

## An introduction to Lydian studies

The ancient region of Lydia in western Anatolia stretches from the present-day Turkish province of Manisa in the west to Uşak in the east (**fig. 1**). It was one of the largest landscapes in Asia Minor in ancient times and was inhabited by the Lydians and Maonaens. Lydia was not a coastal region but an inner eastern Aegean landscape. Pliny the Elder gave a concise and equally vague description of the country: the center of the heartland comprised the mountain Tmolos (now Beydağları), on which the capital was Sardis, the Gygian lake (today Marmara Gölü), and the surrounding fertile plain along the Hermus. In the south, Lydia bordered on Caria, in the east on Phrygia, in the north on Mysia, and extended to Ionia in the west. Turning to modern publication, C.H. Roosevelt's 2009 book, entitled *The archaeology of Lydia, from Gyges to Alexander*, has a special emphasis on archaeology of Lydia, as well as its history within the wider context of ancient Asia Minor. For the chronology of Lydia, Roosevelt has recently developed a uniform scheme to meet the methodological difficulties:

1. Pre-Lydian period (before the 12th century B.C.).
2. Early Lydian period (about 12th century to seventh century B.C.).
3. Middle Lydian period (about seventh century to 547 or 545 B.C., the time of Croesus, the last and most famous Lydian king).
4. Late Lydian period (about 547 B.C., after the conquest of Sardis by Cyrus the Great and creation of the Persian satrapy Sparda, until 217 B.C.).
5. Post-Lydian period (late third century B.C. to third century A.D.).
6. Province "Lydia" after Diocletian's provincial reforms in A.D. 297. The province, however, consisted only of the slightly extended Hermus Valley, the heart of Lydia.
7. Early Byzantine rule from the beginning of the fifth century A.D. until 616/617, when Sardis and the surrounding area suffered massive destruction from the incursion by the Persian troops of the Sassanid Khosrau II.
8. Byzantine empire, from A.D. 617 until A.D. 1405, by which time Sardis was a small castle that was finally destroyed by the Golden Horde of Timur the Mongol.

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The following subjects are currently being discussed by scholars in the context of Lydia and the Lydians: Society, social structure, military, economy, resources, agriculture and livestock, ceramics, textiles and luxury, commerce, religion, cults and cultic sites, visual arts, architecture, music, and the Lydian language. The most important topics of Lydian research are a.o. local resources, especially the gold from the Tmolos, agriculture and pastoralism, the oldest coinage in the Mediterranean, and the so-called Royal Road or King's Road in Lydia.

The name Lydia was linked to wealth in antiquity. In most cases it mentioned prominently that the Pactolus poured out gold from the Tmolos, which would have led to the wealth of the Lydians. This view continued into the 20th century but has become increasingly relativized in recent years. In fact, Lydia was well positioned economically. Firstly, there were the rich soil, which, together with the mild climate, produced very good agricultural yields. The uncultivated land also offered good grazing grounds and game for hunting, as well as forests that supplied firewood and timber. In addition to the gold of the Tmolos (as recent research has shown, it was indeed gold and not electrum, as has long been assumed), there existed iron, copper, lead, and mineral deposits suitable for textile dyeing. Furthermore, there was marble, limestone, jasper, and a kind of onyx that was named "sardonyx" after the city of Sardis. Lastly, the favourable geostrategic position needs to be mentioned: Lydia was a borderland on the route between the Anatolian plateau and the Aegean coast.

As regards agriculture, the produce of Lydia was not significantly different from most Greek cities. In addition to cereals, legumes, pumpkins, and olives, a very popular local wine was produced. Reddish figs were called "Lydian figs" in antiquity and chestnuts "Sardinian acorns." In the seventh century B.C., the first coins were issued as a means of payment, which represent the oldest coin finds in the ancient world. The so-called Royal Road was one of the first major, long-distance highway in antiquity and was built by Persians to allow rapid communication across his very large empire, stretching from Susa to Sardis. The first coinage as well as the route of the Royal Road were linked most probably to the local resources of Lydia.

Since the end of the 19th century Lydia has been scientifically researched. One of the most significant scientific initiatives of the 20th century was the American "Archaeological Exploration of Sardis" project. Since the late 1950s, numerous scholars, notably G.M.A. Hanfmann, C.H. Greenewalt, Jr., R. Gusmani, P. Herrmann, A. Ramage and C. Foss have contributed to the study of the city's as well as region's archaeology, history, and epigraphy in the Lydian, Persian, Hellenistic, Roman, Early Byzantine, Byzantine, and Late Medieval periods.<sup>1</sup> Following the 2009 publication by C.H. Roosevelt on Lydia, three more books have appeared in recent years: a historical book on Lydia by Peter Högemann and Norbert Oettinger in 2018, a study by Annick Payne on the Lydian language, and the epigraphic monograph of Hasan Malay (†) and Georg Petzl on religious texts from Lydia.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The project website is one of the most informative archaeological digital resource in Turkey with an extensive corpus of excavated finds and their detailed descriptions: <<https://sardisexpedition.org/>> (accessed 1 January 2021).

