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CYRUS THE GREAT, RELIGION, AND
THE CONQUEST OF ANCIENT ANATOLIA

PhD Classics 2013

By Selga Meta Medenieks
(Student number 08134511)



Thesis 10074

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SUMMARY

With the invasion of Anatolia in the sixth century BC Cyrus the Great began a series of conquests that would form the Persian Empire. For his tolerance and, indeed, support of foreign religions during his rule, Cyrus has come to be regarded as the world's first humanitarian imperial leader. This reputation is based largely on actions in Babylonia and Palestine (related in the Cyrus Cylinder and the Old Testament), but little is known about Anatolia and the period in which his religious policies were probably formulated and first implemented.

This thesis uses ancient historical and archaeological sources to:

— **examine the interaction between religion and politics in ancient Anatolia prior to the institution of Persian rule**, in order to shed some light on the expectations of indigenous populations on the advent of Cyrus. These were no doubt shaped by their previous experience of invasion and domination by another foreign, imperial power: Assyria. It has long been claimed that Assyrian imperialism was driven by religious imperatives or alternatively that Assyria was the originator of a religion-centred political ideology that sustained its empire and was forced upon client kingdoms. However, the earliest surviving written records of Anatolia reveal a longstanding familiarity with the use of religion to exercise political control in newly conquered territories. The evidence of the place of religion and religious institutions in the Hittite, Urartian, Phrygian and Lydian empires exhibits all the religious topoi that would be at the core of Neo-Assyrian imperialism: the special relationship between king and protector god; the plundering of religious images; the concept of divine abandonment; and the honouring of the god/s of the conqueror alongside reconciliation with selected local deities. The commonalities in Anatolian and Assyrian practice are surprising and suggest the early assimilation of a Near Eastern model of conquest and rule.

— **identify the main elements of Cyrus the Great's religious ideology and its strategic applications.** The formative influences of Elam and Media – antecedents of the Persians – is traced, showing that it was probably not Zoroastrianism but the old Indo-Iranian religion that shaped Cyrus' conduct. The analysis reveals the roots of Cyrus' policy as particularly Persian and distinguishable from those of earlier rulers in Anatolia.

— **present a new understanding of Cyrus' use of religion in conquest and explore his reputation for tolerance of religious diversity.** It is argued that the approach of Cyrus the Great to religion and religious life, then unique in the ancient world, was a deliberate political strategy instituted by him from the time of his earliest imperial actions. In recent years Cyrus' reputation for religious tolerance has been dismissed as simply an extrapolation from accidental survivals in the historical record, principally the Cyrus Cylinder and Old Testament accounts, and that his treatment of defeated peoples was no different to that of earlier conquerors who manipulated local religious traditions for political and economic gain. However, an overview of events in Anatolian cities at the time of conquest illustrates Persia's early religious politics in practice and demonstrates the distinctiveness of Cyrus' approach. His policy is shown to be the first attempt at empire in Anatolia that neither extinguished nor subjected local belief systems to that of the conqueror. He endeavoured to encourage acculturation of Persian customs, using commonalities between the cultures wherever possible, to unify his administrators with his subjects, but no coercion is evident. However, the case in favour of Cyrus as supporter of religious liberty is balanced by acknowledgment of the limits of Cyrus' 'tolerance', drawn at political rebellion. In such circumstances, religious institutions could be singled out as ideological targets for reprisals.

Methodology

The research was conducted primarily at Trinity College, Dublin, with supplemental visits to archives/museums and relevant archaeological sites abroad (Turkey, London, Oxford). Work was conducted under the supervision of Professor Brian McGing (TCD). An interdisciplinary approach was required to properly address the disparate sources for the subject, including sociological (imperial ideology, acculturation), archaeological, art historical (religious artefacts and monuments), and ancient literature (Greek texts). Chapter 1 is devoted to sources and methodological approaches in detail. The guiding principle was to remove the religious assumptions of historiography and ontology before interpreting the evidence.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Before I returned to university to study I worked as an editor and publisher. My authors would disappear into obscure libraries in foreign parts for extended periods of time and on their return be unable to say whether they had made any progress. There would be long, triumphant phone calls upon unearthing the smallest nugget of useful information, and long, miserable ones when a lead failed to pan out. Their reluctance to settle on a definite line of argument and submit draft chapters was baffling; entire years could pass before I had sight of a full manuscript. With the completion of this thesis, I am at last able to say that I empathise completely.

I feel very fortunate to have had erudite colleagues at Trinity College, Dublin. I am especially grateful to my supervisor, Professor Brian McGing, who has always encouraged me without standing over my shoulder. His interest in my subject and our many discussions have been the source of great inspiration; this would have been a much poorer work had it not been for his guidance. I would also like to thank my language teachers, Cosetta Cadau (ancient Greek) and Gabi Nolan (German), for their persistence with a student who never had time for homework assignments and for their friendship. The librarians in TCD's Early Printed Books department could never do enough to help and I would like to express my appreciation for their efforts and years of kindness. To my examiners, Dr Christine Morris (TCD) and Professor Tom Harrison (University of Liverpool), my gratitude for a lively and stimulating discussion.

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and hospitality, *çok teşekkür ederim*. In the course of my stay I was fortunate to make the acquaintance of Professor Geoffrey Summers and Dr Susanne Berndt-Ersöz, who shared their knowledge and experiences most generously.

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This thesis is dedicated with deep affection to my father.

Tētim

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Note on spellings

For the sake of clarity, I have chosen to use the most conventional English-language spelling known to me for the proper nouns occurring in this thesis. For Near Eastern words I have employed Assyriological conventions; otherwise I have tried to use ‘Greek’ spellings as consistently as possible, except in those cases where another spelling is predominant in English-language scholarship, notably ‘Cyrus’ instead of ‘Kyros’.

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IRON AGE KING LISTS

(Spellings as per source: Eder and Renger [2007], except Urartu, from *CTU*, Tavola Cronologica con Sincronismi e Riferimento ai Capitoli.)

Key

- att. attested in Assyrian records
- ca. about

Neo-Assyria	Neo-Elamite	Media	Urartu	Phrygia & Lydia
Aššur-dān II 935-912 Adad-nērārī 912-891 Tukultī-Ninurta II 891-884 Assurnāširpal II 884-859 Salmanassar III 859-824			Aramu att. 859-844 Sarduri I ca. 840-830 Išpuini ca. 830-820 Išpuini and Minua (co-r.) ca. 820-810	
Šamši-Adad V 824-811				

Adad-nērārī III 811-783		Minua ca. 810-785/0 Argišti I ca. 785/0-756
Salmanassar IV 783-773	Humban-tahra I ca. 775 Humban-mena II ca. 775-743	Sarduri II 756-ca. 730
Aššur-dān III 773-755		Rusa I ca. 730-713
Aššur-nērārī V 755-745 Tiglath-Pileser III 745-727	Humban-nikaš I 743-717	Argišti II 713-?
Salmanassar V 727-722 Sargon II 722-705	Šutruk-Nahhunte II 717-699	

Sennacherib
705-681

Asarhaddon
681-669

Assurbanipal
669-631

Hallušu
699-693
Kutur-Nahhunte
693-692
Humban-menana
692-689
Humban-haltaš I
689-681
Humban-haltaš II
681-675
Urtak
675-664

Te'Umman
664-653
Ištarnandi
?-653
Humban-nikaš II
653-652/1
Tammāritu I
653-?
Tammāritu II
652/1-650/49
Intapipi
650/49-648
Humban-haltaš III
648-647

Phraortes
?

