammetico, fu il primo ad adoperarsi per lo scavo di un canale che dal Nilo conduceva al mare Eritreo (= mar Rosso), ma fu poi Dario a scavare effettivamente il tracciato del canale<sup>90</sup>. Di questa notizia troviamo conferma ancora una volta nelle iscrizioni achemenidi. Del canale in questione c'è traccia in effetti in una iscrizione trilingue<sup>91</sup> ritrovata da Charles de Lesseps nel 1866 in prossimità di Kabret, sito a 130 km da Suez<sup>92</sup>. Questa iscrizione occupa la parte inferiore di una stele in granito rosa, chiamata 'stele di Chalouf'<sup>93</sup>: il tema centrale è appunto lo scavo del canale di Suez. Nel testo anticopersiano dell'iscrizione Dario dichiara di essere un Persiano che a partire dalla Persia ha conquistato l'Egitto; egli ha ordinato di scavare un canale che da una riva del Nilo giungesse presso il mare che viene dalla Persia (il mar Rosso). Dario rivendica inoltre il fatto che questo canale è stato scavato così come egli aveva ordinato e grazie a questo le navi andavano dall'Egitto alla Persia, secondo la sua volontà<sup>94</sup>. Secondo G. Posener la prima misura intrapresa da Dario fu quella di inviare una missione navale di celebrazione: lo studioso arriva a sostenere quest'ipotesi connettendo l'apertura

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ἐντέλλεται ἀνοίγειν ἄλλοισι τοῖσι δεομένοισι μάλιστα τῶν λοιπῶν. Trad. it. A. Fraschetti, Milano, 1990.

<sup>87</sup> Hdt. 3.117.6.

<sup>88</sup> I fatti in questione andrebbero localizzati, seppur con una certa vaghezza impossibile da eliminare, nel sedicesimo *nomos* (cf. Hdt. 3.93.3), in un'area posta ad est del mar Caspio; cf. Asheri, 2007: 505.

<sup>89</sup> Su questo aspetto si veda Asheri, 2007: 505.

<sup>90</sup> Hdt. 2.158.1.

<sup>91</sup> L'iscrizione in origine era trilingue: oggi il testo babilonese è interamente perduto.

<sup>92</sup> Lecoq, 1997: 127.

<sup>93</sup> Lecoq, 1997: 127–128; cf. Aubert, 2004: 225.

<sup>94</sup> DZc §3.

ufficiale del canale, databile al 518 a.C., con il viaggio di Scilace di Carianda<sup>95</sup>.

L'importanza anche simbolica di quest'opera compiuta da Dario, di cui è testimone pure Erodoto, è sottolineata dalla volontà del sovrano di celebrarla e ricordarla: il testo dell'iscrizione mette in risalto come il re abbia ordinato lo scavo di questo canale e come quest'ultimo sia stato realizzato in modo confacente ai suoi ordini. È esplicito inoltre l'obiettivo del sovrano nello scavo del canale: aprire una via di comunicazione diretta per i viaggi delle navi tra Egitto e Persia. L'intento propagandistico del testo della stele è evidente: Dario si 'appropria' dell'impresa della conquista dell'Egitto, che di fatto era stata compiuta da Cambise. Probabilmente non c'è solo la volontà di sottrarre la paternità dell'impresa al re Cambise, rispetto al regno del quale Dario voleva porsi in linea di discontinuità soprattutto in Egitto<sup>96</sup>; c'è anche e soprattutto l'intento di sottolineare la capacità del gran re, grazie all'apertura del canale, di aver reso l'Egitto più facilmente controllabile e direttamente connesso alla Persia. L'apertura del canale costituisce un ulteriore gesto che sancisce un predominio del re sulle forze naturali, acqua e terra in questo caso, che garantisce una volta di più l'universalità e la connessione delle regioni dell'impero.

### Conclusioni

L'idea che si ricava quindi da questi esempi che abbiamo analizzato è che all'interno dell'ideologia imperiale i fiumi svolgono certamente un ruolo di frontiera tra l'impero e le regioni esterne ad esso: tuttavia il concetto di frontiera non può essere inteso in via definitiva, ma in un senso più dinamico, direi 'fluidò'. Il fiume infatti cessa di essere frontiera e diventa un mezzo per l'espansione imperiale quando il re e il suo esercito lo attraversano: la concezione universalistica dell'impero persiano, infatti, mal si concilia con l'ammissione di un limite geografico dello stesso impero. In effetti il senso generale dell'iscrizione di Behistun sta nell'affermazione del potere del Gran Re presso tutti i popoli conosciuti; Dario stesso si definisce gran re, re dei re, re dei popoli. Nella versione babilonese dell'iscrizione di Elvend egli si definisce il re delle regioni della totalità di tutte le lingue<sup>97</sup>. Nelle iscrizioni di Naqs-e Rostam Dario afferma di essere il re dei popoli di tutte le origini, il re della terra lontana<sup>98</sup>; nelle iscrizioni di Persepoli Dario si definisce re grazie ad Ahura Mazda che gli ha donato la regalità su questa

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<sup>95</sup> Posener, 1936: 48–87, 180–181; su Scilace di Carianda vedi ora Zizza / Biondi, 2020: 244–245 con bibliografia.

<sup>96</sup> La politica di Cambise in Egitto è segnata in Erodoto da toni particolarmente empi e sprezzanti: emblematico il caso dell'uccisione del bue Api da parte del sovrano persiano; vedi in particolare Hdt. 3.29. Non così nelle iscrizioni di Udjahorresnet, in cui il tono è decisamente diverso e Cambise è presentato come re benefattore: per un primo approfondimento si veda Briant, 1996: 66–72.

<sup>97</sup> DE(B) §2.