<sup>2</sup> Professor Hasan Malay passed away suddenly on February 23rd, 2022, in Izmir. Furthermore, a noteworthy dissertation is completed by Kevin Leloux on "the Lydian Kingdom under Alyattes' and Croesus' reigns. A kingdom at the crossroads of the Greeks cities and the eastern monarchies. Research on its internal organization and its foreign policy" (original title in French "La Lydie d'Alyatte et Crésus. Un royaume à la croisée des cités grecques et des monarchies orientales. Recherches sur son organisation interne et sa politique extérieure") at the Université de Liège in Belgium. Its website is as follows: <<https://orbi.uliege.be/handle/2268/220928>> (accessed 1 January 2021).



Fig. 1. Map of Lydia and neighbouring areas in western Asia Minor (by S. Pataci, 2021).

Since 2005, Lydia has become a significant research area owing to the increasing number of archaeological projects, such as the excavations at Thyatira, Tripolis-on-the-Maeander, and Blaundos, and field surveys in southeastern Lydia and around Hypaepa in the Cayster Valley. Additionally, the archaeological departments at the Universities of Manisa and Uşak are very active in the region. The local museums of Manisa, Uşak, and Akhisar in Lydia have also carried out a large number of rescue excavations and producing publications. Some of the Lydian material in the Museums of Afyonkarahisar, Ödemiş, Tire, Izmir, and Kütahya have been published.

For the current state of Lydia research two conferences and their contributions are decisive: one is the volume *Forschungen in Lydien*, published in 1995 and edited by E. Schwertheim, and the other is the proceedings of the Lydia Conference held in Rome in 1999 and edited by M. Giorgieri, M. Salvini, M.-C. Trémouille, and P. Vannicelli. This volume is the result of a third major symposium on Lydia, which was held on May 17-18, 2017 at Dokuz Eylül University (DEU) in Izmir, Turkey. This event, titled «Archaeology and history of Lydia from the early Lydian period to late antiquity (eighth century B.C.-sixth century A.D.)» was intended to cover time frame as much as possible stretching from the Middle Iron Age to the late antiquity. Our intention was to broaden the timeline of Lydian studies from the Lydian period to the Early Byzantine period and to bring together researchers from a broader range of disciplines, including archaeology, history, epigraphy, etc., as well as to discuss a series of questions related to greater diversity perspectives interdisciplinary. One of our questions was whether there was a «continuation» of the earlier phases in Lydia during the Hellenistic, Roman and Early Byzantine periods, a time frame from the late fourth century B.C. until the middle of the sixth century A.D., as there is a great cultural continuity in all parts of Asia Minor. In this symposium 65 papers were accepted as contribution. Thematic works were divided into 20 sessions dealing with both Lydia and other neighbouring regions in western Anatolia.

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As said above, the object of this study is to bring together in one volume some recent historical and archaeological studies concerning Lydia, of the Lydian through Byzantine periods. In terms of structure, the book moves from a general to a specific treatment of the region. Since Lydia has a long tradition of treatment as a special region within the field of ancient Anatolian studies, we have divided the book into six chapters and we have added some useful abstracts in the chapter 7 at the end of the book.

We should like to express our gratitude to the many scholars who have helped us in this endeavour, but especially to Dr Chris Lightfoot, the former curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, now living in Kyrenia in Northern Cyprus, for correcting our book entirely. We hope that this volume proves worthy of his trust to our work and will serve as a type of commemoration to him and his lasting influence on scholarship in ancient Anatolia. We have been fortunate to have the support of successive directors of the excavations in Lydia and their encouragement at a crucial juncture kept us going and enabled us to complete the volume. For general inspiration, advice, and various contributions, we thank all of the current excavators, surveyors and researchers in Lydia. The three anonymous reviewers of the manuscript did a thorough and meticulous job for which we are extremely grateful. Outside reviewers have a thankless, yet vital role in the publication of scholarly work. We have attempted to incorporate their suggestions in the hope of making this a stronger and more useful book. Every editor needs a good redactor and we have had the advantage to have some of the best in the publications office of the ISTA in Besançon. We would like to acknowledge Ms Laurène Leclercq and Professor Antonio Gonzales, for their endless

patience and assistance. A systematic search for relevant bibliographic material was last conducted in November 2020.

Usual abbreviations follow *L'Année philologique*. Others are cited in the bibliography of each author before the bibliographical references.

For Greek names, the Greek ending has been kept, except for the names that are traditionally Latinized, such the names of ancient authors (Herodotus, Diodorus, Plutarchus, Nicolaus Damascenus etc.) or other famous names (Croesus, Cyrus, Darius). The established list of authors and works in the *Greek English lexicon* of H.G. Liddell, R. Scott and H.S. Jones (p. xvi-xxxviii) was used as a reference. Greek toponomy was also preserved (Pergamon etc.), except for Ephesus, Stratonicea, Laodicea, Cyzicus etc. Exceptions can be found in author citations or in bibliographic references. Articles reflect the state of knowledge as of 2017, the year in which they were submitted for publication here.

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Unfortunately two of our authors have been passed away; Dr Fred C. Woudhuizen from the Dutch Archaeological and Historical Society, Heiloo on September 28th, 2021, and Professor Yannis Pikoulas from the University of Thessaly in Volos on May 10th, 2022. Dr Woudhuizen was an independent scholar who was examining in particular the writing systems of the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age in the eastern Mediterranean, especially Luwian hieroglyphs of Asia Minor. Professor Pikoulas was a professor of ancient history at the University of Thessaly, and was the founder as well as one of the editors of the journal *Ἡρόδος* of the Greek Epigraphic Society.

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