Rusa II
att. 672

Rusa III
att. 652

Mita (Midas)
?-696/5

Gyges
att. 668-644

Aššur-eṭel-ilāni 631-627	Humban-habua 647 Tammariṭu II 648-647 Humban-haltaš III 647-645 Pa'e 646	Sarduri III att. 646/2	Ardys 644-?
Sîn-šumu-līšir 627 or 626 Sîn-šarra-iškun 626-612	Indada ca. 630-610 Šutur-Nahhunte ca. 630-ca. 610	Sadyattes ?ca. 624-607	Alyattes ca. 607-561
Aššur-uballiṭ II 612-610/09	Humban-tahra II ca. 620-585 Hallutaš-Inšušinak ca. 620-ca. 585	Cyaxares ca. 614-612	

Humbarini
ca. 585-ca. 565
Šilhak-Inšušinak II
ca. 565-ca. 550

Tepti-Humbar-
Inšušinak
ca. 550-ca. 530
Hutran-tepti
ca. 530
Atta-hamiti-Inšušinak
ca. 530-520

Astyages
ca. ?-553/0

Croesus
ca. 560-ca.546

Introduction

CYRUS THE GREAT, RELIGION, AND POLITICS

Remarkably little is known about Cyrus the Great, founder of the Persian empire in the mid-sixth century BC (r. 550-530 BC). The only information that is reasonably certain to have come from his own mouth is that he was King of Anšan, a region corresponding roughly to modern-day Fārs in the Iranian highlands. Astonishingly, in spite of this lack of first-hand information, Cyrus is regarded today as the exemplar of imperial leadership, admired as much for his manner of dealing with the diverse ethnicities under his rule as he is for creating the largest empire yet seen in the world. For his tolerance and, indeed, support of foreign religions during his rule, Cyrus has been lauded as the world's first humanitarian imperial leader.¹ The supposition that his leadership displayed a liberality in matters of religion unique in the ancient world has been pervasive since the earliest scholarship on Persian history. In 1884 Meyer wrote:

“Die Kriege, durch welche das Reich der Iranier begründet wurde, waren nicht zugleich Religionskriege... Wenn Kyros zweifellos wie Darius ein frommer

¹ As recently as 2008, by the United Nations on International Human Rights Day, December 10, amid celebrations marking the sixtieth anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights: <http://www.un.org/events/humanrights/2008/history.shtml>.

Mazdajasnier war, so schonte er doch durchweg die religiösen Gefühle seiner Unterthanen.”²

Cyrus’ reputation is based largely on actions in Babylonia and Judaea, related in the so-called Cyrus Cylinder and the Old Testament, sources which have been examined on innumerable occasions. By contrast, Anatolia has received comparatively scant attention, although it was the scene of the Great King’s earliest foreign conquests and the period in which his religious policies were probably formulated and first implemented. The objective of the present study is to remedy this lacuna.

The Cyrus Cylinder

Attempts to reconstruct Cyrus’ use of religion in conquest and the consolidation of political power – namely, how his stratagem was conceived and implemented in a subjugated locality – have been made through examination of the so-called Cyrus Cylinder of 538 BC (Fig. 1).³ Although written by recently subjugated Babylonian priests and demanding a critical approach, the text constitutes rare evidence contemporaneous with early Persian expansion. The clay document, a foundation deposit from the sanctuary of the god Marduk in Babylon,⁴ encapsulates the image of Cyrus the conqueror, respectful of local religion and restorer of religious liberties.

a) Legitimation of Kingship

The Cylinder text begins with a third-person enumeration of the impieties of Nabonidus, former ruler of Babylon. Nabonidus’ failings include the installation of incorrect cult images, improper ritual behaviour, and particularly offensive actions in relation to the chief Babylonian deity, Marduk. These last are linked to evil done in Marduk’s city, namely the imposition of corvée on the Babylonians. The Cylinder contrasts these misdeeds with the divinely sanctioned actions of the new king, Cyrus. The Persian is portrayed as the

² Meyer (1884) 608 §506. For a historiographical bibliography on this matter, see Tozzi (1977) 29-30, n. 29.

³ See Appendix for a translation of the full text. Quotations in this thesis are taken from *ANET* 315-316, with the addition of the so-called ‘Yale’ fragment in Cogan, *COS II*, 2.124, 316.

⁴ Discovered in 1879 by the excavator Hormuzd Rassam, apparently at the site of the temple of Marduk at Omran, Babylon: see Kuhrt (1983) 95, n. 12.

instrument of Marduk, restoring order and proper worship. He receives his kingship from Marduk, rather than takes it from Nabonidus.

Cyrus himself declares his kingship somewhat differently in his titulature. While he calls his ancestors Great Kings, Kings of Anšan, Cyrus' own title ambitiously adds that he is "King of the World".⁵ With the conquest of the venerable city of Babylon, his nomenclature includes the hyperbolic titles of Nabonidus:⁶

"King of the World, Great King, [legitimate/] *Mighty King, King of Babylon*, King of Sumer and Akkad, *King of the Four rims* (of the earth)[/*Quarters*]" (§20).

Cyrus then asserts local endorsement by the gods Bel (Marduk) and Nebo/Nabu (Marduk's associate or son), who love Cyrus' rule and desire his kingship (§22). The inhabitants of Babylon are inspired to love Cyrus, who "was daily endeavouring to worship" Marduk (§23). Cyrus' soldiers had their weapons packed away, so little resistance did he encounter en route; the Persian was different to invaders who had sacked the sacred city before. The lack of conflagration or destruction evidence in occupation layers dating to the fall of the city appear to support this contention.⁷ Nabonidus, explicitly "the king who did not worship him (i.e. Marduk)" (§17), was thus delivered into Cyrus' hands.⁸ The role of divinely-appointed liberator of the people clearly appealed to Cyrus and was palatable to the newly conquered population.

The thrust of the justifications in the Cylinder text is that Babylonian ethnicity is not the essential characteristic of a legitimate king; Cyrus' kingship is still founded in a local idiom, the sanction of Babylonian religion. Persian deities do not appear in the Cylinder (nor in any other surviving text of the time). Nabonidus has failed in his primary religious obligation as king to maintain proper relations with the principal Babylonian deity, so Marduk is at liberty

⁵ Inscribed bricks at Ur: Gadd and Legrain (1928) 58, no. 194.