<sup>98</sup> DN<sub>a</sub> §2.



vasta terra dove esistono numerosi paesi: la Persia, la Media, e gli altri paesi d'altre lingue, delle montagne e delle pianure, dei paesi al di qua e al di là del mare, dei paesi al di qua e al di là del deserto<sup>99</sup>. Infine, nelle iscrizioni di Susa, lo stesso sovrano persiano si autodefinisce re di tutta la terra secondo il buon volere di Ahura Mazda che lo ha preferito come uomo, ponendolo a capo di tutta la terra<sup>100</sup>.

È in questo senso che si chiarisce tanto l'insistenza di Erodoto sulle imprese dei sovrani persiani connesse al passaggio dei fiumi, tanto la stessa esigenza di comunicare ai sudditi la capacità di attraversare fiumi o bracci di mare collocando i re medesimi in una dimensione superiore a quella puramente umana; grazie ad Ahura Mazda il re supera gli ostacoli naturali e si fa garante della volontà divina che lo vuole padrone di tutta la terra, compiendo con l'attraversamento del fiume e con l'espansione del potere imperiale nient'altro che la volontà della divinità. Così si spiega l'importanza attribuita da Dario anche all'attraversamento del fiume Tigri di cui leggiamo nella stessa iscrizione di Behistun inserito nel contesto della rivolta scoppiata a Babilonia contro l'impero: è interessante notare che Dario, per indicare il passaggio del Tigri, utilizza un termine, *viyatarayāmā*, che è lo stesso impiegato per indicare l'attraversamento del *drayah* scitico, in §74, *viyatarayam*. L'avversario del re persiano è Naditabaira (Nidintu-Bel nella versione babilonese dell'iscrizione), che si ribellò assumendo il nome di Nebuchadnezzar III, figlio di Nabonedo. Dario in persona prese il comando della spedizione contro di lui, ma il fiume Tigri, celebre per la pericolosità delle sue acque, rappresentava per le schiere persiane un serio ostacolo per la vittoria<sup>101</sup>.

Parla re Dario: quindi io partii per Babilonia contro quel Naditabaira che si diceva Nabuccodonosor. L'esercito di Naditabaira teneva (il Tigri), stava là; e (il Tigri) per via delle acque era navigabile. Poi io posi l'esercito in (barche di) cuoio, feci portare altri su cammelli, e ad altri procurai cavalli. Ahura Mazda mi dette soccorso; per volere di Ahura Mazda traversammo il Tigri. Qui sconfissi grandemente l'esercito di Naditabaira.<sup>102</sup>

È molto significativo come Dario sottolinei la volontà di Ahura Mazda di permettere ai Persiani il passaggio del fiume per riprendere il potere presso Babilonia. Che il fiume qui non costituisca una frontiera propriamente detta con un luogo sconosciuto quanto piuttosto un ostacolo alla presa del potere poco importa: nell'ideologia imperiale di acquisizione e rafforzamento del potere la differenza tra i due ruoli che può svolgere un fiume è praticamente inesistente.

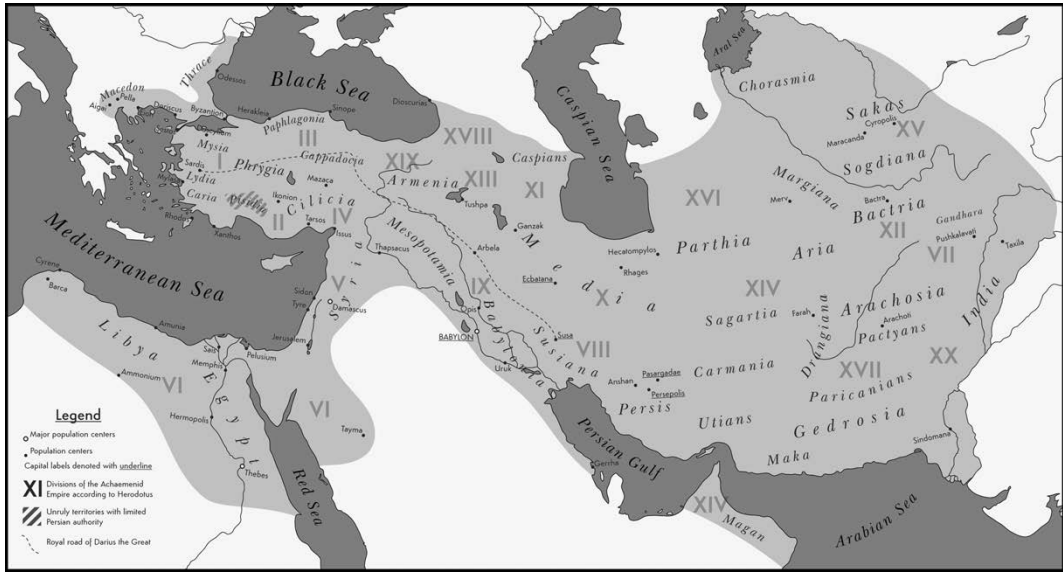
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<sup>99</sup> DPg §1.

<sup>100</sup> DSf §5.

<sup>101</sup> Vedi in proposito Filippone, 2016.

<sup>102</sup> DB §18.

Impero persiano.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Achaemenid\\_Empire#/media/File:Achaemenid\\_Empire\\_500\\_BCE.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Achaemenid_Empire#/media/File:Achaemenid_Empire_500_BCE.jpg) (accessed Sept. 5, 2023).

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# The Cimmerian Bosphorus as a Boundary between Europe and Asia according to Aeschylus

An Invented Tradition?

Luisa Prandi

## Abstract

This study may be considered as a sequel of my paper about the Thracian Bosphorus (*Kaskal* 2022), where I argued that the evidence of the real weight and role of the Bosphorus, with regard to the relationships between Greeks and non-Greek people, points to the conclusion that the channel was originally perceived as a passage from one country to another, not as an actual boundary.