⁶ Nabonidus' titles in italics. These titles were in their turn patterned after inscriptions of the Assyrian king Aššurbanipal: Beaulieu, *COS II*, 2.123A, 311, n. 2.

⁷ Reuther (1926) 34. Cf. Herodotus, *Hist.* I.191, and Xenophon, *Cyr.* VII.5.15, which both allege that Cyrus took advantage of a Babylonian festival to mount a surprise attack. The Old Testament, too, records the tradition that a feast was taking place on the day of the conquest: *Daniel* 5.

⁸ The last surviving building inscription of Nabonidus attests to his efforts to put Sîn in the pre-eminent place among Babylonian gods, an honour customarily accorded to Marduk. Marduk's titles and temples are now Sîn's, while Marduk is entirely absent: Beaulieu, *COS II*, 2.123B, 313–314.

to select another ruler and travel “at his side like a real friend”.⁹ The divinity’s authoritative choice is not merely to be accepted by the people but be greeted with jubilation. It is made reassuringly plain that Cyrus will worship Marduk and will not overthrow the established traditions of kingship. The probable find-spot of the Cylinder at the temple of Marduk is suggestive.¹⁰ Evidently, adherents of the Marduk cult found an ally in Cyrus and secured their return to the centre of Babylonian religious life. The priesthood had been agitating against certain kings for a century and coming into conflict with the army.¹¹ Cyrus secured their favour by protecting Esagila from plunder with a special guard, himself acting in accordance with the temple tradition, and providing them with the security to renew their cult practices under his protection.

Other parts of the kingdom are also named as having had their cult centres damaged by Nabonidus. It is probable that his intention in relocating idols to Babylon was to transfer their adherents’ allegiance to the capital, while preventing Persian appeals to the gods for assistance.¹² If so, his actions were misunderstood by the cities affected. Taking advantage of the resulting ill-feeling, Cyrus demonstrated that freedom of worship would not only be permitted to the people, but would be supported, by the return of cult images to their original locations. The Nabonidus Chronicle records the restoration.¹³ With this action, a positive contrast to Nabonidus must have been inescapable.

Cyrus’ policy had much to recommend it, on both sides. The retention of existing religious customs¹⁴ was both a gesture of goodwill and provided continuity for the community at a time of upheaval. A non-military echelon of the local elite was preserved in return for only one immediate accommodation in the existing belief structure: the substitution of the Persian

⁹ §15. Another text describing the end of Nabonidus’ reign, the pro-Persian ‘Verse Account of Nabonidus’, states plainly that the protective deity of the Babylonian had turned on him, with the result that none of his actions were correct or prospered: *ANET* 312-315, col. i. On the motif of divine abandonment, see below, Ch. 2.

¹⁰ See above, n. 4.

¹¹ Dandamaev (1989) 39.

¹² Dandamaev (1989) 45.

¹³ “From the month Kislev to the month Adar, the gods of Akkad which Nabonidus had brought down to Babylon returned to their places”: *ABC* 110, Chronicle 7.iii.21-22.

¹⁴ Unlike local political and social structures, which were not retained, “except to the extent they could be integrated into the new state-in-formation. Local dignitaries were associated with the government of the Empire as auxiliaries to a new ethnically and socially homogeneous ruling group... consisting for the most part of representatives of the great aristocratic families of Persia”: Briant (2002) 82.

king in the role of preserver. Cyrus' military action and success could be rationalised as the will of the gods; so, consequently, could his kingship. The flexibility of Cyrus' strategy is demonstrated by a text from Ur in which the Persian king is declared the choice of the god Sîn, rather than Marduk.¹⁵

It should be acknowledged that Cyrus was by no means the first to put religion into political service. The Cylinder account of his coming to power can be compared with an earlier one of the monarch whom he displaced: the Babylonian stela from the time of Nabonidus also describes threats that led to changes in kingship in religious terms.¹⁶ Both texts relate the religious crimes of the previous ruler; both show the new leadership to have been brought about by the choice of Marduk; both new kings honour the supreme deity but do not neglect the other deities of the pantheon. Cyrus' re-use of forms familiar to Babylonians gave the reassuring impression of the new ruler observing peacetime norms. Similarly, the writer of the Verse Account of Nabonidus compares Cyrus favourably with a beloved earlier king, this time Nebuchadnezzar, when he takes up a spade to resume the latter's plan to wall Babylon.¹⁷ Nabonidus and Cyrus share a further example of attempting to stand in the tradition of a respected king, namely Aššurbanipal of Assyria. A Nabonidan inscription describes his finding a valuable jasper cylinder seal on which Aššurbanipal had inscribed a eulogy to and a picture of the god Sîn. The seal is put in the Esagila temple, evidently so that oracles can be obtained from the god through it.¹⁸ The action displays the desire of Nabonidus to revive a cult formerly revered by a great king, which presumably contributed to Aššurbanipal's successful reign. The incident may help explain the controversy surrounding Nabonidus' worship of Sîn, beginning with housing the foreign deity (however temporarily) in the temple of Marduk.¹⁹

The discovery of Aššurbanipal's foundation inscription in the ruins of the temple of Sîn in Harran is recorded in the Sippar Cylinder.²⁰ Nabonidus observed that when Aššurbanipal discovered the foundation deposit of his predecessor Shalmaneser he returned the inscription to its original place and added his own. Nabonidus emulated the action of the Assyrian, and

¹⁵ Gadd and Legrain (1928) 96, no. 307. The editors restored Cyrus' name to the broken text based on analogies with the inscribed brick of Cyrus also from Ur (below, n. 37) and the Cyrus Cylinder.

¹⁶ The so-called Istanbul stela, *ANET* 308–311, col. i.

¹⁷ *ANET* 312–314, col. vi.

¹⁸ *ANET* 308–311, col. x.

¹⁹ The Marduk priesthood associated Aššurbanipal with the restoration of the Marduk cult and as protector of its privileges: Kuhrt (1983) 92.

²⁰ Beaulieu, *COS II*, 2.123A, 310–313.

searched for and reburied the foundation deposits of other temples before rebuilding them.²¹ The Babylonian monarch wished it to be known to posterity that he behaved in the traditional kingly manner. Cyrus, too, mentions Aššurbanipal, at the end of the Cyrus Cylinder text, echoing the style of the latter's inscriptions.²² The discovery of an inscription bearing the name of the Assyrian king occurs during the reconstruction of the Babylonian city wall. Unfortunately, damage to the text prevents us knowing what action Cyrus took, but it is not unlikely to have been in the vein of Nabonidus. Both Nabonidus and Cyrus refer respectfully to Aššurbanipal as a king who "preceded me";²³ they now stand in the rank of great kings.