The same conclusion does fit to the Cimmerian Bosphorus, on the basis of a three steps exposition; a careful analysis of Aeschylus' tragedies concerning the boundary between Europe and Asia (*Prometheus Bound* and *Suppliants*, where the poet mentions Io; a fragment of *Prometheus Unbound* and *Persians*); some considerations about the traditions, in Herodotus, Strabo and other writers, concerning the rivers Phasis and Tanaïs as boundaries, because our sources connect the final course of the Tanaïs and the Cimmerian Bosphorus; an overview of the Greek colonization in that area and of the Persian initiatives against the Scythians in the 6<sup>th</sup> century.

## Premise

In the ShaBo project I considered the Thracian Bosphorus an inescapable case study in the search for areas and reasons that define boundaries and dividing lines – natural or ethnic – between the Ancient Greek and Near Eastern world <sup>1</sup>. And the evidence of the real weight and role of the Thracian Bosphorus, with regard to the relationships between Greeks and non-Greek people, points to the conclusion that the channel was originally perceived as a passage from one country to another, not as an actual boundary.

Ancient writers offer two possible reasons that the name Bosphorus became associated with the Thracian channel. One concerns the link with the myth of Io (the woman loved by Zeus and turned into a heifer, who has pursued by a gadfly sent by Hera, and wandered across the channel toward Asia). The other involves reference to real and anonymous cattle which for various reasons crossed it. The name Bosphorus is always associated with the idea that the Thracian channel was a means to cross from one side to another, a point of passage. Moreover, a se-

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Prandi, 2021. A further outcome of this project was my book about Byzantium, cf. Prandi, 2020.

quence made up of ethnonyms only, Mysian or Phrygian or Thracian Bosphorus, appears in some late writers, like Dionysius of Chalcis, Dionysius of Byzantium, Arrian and Apollodorus. We may note that although they refer to it without providing any commentary, they were certainly aware of the myth of Io. The occurrence in Apollodorus of *poros* (i.e. passage, not *Bosporos*, passage of the bovid) to indicate the path of the channel is also very striking. The word *poros* is particular in being a part of the compound *Bosporos*. Or rather, this may be a basic name derived from remote memories, that is merely *poros* “passage, crossing”, from time to time specified as passage of the Mysians, or Phrygians, or Thracians, or finally of a bovine animal, of the heifer, that is Io.

The late writers already mentioned reflect a couple of important aspects. On one hand, the map of Greek colonization of the Straits area at the beginning of the first millennium BC; there were settlements on both sides without territorial limits. On the other, the policies of the Greek cities in this area in a later epoch, especially Byzantium, were not restrained by considering the channel a foreclosure to their freedom of action. All the evidence suggests that no dividing lines between Europe and Asia did pass through the Thracian Bosphorus; the channel has always had a merely geographical significance, as Herodotus himself points out.

Without having published them, I presented this evidence and my conclusions in a webinar organized in March 2021 by colleagues at the University of Trento. On that occasion my friend Serena Bianchetti told me that the Bosphorus, that is the channel, the strait explicitly defined in our sources as a boundary between Europe and Asia, is the Cimmerian Bosphorus referred to by Aeschylus in the tragedy *Prometheus Bound*. So, I was forced to conduct further research and to write something like a sequel.

My present paper is divided into three parts:

- 1: A careful analysis of Aeschylus' tragedies concerning the boundary between Europe and Asia, not only *Prometheus Bound* and the *Suppliants*, where the poet mentions Io, but also a fragment of *Prometheus Unbound* and *Persians*.
- 2: Some considerations about the traditions, in Herodotus, Strabo and other writers, concerning the rivers Phasis and Tanaïs as boundaries, because our sources connect the final course of the Tanaïs and the Cimmerian Bosphorus.
- 3: An overview of the Greek colonization in that area and of the Persian initiatives against the Scythians in the 6<sup>th</sup> century.

My aim is to determine whether the Greek evidence shows some perception of the Cimmerian Bosphorus as a real frontier.



to cross the Maeotis strait, that is the Cimmerian Bosphorus<sup>7</sup>, required “a bravery that mangles the entrails” (v. 734)<sup>8</sup>. And, almost in compensation for an effort that surged from the creature's very depths, this crossing remained of great renown (*logos megas*) among humankind, through the eponymy of the channel which is named after Io in the form of a heifer<sup>9</sup>. We may however notice that, after the emphasis on bravery and eponymy, the poet marks the passage from Europe to Asia in a lower tone, like an obvious element of Io's wandering. The second passage seems to announce the whole journey of the pursued woman once more, but v. 790 is related to v. 735 and resumes the narration of the crossing of the stream between the continents<sup>10</sup>, that is the Bosphorus strait<sup>11</sup>.

Both passages show that although the whole ancient tradition related the eponymy of Io to the Thracian Bosphorus, Aeschylus relates it to the Cimmerian. Then he defines this strait as a point of separation between Europe and Asia. The poet refers to a couple of elements that were well-known in his time: the relationship between Io and a channel (a *Bosporos*) and the Cimmerian ethnic name for the channel between Maeotis and Pontus. He links them in an unusual way<sup>12</sup>. However, we must find the roots of this link: did it originate before Aeschylus, or did he invent it himself?<sup>13</sup>

*Prometheus Bound* belongs to a trilogy and the tragedy with which the story ended, *Prometheus Unbound*, is lost. A fragment survives, strongly related to my topic (frg. 191 Radt), handed down by Arrian, Procopius and a scholiast to Dionysius Periegetes<sup>14</sup>. Arrian (*Per. Pont. Eus.* 19) describes the Maeotis area and cites the tradition that the River Tanais (Don) was the boundary between Europe and Asia and that its stream continued through Maeotis into Pontus<sup>15</sup>. Then Arrian

<sup>7</sup> The poet uses the word Cimmerian to define the isthmus before the Tauric Chersonese and the channel, perhaps because the toponym Bosphorus became more important later on. Regarding the direction of travel, from north to south, see Bonnafé, 1991: 165–166, with previous bibliography, and Bianchetti, 1988: 207–208, who usefully pinpoints that all the itinerary before the crossing of the Cimmerian Bosphorus is set in Europe.

<sup>8</sup> Thus Bianchetti, 1988: 211, “un coraggio che strazia le viscere”.

<sup>9</sup> See Prandi, 2021 for remarks on this etymology.

<sup>10</sup> The use of the dual form is notable. Griffith, 1983: 228 stresses *epeiron* (v. 735) and *epeiroid* (v. 790) as markers of a resuming narration.

<sup>11</sup> Thus Wecklein, 1891: 116 and Griffith, 1983: 228. However, Bianchetti, 1988: 213 thinks that the stream is the River Phasis.

<sup>12</sup> Although all our sources on the link between the Thracian Bosphorus and Io are later than Aeschylus, cf. Bonnafé, 1991: 152.

<sup>13</sup> As Griffith, 1983: 219 suggests.

<sup>14</sup> These writers do not appear to depend on one another because each focuses on a particular feature of the tragic passage: Arrian quotes the verse, Procopius mentions only a word but offers an accurate location of the verse; the scholiast refers not only to Aeschylus but also to Sophocles.

<sup>15</sup> I return to this below, see *Geography*.



traces back to *Prometheus Unbound* the opinion that the River Phasis was the boundary, quoting some verse where the Titans say τῆ μὲν δίδυμον χθονὸς Εὐρώπης / μέγαν ἤδ' Ἀσίας τέρμονα Φᾶσιν (where the great Phasis, common boundary of the land of Europe and Asia). Procopius (*De Bell.* VIII 6. 15) briefly recalls both traditions, about the Tanaïs and the Phasis as boundaries; he does not quote any verse of Aeschylus but refers to *Prometheus Unbound* and clearly echoes his epithet referring to the Phasis (*termona*). The passage of the scholiast (*Schol. Dion. Per.* 10 p. 323, 22 Bernhardt), who provides a commentary on Dionysius Periegetes, who wrote that the River Tanaïs divided Europe from Asia, is more puzzling. He briefly refers to *Prometheus Unbound* by Aeschylus and Sophocles' *Scythae*, another lost tragedy, for this opinion. It seems that Aeschylus believed that the Tanaïs was the boundary. However, we may note that Arrian quotes the verse of Aeschylus on the Phasis and that Procopius and Arrian agree on this point. May be the scholiast was careless or too hasty in his writing<sup>16</sup>.

In any case, explaining this clear conflict between two tragedies belonging to the Prometheus trilogy about the boundary between Europe and Asia – Cimmerian Bosphorus or Phasis – is problematic<sup>17</sup>. We have also to take into consideration that the tragedies of Aeschylus contain two other challenging passages concerning this topic. The name Bosphorus appears twice in the tragedy *Persians* (vv. 722–723, 745–746), meaning in a peculiar way the Hellespont yoked by Xerxes<sup>18</sup>. In the tragedy *Suppliants* the daughters of Danaus, searching for protection from the city of Argos, because of their descent from Io recall the wandering of the woman/heifer pursued by Hera. The Danaids mention the crossing of a *poros* marking a boundary<sup>19</sup> in a very difficult passage (vv. 543–548)<sup>20</sup>:

<sup>16</sup> See Dan, 2016: 265–267 for a useful analysis of the passage.

<sup>17</sup> Griffith, 1983: 219 says that either the Prometheus tragedies contradict one another or the poet identified the Tanaïs with the Phasis. Cf. also Dan, 2016: 265–267: I agree with her analysis, but I cannot follow her when she denies all contradiction in Aeschylus.

<sup>18</sup> Aeschyl. *Pers.* 722–723: Atossa – μηχαναῖς ἐξευξεν Ἑλλης πορθμόν, ὅστ' ἔχειν πόρον. / Δαρεῖος – καὶ τόδ' ἐξέπραξεν, ὅστε Βόσπορον κλῆσαι μέγαν; (“By a clever device he yoked the Hellespont so as to gain a passage.” Darius – “What! Did he succeed in closing the mighty Bosphorus?”). 745–746: Darius – ὅστις Ἑλλήσποντον ἱρὸν δοῦλον ὡς δεσμώμασιν / ἤλιπσε σχῆσειν ῥέοντα, Βόσπορον ῥόον θεοῦ (“for he conceived the hope that he could by shackles, as if it were a slave, restrain the current of the sacred Hellespont, the Bosphorus, a stream divine”). Cf. Cahen, 1925: esp. 178–181, and Prandi, 2021: 384, note 30.

<sup>19</sup> As Sommerstein, 2019: 240–241 remarks, the recurring term *-poros* indicates a Bosphorus, but it remains unclear whether this is a real Bosphorus or the Hellespont, as in the verse of *Persians*.

<sup>20</sup> “... traversing many tribes of men, and [545] |according to fate, cut in two the surging strait, marking off the land upon the farther shore|. And through the land of Asia she gallops, straight through sheep-pasturing Phrygia.”

πολλὰ βροτῶν διαμειβομένα  
 φῦλα, διχῆ δ' ἀντίπορον  
 γαῖαν ἐν αἴσα διατέμ-  
 νουσα πόρον κυματίαν ὀρίζει:  
 ἰάπτει δ' Ἀσίδος δι' αἴας  
 μηλοβότου Φρυγίας διαμπάξ.