The scholar Pierre Briant wrote that one way Cyrus displayed his imperial programme was through fidelity to the model of Aššurbanipal, with the intention of portraying himself as inheritor of ancient Assyrian power. This took various forms, but was perhaps most visible in the king's titulature.²⁴ Cyrus may have intended to position himself as successor to the Assyrian heritage in Babylon, as Nabonidus tried (in vain) to do. The Cylinder was probably intended to commemorate Cyrus' piety in restoring Babylon and the Marduk cult, as Aššurbanipal did before him.²⁵ It should be noted that inscriptions such as this were not intended primarily for contemporary eyes, but for posterity – and the gods.²⁶ However, the propagandistic content of the Cylinder makes it likely that copies were made available publicly.²⁷

b) Re-establishment of divine order

The second part of the Cylinder is a first-person description of events, purporting to be Cyrus' account of his relationship with Marduk and his institution of a restoration policy commensurate with that god's wishes. The text makes clear the intimate connection between religious order and civil order in the ancient world. Failed worship of the chief deity does

²¹ The Sippar Cylinder mentions the temples of Šamaš and Anunitu: Beaulieu, *COS II*, 2.123A, 312–313.

²² The 'Yale fragment' text: Cogan, *COS II*, 2.124, 316; on the language of the inscriptions of Aššurbanipal see Michalowski (2006) 427.

²³ Beaulieu, *COS II*, 2.123A, 311; Cogan, *COS II*, 2.124, 316.

²⁴ Briant (2002) 44.

²⁵ See Kuhrt (1983) 88, 92.

²⁶ Michalowski (2006) 427.

²⁷ So Grabbe (2004) 79.

damage to the city; similarly, wrongs done to the people constitute evil to the city of which the deity is patron.

“The worship of Marduk, the king of the gods, he [chang]ed into abomination, daily he used to do evil against his [i.e. Marduk’s] city... He [tormented] its [inhabitant]s with corvée-work without relief, he ruined them all” (§§7–8).

The people’s relationship with Marduk was mediated by the king. The Cylinder reports that the situation in Babylon had degenerated to such an extent that Marduk was thought to have left the city entirely. The crisis indicated by this statement is relieved by Marduk’s next action. Rather than abandon the people, he hands the kingdom – and the kingship – to one whose conduct he can approve and who will restore order: Cyrus.

The Cylinder promotes Cyrus as restorer of civil, as well as religious, liberties. His imperial policy does appear to have differed from that of previous rulers of Babylonia, whose efforts to extract a maximum of tribute had ended in forced compliance and group deportations.²⁸ Cyrus pointedly lifts the burden of corvée from the people. This action is very probably in line with the claim of the inhabitants of Babylon to *kidinnūtu* status, i.e. exemption from certain taxes, probably including forced labour, owing to their membership of a community under divine protection.²⁹ According to the Cylinder, Nabonidus had ended that privilege. In the view of the scribes, the imposition of corvée was connected with the king’s devotion to a god other than Marduk.³⁰ Cyrus’ action restored the norm that Nabonidus had impiously disturbed.

At the Iranian commemoration of the 2500th anniversary of the founding of the Persian empire, the Cylinder was promoted as “the first declaration of human rights in the history of the world”.³¹ A belief persists in popular culture, and even among historians, that the Cyrus

²⁸ Dandamaev (1989) 54.

²⁹ See Kuhrt (1983) 89–90, 92.

³⁰ The conflict may have been based on a by-now traditional struggle with the old sacred cities over the privileges granted to the Babylonian cities: see Dandamaev (1989) 41, n. 1.

³¹ From the official publication of the Committee of International Affairs for the festivities: Shafa (1971) 12. The publication emphasized that the king was not only a political and military leader, but a spiritual guide and educator too, and drew a propagandistic parallel between Cyrus and the current sovereign of Iran: *ibid.* 16–17.

Cylinder “proclaimed the freedom of his subject peoples in matters of religion and culture”.³² However, this idea and the impression of the Cyrus Cylinder as declaring a general humanitarian policy in favour of allowing deported groups to return to their homelands, with state support for the restoration of destroyed temples, is mistaken.³³ The repatriation of images and their associated communities referred to in the Cylinder occurs only in named cult centres mainly in or close to Babylonia. It concerns the re-establishment of neglected cultic norms,³⁴ not a general policy of permitting ethnic peoples to depart to their places of origin, as has often been stated to be the case. Rather, as Amélie Kuhrt has speculated, “some restimulating of the economy through re-establishment of traditional urban centres focused on their shrines” may have been the true basis of Cyrus’ policy.³⁵ Religion may have been a unifying point for such communities, with a commonality of interest in maintaining their privileges under Persian rule, so that it was hoped they would provide centres of loyalty to the empire.

That Cyrus has restored order in Babylon and returned the city to its proper place at the top of the hierarchy of the region is shown by the Cylinder report that “all the kings of the entire world from the Upper to the Lower Sea... [as well as] all the kings living in the West land” (§§28–29) now pay tribute to Cyrus. Moreover, he is said to have brought peace to all the lands (§36). The reference to the West indicates control of territory as far as Egypt. Dandamaev posited that the mercantile ports of Phoenicia, as well as traders from Babylonia and Asia Minor, were in favour of Persian imperialism because it would mean security for trade routes.³⁶ An inscription from Ur asserts the connection between prosperity and being delivered by the gods into Cyrus’ control: “I am Kurash... The great gods have delivered all the countries into my hands. I restored prosperity in the land.”³⁷ Indeed, the administrative and economic disruption caused by the Persian takeover appears to have been minimal, as

³² Katouzian (2009) 31. See also Farrokh (2007) 45: “The Cyrus Cylinder, history’s first true human rights proclamation that transcended the concepts of race, language, or religion.”

³³ Expressed recently by Farrokh (2007) 44: “The Cylinder is regarded as the first human rights charter in history... There were three main premises in the decrees of the Cyrus Cylinder: the political formalization of racial, linguistic, and religious equality; all deported peoples were to be allowed to return home; and all destroyed temples were to be restored.”

³⁴ Kuhrt (1983) 88.

³⁵ Kuhrt (1983) 90–91.

³⁶ Dandamaev (1989) 59.

³⁷ Dandamaev (1989) 51, citing Gadd and Legrain (1928) 58, no. 194, who however translated the last sentence slightly differently: “the land I have made to dwell (in) a peaceful habitation.”

the interval between the issue of Nabonidus' last and Cyrus' first economic texts was only fourteen days.³⁸

The Old Testament

Partly as a result of the survival of the Cyrus Cylinder and of coincidences with the concerns of the editors of the Old Testament, the example of Cyrus has been singled out in history as unusually tolerant and supportive of religious diversity. Just as the Cylinder emphasised that everything occurred at the behest of the Babylonian god, the Old Testament proclaimed Cyrus the instrument of Yahweh:

“[44:24]... I am the Lord...