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The channel is anonymous; vv. 544–546 challenge readers and translators<sup>21</sup>. It will suffice here to remark that the crossing appears fatal (*en aisai*), the *poros* is stormy, and the country on the other side is Asia (therefore Europe is on this side). However, we cannot overlook that the heifer's crossing follows a strange path. As in *Prometheus Bound*, the scenery is fascinating: the earth, like the water, is absurdly divided in two by the animal's crossing; the toponym is lacking, suggesting that the writer and public are both familiar with it. But where is it? After the crossing Io's journey (vv. 547–555) leads her to Phrygia, Mysia, Cilicia and Pamphylia, an itinerary quite compatible with the Thracian Bosphorus – the ford most attested in myth<sup>22</sup> – but not at all in agreement with the Cimmerian Bosphorus.

The passages of *Suppliants* and *Prometheus Unbound* are very different, save for the woman protagonist and especially for their emphasis on the crossing.

### Geography

The poet does not speak with a single voice. Gathering evidence as to whether some geographical tradition concerning the boundary between Europe and Asia was current in the time of Aeschylus would be profitable, so I proceed to the second point of my paper and take into consideration the well-known Herodotean polemic about the division of the continents.

Notoriously, Herodotus did not accept that there was a division and thought that the commonly cited boundaries were artificial dividing lines<sup>23</sup>. However, he is a precious witness of the existence in the 5<sup>th</sup> century of two different opinions about the boundaries between Europe and Asia (IV 45. 2)<sup>24</sup>: οὐδ' ἔχω συμβαλέ-

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Miralles, 2019: 327–329 who gives an accurate overview of the problems and proposed solutions. See in the same volume an Italian translation put forward by L. Lomiento “attraversando numerose stirpi d'uomini, e in due (*dichei*) l'opposta terra tagliando per volere del fato (*en aisai*) definisce un passaggio agitato dai flutti”.

Another anonymous mention of some straits in Soph. *Trach.*, 100–101; see Davies, 1991: 80–81 about the proposed suggestions.

<sup>22</sup> As Bonnafé, 1991: 148 remarks, this itinerary is also shorter and easier.

<sup>23</sup> Bianchetti, 1988: 212–213 rightly observes that these views were contemporary, not in sequence.

<sup>24</sup> “I cannot guess for what reason the earth, which is one, has three names, all women's, and why the boundary lines set for it are the Egyptian Nile river and the Colchian Phasis river (though some say that the Maeotian Tanaïs river and the Cimmerian Ferries are boundaries); and I cannot learn the names of those who divided the world, or where they

ζθαι ἐπ' ὅτευ μιῆ ἐούση γῆ οὐνόματα τριφάσια κέεται ἐπωνυμίας ἔχοντα γυναικῶν, καὶ οὐρίσματα αὐτῇ Νεῖλός τε ὁ Αἰγύπτιος ποταμὸς ἐτέθη καὶ Φᾶσις ὁ Κόλχος οἱ δὲ Τάναιν ποταμὸν τὸν Μαιήτην καὶ πορθμήια τὰ Κιμμέρια λέγουσι), οὐδὲ τῶν διουρισάντων τὰ οὐνόματα πυθέσθαι, καὶ ὅθεν ἔθεντο τὰς ἐπωνυμίας.

I think it pointless to linger over the difficult identification of the rivers, particularly the Phasis, or the reasons why one river or the other might be chosen<sup>25</sup>. I prefer to focus on the idea that the course of the Tanais continued after its mouth as a boundary into the stream which crossed Maeotis and came to the channel of the Cimmerian Bosphorus<sup>26</sup>. After Herodotus, this idea appears in several other writers<sup>27</sup>. Ephorus<sup>28</sup> is credited with having written that the River Tanais flows into Maeotis and the Cimmerian Bosphorus (70F159)<sup>29</sup>: ὡς δὲ Ἐφορος ἱστορήκεν, ἐκ λίμνης τινός, ἧς τὸ πέρας ἐστὶν ἄφραστον· ἐξίησι δὲ διστομον ἔχων τὸ ρεῖθρον ἐς τὴν λεγομένην Μαιῶτιν ἐς τὸν Κιμμερικόν τε Βόσπορον. Strabo (VII 4. 5)<sup>30</sup> says ... διαίρει δ' ὁ στενωπὸς οὗτος τὴν Ἀσίαν ἀπὸ τῆς Εὐρώπης καὶ ὁ Τανάϊς

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got the names which they used.”

<sup>25</sup> See Bianchetti, 1988: esp. 212–213, and Dan, 2016: esp. 265–267. Bonnafé, 1991: esp. 171–172, rightly points out that Herodotus and Aeschylus had geographical opinions we do not know but apparently different from our own.

<sup>26</sup> Wecklein, 1891: 145–146 and Bianchetti, 1988: 212–213 believe in a similar combination but between the Phasis and Cimmerian Bosphorus.

<sup>27</sup> However, I think that neither F191 of Aeschylus, which mentions only the River Tanais as a boundary, nor the short Hippocratic treatise *De aer. Aq. Loc.* 13 mentioning only Maeotis, refer to the Tanais-Maeotis-Cimmerian Bosphorus line, as Asheri / Lloyd / Corcella, 2007: 614 suppose.

<sup>28</sup> Ephorus is quoted by the *Peripl. Pont. Eux.* 49 M (= ps-Scymn. 860–873 M). However, the passage drew attention mainly because of the presence of the name Hecataeus: ἀπὸ δὲ τῶν Μαιωτῶν λαβοῦσα τὸ ὄνομα Μαιωτῆς ἐξῆς ἐστὶ λίμνη κειμένη, εἰς ἣν ὁ Τάναις, ἀπὸ τοῦ ποταμοῦ λαβὼν τὸ ρεῦμα Ἀράξεως, ἐπιμίσηθ', ὡς Ἐκαταῖος ἔφορτιεις. (“Next comes the Maeotic Lake which gets its name from the Maeotai. The Tanais, which receives water from the river Araxis, flows into this lake, as Hecataeus”). Cf. Parker, 2016, who comments on 70F159 but does not linger on the content of the Ephorean fragment. The mention of Hecataeus is classified in the *BNJ* both as a fragment of Hecataeus of Miletus (1F195), and as fragment of Hecataeus of Abdera (264F13) – cf. respectively Pownall, 2016 and Lang, 2016 – because Jacoby conjectured, perhaps too subtly, that the sequence ἐφορτιεις should be read as εἶφ' ὁ Τήιος and recalled that Abdera was a colony of the inhabitants of Theos. Asheri / Lloyd / Corcella, 2007: 614 wrongly refer to Hecataeus of Miletus that which the author of *Periplus* traces back to Ephorus. In my opinion the best commentary is that made by Marcotte, 2002: 140 and 250–251, also very useful regarding the relationship between the *Periplus* and the *Periegesis* of pseudo-Scymnus (see F15b).

<sup>29</sup> “But as Ephorus has written in his work, (it receives water) from a certain lake, the extent of which is unknown. The current flows, with a double mouth, into the so-called Maeotis and into the Cimmerian Bosphorus.”

<sup>30</sup> “This strait (the Cimmerian Bosphorus) separates Asia from Europe, and so does the Tanais river”.

ποταμός<sup>31</sup>, and explicitly couples the Bosphorus and Tanaïs. After him, Dionysius of Byzantium says that the River Tanaïs is the *peras* (limit) of the Maeotis, *oros* (boundary) between the continents (the word is in dual form), flowing into the Cimmerian Bosphorus.

As mentioned above, Arrian (*Per. Pont. Eus.* 19), before quoting the verse from Aeschylus' *Prometheus Unbound* and without explicitly mentioning the Cimmerian Bosphorus, clearly talks of a stream from the course of the Tanaïs to Pontus Euxinus through Maeotis, and therefore through the channel. Procopius too, in the passage cited above (*De Bell.* VIII 6. 15), before referring to Aeschylus says that some people take as a boundary the River Tanaïs, the Maeotis Lake and the Cimmerian strait.

Unlike Herodotus, who restricts himself to recording anonymous opinions that he does not agree with, the later writers accept them and prefer one of the two rivers. They had read Herodotus' work, but were informed by more than his brief remarks. More probably they witnessed the survival and acceptance of geographical views that we know already existed in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. Many were born in cities around Pontus (save Ephorus, who was in any case born in a town in Asia Minor), therefore they lived not far from these geographical features and were not unaware of them.

This perspective on the water system tends to render the river plus the channel as a single feature, the boundary between the continents. Among the writers already mentioned, Strabo says twice (XI 1. 1 and 2. 1) that he chose the Tanaïs as a border marker and so he wants to use it as the starting point of his geographical description.

### **Ethnicity and politics**

Perhaps this outlook is merely theoretical and does not match any actual frontier, ethnic or political. The map of human settlement in the area, Greek and non-Greek, may corroborate this feeling. This leads to the third point of my paper. Greek colonization of the Cimmerian Bosphorus dates back at least to the beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> century and, compared to the geographical frames we have seen outlined from Aeschylus onwards, was quite unrestricted in its practices. I would like to recall some well-known features.

Miletus was the metropolis of many colonies<sup>32</sup>, save Phanagoreia founded later by some inhabitants of Theos forced out by the Persians<sup>33</sup>. I will shortly return to this issue. The scarce literary evidence and unusual archaeological remains

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<sup>31</sup> Right afterwards, Strabo says that the course of the Tanaïs is oriented north-south. However, when the river meets Maeotis its course runs east-west instead.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Kochelenko / Kouznetsov, 1990; Gallotta, 2010: 12–19 and 115; Vinogradov, 2012.

<sup>33</sup> Scholars suppose that the Milesian colonies were also a result of the Persian expansion toward the Aegean Sea, cf. Gallotta, 2010: 13.

from the Maeotis area raise many questions, about chronology and typology<sup>34</sup>. However, it is indisputable that Greek colonies were present on both sides, European and Asiatic, of the Cimmerian Bosphorus<sup>35</sup>. The situation along the shore of the Hellespont, Propontis and Thracian Bosphorus waterway was very similar<sup>36</sup>, as well as on the Pontus Euxinus coast. This rules out the possibility that the Greeks or other people perceived and exploited these channels and lakes as significant dividing lines and ethnic boundaries. The presence of seminomadic people<sup>37</sup> around Pontus Euxinus is also relevant, particularly because the Cimmerian Bosphorus seems to have functioned as a useful crossroads for terrestrial movements of human groups<sup>38</sup>.

Our sources document the Scythian tribes in particular, but Greek works name the channel after the Cimmerians<sup>39</sup>. This may be similar to the case of the Thracian Bosphorus, defined also as the *poros* of the Mysians and Phrygians with regard to the movements of these people. Scattered evidence, not always easy to understand, leads us to conclude that in the 7<sup>th</sup> century the Cimmerians in Anatolia were a destabilizing factor for organized polities such as Assyria, Phrygia and Greek cities<sup>40</sup>.

However, they are protagonists only in a story recounted by Herodotus<sup>41</sup>. This *logos* is not entirely true and has no connections with Maeotis. Herodotus says that the Cimmerians, driven by the Scythians, pushed in turn by Massagetae, were forced to leave their country and move to Anatolia. According to the historian, the Scythians reached the country of the Cimmerians by crossing the River Araxes

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<sup>34</sup> We must also take into consideration the presence of areas that are by now submerged. Cf. Kochelenko / Kouznetsov, 1990; De Boer, 2006; the papers collected by Solovyov, 2008, especially Podosinov.