[28] who says of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd, and he shall fulfil all my purpose’...

[45:1] Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped, to subdue nations before him and ungird the loins of kings, to open doors before him that gates may not be closed:

[2] ‘I will go before you and level the mountains, I will break in pieces the doors of bronze and cut asunder the bars of iron,

[3] I will give you the treasures of darkness and the hoards in secret places, that you may know that it is I, the Lord, the God of Israel, who call you by your name...

[5] ... I gird you, though you do not know me...’

[13] ‘I have aroused him in righteousness, and I will make straight all his ways; he shall build my city and set my exiles free, not for price or reward,’ says the Lord of hosts.”

Isaiah calls him God's “shepherd” and his “anointed”, terms usually reserved for the king and Messiah, respectively. In another apparent parallel to the Cyrus Cylinder and the restoration of Babylonian gods instituted by Cyrus, the Old Testament books of Ezra and Chronicles record the king's permission for the return of the Jerusalemites then living in exile and support for the rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple.³⁹

³⁸ Dandamaev (1989) 55.

³⁹ *Ezra* 1:1-6; 6:1-5; *2 Chronicles* 36:22-23. On the disputed authenticity of the ‘edict’ of Cyrus contained in *Ezra*, see Grabbe (2004) 71-84; 271-276.

Political pragmatism or faith?

It is a truism of the ancient world that politics and religion were inseparable. The writers and editors of the Cyrus Cylinder and the Old Testament certainly viewed Cyrus' success and his conduct as divinely directed. Owing to these sources, it has long been supposed that the Persian king adhered to a policy of non-interference in the religious life of his subjects. But does the evidence of the region of Cyrus' earliest imperial conquests support this contention? Did Cyrus actually formulate and implement an imperial policy that supported religious freedom? Was his approach genuinely different from that of rulers who came before him? If so, how and why? The following walk through the centuries in Anatolia will sketch out the conventions that were long the norm in imperial action, which this thesis argues Cyrus the Great was unique either in amending or entirely disregarding.

1.

SOURCES AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES

Writing ancient Persian history

Most of the early writers of Persian history were western Assyriologists or scholars of Greek literature and history, and had little material available to them from a Persian perspective. The modern impression that these memoirists and historians conceived of ancient Persians as heirs to a despotic Oriental ideology and that they were swayed by the unreliable narratives of mostly Greek authors is exaggerated but cannot be said to be entirely incorrect.⁴⁰ Early, particularly British, interpretations were sometimes coloured by contemporary imperial experiences and histories, and the classical education of the authors could result in an emphasis on Greek literature and a Hellenocentric viewpoint.⁴¹ None of the ancient writers at their disposal were sixth-century BC contemporaries of Cyrus the Great, nor were these very familiar with their enemies' countries or early history,⁴² and they tended to interpret foreign

⁴⁰ For a historiographical review of instances of early writers taking a less blinkered approach, see Harrison (2011) ch. 5. Notable is the first full-length work of Persian history in English, that of John Malcolm in 1815.

⁴¹ Such as George Rawlinson's *Fifth Oriental Monarchy* (1871), examined by Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1987b), and *A History of Persia* by Victorian military man P. M. Sykes (1915).

⁴² Herodotos spent no time in Persia. His travels and sources were confined to the Graeco-Persian *oikoumene*. Ktesias and Xenophon experienced Persian milieux, but at a later date: for their sources, see below.

institutions and customs in Greek terms,⁴³ or invert Greek norms in order to create interesting descriptions of ‘barbarian’ culture or make a moralising point.⁴⁴ Reliance on Greek sources of the fifth and fourth centuries BC, for example, led to the conventional view of a Persian heyday from Cyrus to Xerxes and a steady military and moral decay thereafter, culminating in defeat by Alexander the Great at Gaugamela; modern, less hellenocentric scholarship has shown that this final century cannot simply be classified the period of “dying empire”.⁴⁵ Comparisons of Persian arts and sciences with those of the Greeks or Babylonians rarely judged Persia superior and focused on elements ‘borrowed’ from other powers.⁴⁶ Misunderstandings arose out of attempts to explain the positive portrayal of Cyrus in the Old Testament and his treatment of the Judaeans from a religious rather than political point of view: the assumption was that parallels between Cyrus’ belief system and monotheistic Judaism were behind his conduct and the OT writers’ characterisations of the king.⁴⁷ Persian beliefs and practices were thought largely indistinct from those of other cultures in the Near

⁴³ The probable result, according to Asheri (2007) 17 in relation to Herodotos, of “the linguistic barrier in the Eastern countries, the total dependence upon interpreters and guides, the limitations encountered by a foreigner who has no access to sacred places and religious rites, and Herodotus’ instinctive tendency, as well as that of his guides”.

⁴⁴ Kuhrt (1995) 648. Recently the view that Greeks perceived Persians as a barbarian ‘other’ and that therefore their writings are misleading in attempts to reconstruct an authentic history have been ameliorated in favour of a more nuanced view: see discussion in Harrison (2011) 116-120.

⁴⁵ Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1987a) xi-xii. See contributions to *Ach. Hist.* I.

⁴⁶ Rawlinson (1885) gave Persian art a mixed review. He praised the relief of a lion combatting a bull as “beyond the ordinary powers of Oriental artists” (416) and reliefs giving Assyrian mythological ideas a “native” reinterpretation (413), but, despite improving on Assyrian sculptural style, the colossal portal beasts implied “no great artistic merit, since they are little more than reproductions of Assyrian models” (412). Persian gem-engravings “need not fear comparison with those of any other Oriental nation” (416) but the glyptic art of coins was “rude” (418). As for science, “the ancient Persians contributed absolutely nothing... Too light and frivolous, too vivacious, too sensuous for such pursuits, they left them to the patient Babylonians, and the thoughtful, many-sided Greeks. The schools of Orchoë, Borsippa, and Miletus flourished under their sway, but without provoking their emulation, possibly without so much as attracting their attention” (419). The modern, more nuanced appreciation of Persian kings “as the central, commanding figures of their own cultural history”, led by a complex cultural system of influences to project their “vision of kingship and empire” through iconography is articulated by Root (1979) in her Introduction.

⁴⁷ Exemplified by Rawlinson (1885) 425: “a religious sympathy seems to have drawn together the two nations of the Persians and the Jews. Cyrus evidently identified Jehovah with Ormazd, and, accepting as a divine command the prophecy of Isaiah, undertook to rebuild their temple for a people who, like his own, allowed no image of God to defile the sanctuary.”

East, themselves poorly comprehended especially prior to the decipherment of Near Eastern scripts in the nineteenth century, and altogether the understanding that emerged from early syntheses of information consisted of generalisations about the motivations and attitudes of the Great King and Persian people from a western perspective that was also anachronistic.