<sup>35</sup> See Müller, 2000, Müller, 2002 and Müller, 2004–05.

<sup>36</sup> See again Prandi, 2021, about the area of the Thracian Bosphorus.

<sup>37</sup> I employ the term generically. See Lanfranchi, 1990: 140–145 for useful remarks about the concept of nomadism in reference to the Cimmerians.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. the well-known report of Her. IV 28 about the iced-up channel (also Hellan. 4F167), perhaps an exceptional event that has become a literary *topos*. Cf. anyway Vinogradov 2012, 59–60 and 64, with references to his other studies, on mobility.

<sup>39</sup> The presence of a non-Greek toponym such as Panticapaeum may indicate the existence of a different name for the channel. However, the meaning currently proposed (“fish way” by Diakonoff, cited by Lanfranchi, 1990: 266 note 103) does not belong to frontier terminology.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Lanfranchi, 1990 and Lanfranchi, 2002 with updated bibliography.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Her. IV 11 for the whole story; 11. 1: ἔστι δὲ καὶ ἄλλος λόγος ἔχων ὅδε, τῷ μάλιστα λεγομένῳ αὐτός πρόσκειμαι. For other information and references to the wanderings of the Cimmerians cf. Her. I 6. 3; 15 e 103. 3, always marked by the feature that the Scythians pursued the Cimmerians. The question of the Cimmerians’ historical movements and locations is beyond my scope; I discuss instead some perceptions of their presence. See Ivantchik, 2001 and 2005.

(IV 11). This river flowed through the Caucasus area, between Pontus Euxinus and the Caspian Sea, a southern land far from Maeotis<sup>42</sup>.

However, right afterwards Herodotus lists toponyms related to the Cimmerians (IV 12. 1) in a country settled by them and then later by the Scythians. He says that Cimmerian names were given until his time to some walls, fords, a land (*chora*) and the Bosphorus (this last name referring to the channel between Pontus and Maeotis)<sup>43</sup>.

The geographical discrepancy within this passage of Herodotus, who mentions the River Araxes, which is far from the Bosphorus, prevents us from finding in the pursuit of the Cimmerians by the Scythians the occasion when the former gave their name to the Bosphorus, by crossing it. Just like the Greeks thought that the Mysians and Phrygians did by crossing the Thracian Bosphorus. However, Herodotus leads us to suppose that the Greeks from the colonies on the shore of the Cimmerian Bosphorus were the mediators, or even the creators, of the tradition about the toponym. These Greeks came from cities in Asia Minor and had experience of the Cimmerians<sup>44</sup>, but they evidently believed that Maeotis was a land where the Cimmerians had settled just long enough for their name to become attached to it<sup>45</sup>.

In any case, the resettlements of the Cimmerians and Scythians do not show that the Cimmerian Bosphorus was regarded as a frontier.

In this regard, Achaemenid politics during the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century may deserve some consideration. These concerned the relationship of a great empire with its neighbours<sup>46</sup>.

Ctesias says (688F13.20) that Ariaramnes, the satrap of Cappadocia, received orders from Darius to lead an expedition against the Scythians and made use of 30 penteconters (galleys). The official aim was to take prisoners and the satrap achieved it, also capturing the brother of the Scythian king, who was already in

<sup>42</sup> The account of Herodotus raises many problems. See Macan, 1895: 7–9; Asheri, 1988: 273 and 382–383; Gaetano, 2020: 56–57.

<sup>43</sup> IV 12. 1: και νῦν ἔστι μὲν ἐν τῇ Σκυθικῇ Κιμμέρια τείχεα, ἔστι δὲ πορθμῖα Κιμμέρια, ἔστι δὲ καὶ χωρῆ οὖνομα Κιμμερίη, ἔστι δὲ Βόσπορος Κιμμέριος καλεόμενος.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Lanfranchi, 1990: 142.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Asheri / Lloyd / Corcella, 2007: 580–581. The passage in *Odyssey* where the entry to the Nether Realm is said to be close to the Cimmerians's country (XI 14–19) predates Herodotus. However, I think that these verses have no relationship with my topic and refer to Lanfranchi, 2002.

<sup>46</sup> This passage of Herodotus, who wrote keeping the Persian expansion in mind, is worthy of note (IV 100. 1): τὸ δ' ἀπὸ τῆς Ταυρικῆς ἤδη Σκύθαι τὰ κατῴπερθε τῶν Ταύρων καὶ τὰ πρὸς θαλάσσης τῆς ἠοίης νέμονται, τοῦ τε Βοσπόρου τοῦ Κιμμερίου τὰ πρὸς ἐσπέρης καὶ τῆς λίμνης τῆς Μαιήτιδος μέχρι Τανάιδος ποταμοῦ, ὃς ἐκδιδοῖ ἐς μυχὸν τῆς λίμνης ταύτης (Beyond the Tauric country the Scythians begin, living north of the Tauri and beside the eastern sea, west of the Cimmerian Bosphorus and the Maeotian lake, as far as the Tanais river, which empties into the end of that lake). However, this would take us too far.

jail. Then the historian says (688F13.21) that Darius, after an exchange of harsh letters with the other king, yoked the Thracian Bosphorus and the Ister and led his troops against the Scythians<sup>47</sup>. The geographical position of the satrapy of Cappadocia and the use of ships may suggest – and is anyway not in conflict with – the possibility that Ariaramnes travelled to the Cimmerian Bosphorus<sup>48</sup>.

As has already been emphasized<sup>49</sup>, the Persian expeditions against the Scythians in the 6<sup>th</sup> century and the so-called Persian wars against the Greeks in the 5<sup>th</sup> Century were very similar, each involving a two-stage plan. First, a military expedition entrusted to a general, then a more systematic mobilization of troops under the leadership of the king<sup>50</sup>. In the first case the destination of the expeditions was not the same, but the Persians marched against the same people. On the other hand, the Greek states were numerous, as were the Scythian tribes.