One of the first full-length works to reach beyond these boundaries was Olmstead's *History of the Persian Empire* in 1948; in it the author attempted to reconstruct the history of the empire from a Persian, rather than a Greek, perspective. He was hindered, however, by the paucity of empirical evidence then available. The decades that followed began to yield data to ameliorate this problem, with new archaeological and textual material enabling the reconstruction of ancient Persian history from a perspective much closer to its Near Eastern home: milestones in the research that took place included the first volume of translations of Elamite texts from the Persepolis Fortification archive (Hallock 1969) and the completion of excavations at Pasargadae (published in 1978 by Stronach). The last thirty years have seen a more rigorous academic approach applied to the available evidence as well as the development of Achaemenid studies as a branch of history. Care must still be exercised, however, to ensure that new discoveries are not shoehorned into the old hellenocentric framework and that interpretations are not based on such previous misconceptions.⁴⁸ A watermark of this revolution was the establishment of the Achaemenid History workshop, initiated in 1980 by Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg and attended by international scholars of a multiplicity of disciplines but with a common interest in elucidating a more authentic Persian history. The publications of the workshop papers and, latterly, specialist studies of Persian-period corpora now number 15 volumes.⁴⁹ The modern work setting the standard for writing Persian history appeared in this series. Pierre Briant's *Histoire de l'Empire perse: de Cyrus à Alexandre* (Fayard, 1996, partially revised and translated into English in 2002, *Achaemenid History* volume 10) explained his working method as proceeding from accessible translations of ancient texts, to transliterations and philological literature,⁵⁰ in the belief that

“however partisan and ideological a Greek text may be, when it is located in the web of its associations, it can provide stimulating Achaemenid reading. Furthermore, the

⁴⁸ Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1987a) xii.

⁴⁹ Listed on the website of the publisher, the Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten (the Netherlands Institute for the Near East): <http://www.nino-leiden.nl/publications.aspx>.

⁵⁰ Briant (2002) 4-5.

historical and historiographical status of royal pronouncements and images requires exactly the same approach.”⁵¹

To support the written documents, unevenly distributed across space and time, he added archaeological, iconographical, and numismatic evidence, decrying “the interpretative difficulties that arise from the dominance of archaeological and iconographic sources”.⁵² Briant described the enduring methodological problem of writing Persian history thus:

“how can we reconcile the archaeological picture and the textual picture..?”⁵³

The answer is to accept that the two often cannot be reconciled and that many aspects of Persian history must remain open questions. This is not to say that writing a credible history is a hopeless undertaking, but that the limitations of our sources must be acknowledged. Acceptance of ideological accounts as factual can rarely be justified; the place of an episode in a literary text must be considered within its own context before being utilised as a source for a work of different (in this case, historical) purposes.⁵⁴ Harrison has explored the idea that the stories in Herodotos’ *Histories* are mythologised versions of the *logoi* of his sources; this makes the historian’s work fit less for reconstructions of events than for ideologies.⁵⁵

“Greek sources may nonetheless contain (in complexly altered form) the echoes of Persian rhetoric, Persian ideology (and in so doing, of course, add to the evidence of the ideological impact of Persian imperialism).”⁵⁶

In other words, the understanding of Persia’s Greek subjects of the ruling culture is just as relevant to a reconstruction of history and ideology as the Persian view might have been, had it survived for posterity. The testimony of Herodotos’ *Histories* (especially) and Ktesias’ *Persika*, as well as the historical romance of Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia*, and others, can also be reclaimed for attempts to contextualise physical evidence culturally.⁵⁷

⁵¹ Briant (2002) 8.

⁵² Briant (2002) 9, 11.

⁵³ Briant (2002) 3.

⁵⁴ Harrison (2011) 32-37.

⁵⁵ Harrison (2011) 34-35.

⁵⁶ Harrison (2011) 120. If this thesis were to be accepted, it would overturn the prevailing attitude that “[a]rtifacts... can defy ethnic classification but texts cannot” (*ibid.* 119).

⁵⁷ Assessments of the literature are copious. For excellent introductions to the principal ancient writers of Cyrus’ history, their methodologies, and ways of interpreting the information they provide, see

Herodotos, who spent part of his life living in places under Persian hegemony (Halikarnassos, his city of origin, and Samos, writing within the 450-420s BC), chose what seemed the most truthful and least exaggerated version of the four histories of Cyrus known to him, which came from Persian authorities, and the account of the king's death that he considered the most plausible (I.95; 214). This *logos* (I.95-216) relates the Medo-Persian background to Cyrus' personal history, his rise to power and conquests, and includes a digression on Persian religion and customs (I.131-140: see Chapter 4). Supernatural phenomena, such as oracles and portents, appear in the narrative, usually to explain or justify human actions, but they are also used to determine divine intention in relation to the events. Generally Herodotos strikes a balance between credulity and disbelief, believing that men are free to act within the boundaries of fate. In keeping with Herodotos' understanding of the rise and fall of empires as cyclical and their leaders' fates as similarly inexorable, Cyrus is successful and his conquests unopposed by the gods, until at the end of his life he succumbs to the impiety of *hybris* (see further, Chapter 5).⁵⁸ Herodotos may have found a motive for this (mostly) positive picture of Cyrus in his desire to provide a contrast with Kings Darius and Xerxes during the Graeco-Persian wars, with which his later narrative is greatly occupied.

The concern of Xenophon of Athens writing the *Cyropaedia* (in the 360s BC) was also to draw a parallel, in his case to depict an exemplary Persian king of the past to contrast with the more despotic ruler of his own day.⁵⁹ Cyrus is shown performing the religious ceremonies and offerings expected of a king repeatedly and perfectly, although, as Gera observed, the rites never reveal any unfavourable divine message or need for the king to alter

Asheri (2007) 1-56 on Herodotos; Gera (1993) on Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*; and Llewellyn-Jones (2010) on Ktesias. Other early works on Cyrus are sadly fragmentary, such as Antisthenes, or reveal little more than an impression of the good reputation he enjoyed among the Greeks, e.g. Aeschylus' *Pers.* 767-773 (first performed in 472 BC): "Cyrus, a man blessed by the gods... he gained mastery over the peoples of Lydia and Phrygia, and overran all of Ionia by force. God did not hate him, because he was wise." On the combination of literary and historical approaches necessary to draw information from the play, see Harrison (2000).

⁵⁸ Similarly, Llewellyn-Jones (2010) 65 observed as a feature of oral history in the ancient Near East that "details of historical events within a reign were of less interest than the *pattern* by which the reign was explained in relation to mythic events. The visible events on earth were the reflections of the activities of the gods who communicated to men through the events they set in motion. Wars and conquests were often seen in this light".

⁵⁹ Gera (1993) 290. For the date of the *Cyropaedia*, see *ibid.* 23-25.

his plans.⁶⁰ In the king's resolve to provide an inspirational model for his court, piety took first place; religion was key to the schooling of his subjects to obedience. Cyrus is also credited with organising some kind of enduring college for the magi, whose directions he never failed to heed.⁶¹ Xenophon was correct to reflect the importance of the role of the king in religious ritual, as indicated plainly by the archaeological evidence at the sacred precinct of Pasargadae (Chapter 4), but he described the gods and ceremonies in Greek (even Socratic) terms, claiming the burning of animal offerings among other non-Persian practices.⁶² In composing his work, the author probably made use of oral history transmitted via Persian epic and myth.⁶³ Such nuggets of authentic Persian information which are found in the *Cyropaedia* no doubt derive from his contact with Persian soldiers while campaigning for Cyrus the Younger at the end of the fifth century BC.

Ktesias of Cnidus (in Caria), who called Herodotos "a writer of fables" and also took issue with Xenophon,⁶⁴ records a favourable impression of Cyrus too. The author served as the physician of the Persian king Artaxerxes II (from about 405 BC) and the information in his *Persika* is said to have come directly from personal accounts of Persians and royal records.⁶⁵ This perhaps explains an account of Cyrus that diverges in details from other traditions: for example, Cyrus has no genealogical claim to the Median throne but comes to power via a treacherous political coup.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, in matters touching on religion, he is favoured by the gods as much in this version as in Xenophon's novella. Emboldened by auspicious

⁶⁰ Gera (1993) 58.

⁶¹ *Cyr.* VIII.1.23-25. On the long-running dispute over whether Chapter VIII is authentic or the addendum of a later author, see Gera (1993). Walter Miller, translator of the Loeb library edition of the *Cyropaedia*, urged readers to "close the book... and read no further" than chapter VII (Xenophon Vol. VI, p. 439).

⁶² *Cyr.* VIII.3.24. On animal offerings in Persian religion, see discussion below, in Chapter 4. On the Socratic aspects of Xenophanes' version of Cyrus' religion, see Gera (1993) chapter 2.

⁶³ See Gera (1993) 13-22 for a discussion of Xenophon's possible Persian sources.

⁶⁴ Llewellyn-Jones and Robson (2010) 100: Testimonium 8. Photius, *Library*, 72 p. 35b35-36a6. Note the sharp rebuttal of Herodotean scholar Asheri (2007) 51 that "Ctesias, second to none in deceit and unreliability, also had political reasons in his pro-Spartan orientation to oppose the supposedly pro-Athenian historian [Herodotos]". Testimonia of Plutarch and Photius accuse Ktesias of pro-Spartan bias: see Llewellyn-Jones and Robson (2010) 97-100: Testimonia 7-8.

⁶⁵ Llewellyn-Jones and Robson (2010) 100: Testimonium 8. Photius, *Library*, 72 p. 35b35-36a6; Testimonium 3 (Diodorus, *Historical Library*, 2.32.4).

⁶⁶ Llewellyn-Jones and Robson (2010) 100: Testimonium 8. Photius, *Library*, 72 p. 35b35-36a6. By contrast, Xenophon has Media simply given to Cyrus as a dowry when he marries King Cyaxares' daughter: *Cyr.* VIII.5.19.

dreams and omens, Cyrus not only liberates the Persians from Media but obtains the Median crown by divine mandate.⁶⁷ In spite of their different approaches and discrepancies, all three Greek authors (Herodotos, Xenophon and Ktesias) presented religion as a fundamental, driving aspect of Cyrus the Great's conduct and success. His upright character gave him moral authority and made him worthy of the approbation of Greeks as well as Persians. Among the opinions voiced by the Greek authors are found the adage of Cyrus as a father figure (*Hist.* III.89) and also the view that his subjects were free and equal.⁶⁸ His (presumed) opinion on ethical matters was also worth heeding: for example, in Antisthenes' didactic work *Cyrus* the eponymous hero is asked to pronounce upon the most important thing to learn and gives, instead of the 'Persian' quality of bravery or a skill such as proficiency with the bow as might be expected, a moral instruction undoubtedly relevant to Persians and Greeks alike: "to unlearn evil".⁶⁹ Again, the degree of inference or invention the Greek authors (and, in the case of Ktesias, his epitomisers) may have employed must be weighed before using the particulars presented in any reconstruction of Persian history but it deserves to be emphasised once more that the Greek view of Cyrus is as relevant to our inquiry as the Persian, unquestionably so when considering Hellenised conquered territories.

A less virtuous, less pious Cyrus is visible in texts from Babylonia, which record the conquest of Media, plunder of its capital Ecbatana, and deportation of the defeated King Astyages to Anšan.⁷⁰ Reports on the fate of King Croesus of Lydia after the fall of Sardis (Chapter 5) are a good illustration of how the written records conflict and must be used cautiously, bearing in mind their authors' backgrounds and probable motivations for writing. The past two decades have seen an explosion of scholarship on ancient Elam that has proved enlightening in relation to the ethnicity of early Persia and its religion. Advances in textual studies – Henkelman (2008) is especially notable – have been matched by excellent

⁶⁷ *Persika*, Frag. 8d (Nicolas of Damascus (*Exc. de Insidiis* p. 23.23 de Boor = FGrH 90 F66) §§9, 41. In §33 Cyrus is made to say: "[Y]ou didn't realize the power of the gods, Astyages, if you don't realize now that it was *they* who stirred the goatherds into performing these actions – which we *will* see through to the end." The mention of goatherds alludes to Cyrus' humble origins; his mother is said to have made her living this way: *ibid.* §3.

⁶⁸ Pl., *Laws* III (694A-B). But, contradicting Xenophon, Plato makes a point of saying Cyrus lacked a proper education: (694C-D) and *Diog. Laert.* III.34-35.

⁶⁹ Antisthenes, frag. 21: see Caizzi (1966) 30.

⁷⁰ On Media and Ecbatana, see the Nabonidus Chronicle (*ABC* 7.ii §§1-4); on Astyages see the Sippar Cylinder of Nabonidus (Beaulieu, *COS II*, 2.123A, 310-313 §8). On the treatment of Nabonidus' legacy, see *ANET* 315: "[... in all] the sanctuaries the inscriptions of his name are erased, [... whatever he (Nabonidus) had cre]ated, he (Cyrus) let fire burn up".

archaeological investigations to create compelling syntheses of the history of this poorly understood people who merged with early Persia (Carter and Stolper [1984]; Potts [1999]). The importance of Elamite influence on Persian culture is only beginning to receive due attention (e.g. the volume *Elam and Persia* [2011]. See below, Chapter 4).