We lack information to assess the risk posed by the first expedition to the Greek colonies in Maeotis, but one of these cities might have seen the approaching Persians as a tragic *dejà vu*. Phanagoreia was founded on the Asiatic shore of the Cimmerian Bosphorus, by inhabitants of Theos in Asia Minor who fled due to Persian pressure<sup>51</sup>. The town was a late colonization, not much earlier than the expedition led by Ariaramnes. The mention of Phanagoreia recalls a fragment of an old Persian inscription recently found there, lying upside-down as a doorstep in a burnt house. The text mentions the name Darius<sup>52</sup>. It is arduous to somehow link this inscription to the expedition of Ariaramnes, both because the fragment is isolated among the epigraphic discoveries from the city<sup>53</sup>, and because the satrap ruled for a short time, too brief for the production of an official document. According to Ctesias, his task was not territorial conquest but to round up manpower,

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<sup>47</sup> Herodotus (4 122) says that Darius pursued the Scythians until the Maeotis and beyond the Tanaïs.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Nieling, 2010: 125 and 127; Tuplin, 2010: 301–302; Tsetskhladze, 2013: 212 and Tsetskhladze, 2017: 32–33; Rung-Gabelko, 2019: 115 n. 117 (with reservations). Cf. Gallotta, 2010: 23–28 for the possibly relationship with the birth of the Bosphoran kingdom, another issue unconnected to my topic.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Lenfant, 2004: LXXXII–III. There is no trace of it in the Persian evidence, but we have no compelling reasons to doubt of the story.

<sup>50</sup> The expeditions against the Greeks occur later than the Scythians ones because of some problems concerning succession to the throne.

<sup>51</sup> There are brief reports about its origin in Her. I 168 and Arr. F55 Roos-Wirth. The inhabitants of Theos first found refuge at Abdera. The possibility that Phanagoreia may have been a mixed colony from Theos/Abdera does not significantly affect my topic. The colony may date back to c. 540 BC. Cf. Rubinstein, 2004: 1101–102; Avram / Hind / Tsetskhladze, 2004: 950–951; Lloyd / Asheri / Corcella, 2007: 188–189 (*ad* IV 168).

<sup>52</sup> The inscription was found in 2016 and published by Kuznetsov / Nikitin, 2019, who suggested a link with Xerxes. Cf. Rung / Gabelko, 2019, who provides an exhaustive overview of the issues raised (91–99).

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Rung / Gabelko, 2019: 110–111.

no more than a raid<sup>54</sup>.

The hypothesis that the inscription may be a fragment of the inscribed stelae erected by Darius on the European side of the Thracian Bosphorus, when his troops were leaving for the 514 BC Scythian expedition<sup>55</sup>, is attractive. For example, we know that the Byzantines reused a portion of it in their sacred buildings<sup>56</sup>. The fragment found during the excavations in Phanagoreia might be some sort of trophy, intended perhaps for display in an anti-Persian city such as Phanagoreia<sup>57</sup>.

### Some conclusions

We can now assemble a few final considerations regarding the whole waterway consisting of Hellespont, Propontis, Thracian Bosphorus, Pontus Euxinus, Cimmerian Bosphorus, Maeotis and Tanaïs.

To the question of whether the Persian generals and kings went beyond some real boundaries, I think we can answer negatively, with regard to both the Scythian and Persian expeditions<sup>58</sup>. When Darius organized the Scythian expedition in 514 BC and crossed the Thracian Bosphorus, many pro-Persian tyrants were already in charge in the Greek cities on the European side (Her. IV 138. 1–2). Likewise, the Hellespont was not a boundary when Xerxes crossed it, because the European side and the Thracian Chersonese had been under Persian control since the previous century. Certainly, the Greeks later referred to the channel as a limit that the Persian king had dared to pass<sup>59</sup>.

The channel between Propontis and Pontus received the name of Bosphorus, referring to the myth of Io, but also to the *poros*, passage, of Mysians, Phrygians and Thracians. The channel between Pontus and Maeotis was linked only to the Cimmerians; there is no other name that points to the Scythians. It should be noted that the Cimmerians appear to be the most ancient people tied to the area and to Greek memories, although their presence dates back only to the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium. And the possibility cannot be ruled out that Cimmerian Bosphorus, or better *poros* as in Aeschylus, was the name of a place where the Cimmerian people came and settled.

Let's go back to Aeschylus, my starting point. The verse mentioning the Cimmerian Bosphorus contains nothing which may be related to the Persian wars, the conflicts between Greeks and Barbarians or between freedom and slavery, or to the intertwining of blame, punishment, and revenge. This means that Aeschylus

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<sup>54</sup> Cf. also Vinogradov, 2012: 146.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. again Rung / Gabelko, 2019.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Her. IV 87. 1–2. Cf. Prandi, 2020: 32–34, on the dating of this action by the Byzantians and Prandi, 2021 on the monument's meaning with regard to the Bosphorus.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. again Rung / Gabelko, 2019: 111–116.

<sup>58</sup> The first Persian war is of course unrelated to this question, since the Persians crossed the Aegean Sea.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Prandi, 2021.



does not appear in this case to have been influenced by a way of thinking that was born in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, after the Greek victory over the Persians. Like Herodotus, he seems to bear witness to previous geographical systems, showing curiosity but remaining neutral, more interested in literary effects than scientific concreteness or historical faithfulness.

The Cimmerian Bosphorus, like the Thracian, never marked a boundary and never played any actual role in the process of shaping boundaries between Greek and non-Greek peoples. We can however perceive its place in a theoretical definition of the dividing-lines between the continents, an abstract process that did not take account of human presence, ethnicity or political structures and organizations in these lands.

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