The example of Elam illustrates how archaeology contributes an invaluable balance to literary and non-literary written accounts (e.g. administrative documents), biased as they are by their authors' subjective decisions about what information merits inclusion and how that information should be presented, and can enable an evaluation of a situation that texts do not explain. But artefacts, too, are products of multiple influences and/or borrow from the iconographical repertoire of other cultures and must be contextualised for appropriate inferences to be drawn (see, for example, the discussion of the 'Broken Lion' tomb at Yilan Taş, Chapter 5). The 'processual' archaeological model is useful for considering objects and their meaning(s) from the contexts in which they are found: artefacts serve material, social, and ideological functions, usually falling into one of these categories more obviously than the others.⁷¹ This can also be true for objects within literary constructions. Cyrus' robe, for example (Chapter 5), was a garment, but as part of the investiture ceremony of later kings provided a symbolic connection with the founder of the Persian empire, its simplicity also conveying ideas about the characters of the earliest and latest monarchs and Persian monarchy generally. There is a parallel here to writing on any matter concerning religion: scholars must bear in mind that meaning is not inherent in an object or phenomenon, but *ascribed*.⁷² The present study concerns the use of such attributions for political purposes, rather than for the ontology of religion (i.e. investigation of the sacred, or a deity or deities).

Any historical study must also take into account the fact that the Persian empire was created through warfare. Models of imperial power describing their usage of religion during conquest and subsequent consolidation processes abound. According to S. N. Eisenstadt's model of bureaucratic empires, the ruler "always had some vision of distinctly political goals of a unified polity... and attempted to transmit it to at least parts of the conquered populations". To promote its legitimacy and further its control over the people and its resources, the imperial state either claimed to be reviving older cultures or conveying universal religious values.⁷³ The local aristocratic and cultural elite groups "felt menaced by

⁷¹ Binford (1962); (1965). For a useful commentary on processualism (and postprocessualism), see Trigger (2006) Chapter 8.

⁷² Jensen (1993) 365.

⁷³ Eisenstadt (1963) 141.

the new objectives and activities of the ruler” economically and socially, and sought “to deny the rulers resources and support, and plotted and worked against them either in open political warfare or by sleight of hand, infiltration, and intrigues. The rulers had to find allies [and] had to forge various instruments of power and policy with which to mobilize the various resources they needed”.⁷⁴ These could include groups who “by origin and/or by their social interests and orientations, were opposed to the aristocratic-traditional groups”.⁷⁵

Cyrus, it will be shown, used religion and religious practices to counterbalance this elite discontent and defuse potentially religion-based/supported plots against Persian control. *Pace* Eisenstadt, rather than construing the pursuit of status via involvement in locally normative cultural behaviours by Persian-appointed bureaucrats as attempts to supplant the king, we may view such engagement as part and a result of Cyrus’ strategy for ingratiation. Moreover, Eisenstadt’s model was constructed with Sassanid and later Persia (among other world empires) in mind and is perhaps better suited for the analysis of the role of (universalistic) religion in later imperial society. By the time of the Sassanids, the political community was so strongly allied with Zoroastrian doctrine that religious conflicts occurred; religious institutions began to emerge as autonomous entities from the political bureaucracy and other spheres of society, and pursue sectarian or reforming political goals.⁷⁶ Although rulers continued to promote their own legitimacy and the sanctity of their position through religion,⁷⁷ the place of religion in political life little resembled that of the sixth century BC.

The approach of Michael Mann (1986) is preferable. His model of societal development gives due prominence to religion and its ideological applications, which enable the political and social structures that bind the imperial power and the conquered people together successfully, and comprehends the pervasiveness of religion in ancient life. Other methodologies hesitate to do much more than acknowledge that religious elements were present, preferring to attribute imperial activity to strongly economic and/or political motivations;⁷⁸ or else their reconstructions of the relationship between ancient imperial

⁷⁴ Eisenstadt (1963) 14.

⁷⁵ Eisenstadt (1963) 15.

⁷⁶ See further Eisenstadt (1963) 51-52, 61, 189-191, 193-194.

⁷⁷ Eisenstadt (1963) 140-141.

⁷⁸ Note the recent thesis of Bedford (2007) 322 in which support of cultic institutions plays a part in generating economic benefits: “As a generalization, the Persians fostered good relations with organizations and leading persons in subjugated territories as a means of pacification and thus lowering the costs of running the empire. Respect for the cults of subjugated peoples, the use of local elites as administrators of subjugated territories, and the fostering of an imperial ideology that

activity and religion are derived inappropriately from more recent social history or experience.⁷⁹ Eisenstadt's model of imperial states with their conceptions of universal values was static in time: it does not quite fit with the emerging Persian empire under Cyrus, as is made clear in Chapter 6. To this theory Mann has added an appreciation of social development, i.e. the historical process of constructing a dialectic.⁸⁰

According to Mann's theory, by the time of the Persians the "compulsory cooperation" model of the Assyrians had lost its appeal as a strategy for rule. "[T]he Assyrians combined ruling through the army and a degree of compulsory cooperation with a diffused upper-class 'nationalism' of their own core. The Persians, coming later into a more cosmopolitan arena, combined ruling through conquered elites with a broader, more universalized upper-class culture."⁸¹ In Mann's hypothesis, the cultural and political traditions of the Persians were "weak" but this was to their advantage, as they were then free to conduct themselves opportunistically and "sit loosely on top of the growing cosmopolitanism of the Middle East, respecting the traditions of their conquered peoples and taking from them whatever seemed useful".⁸² This growing cosmopolitanisation "facilitated the diffusion of broader class-cultural identities that could also be used as an instrument of rule"⁸³ over the diverse peoples of the occupied territories. Thus the ruling-class ideology was applicable not simply nationally (to Persians and perhaps their Median kinsmen), but also internationally, i.e. members who were not of the core group were now encouraged to participate in the ruling ideological construct.⁸⁴ The validity of this view will be demonstrated below, in Chapter 5 (Sardis providing a particularly good example). The "syncretic, ideological solidarity" of the ruling class (Persians, their governors, client tyrants, and local elites) kept the empire together in a way not seen under the Assyrians. According to Mann, this could come at the expense of "local particularism",⁸⁵ but the experience of Anatolia in the reign of Cyrus shows

encouraged a view of mutual benefit (reciprocity) all enhanced the opportunity for economic performance. The Assyrians were similarly concerned but had proven unable to integrate the empire sufficiently so that they were forced to undertake provincialization and mass deportation."

⁷⁹ For example, see chapter one and appendix 1 of Holloway (2002) on the hermeneutics of early Assyrian scholars, which arose from the milieu of British imperialism and Orientalism.

⁸⁰ Mann (1986) 170-174.

⁸¹ Mann (1986) 231.

⁸² Mann (1986) 239.

⁸³ Mann (1986) 231.

⁸⁴ Mann (1986) 236, 240.

⁸⁵ Mann (1986) 241.

the reverse could also be true. A new milieu was fostered through a deliberate policy of religion-based acculturation (see Chapter 6).

Writing Persian religion

Many investigations of Anatolian religion have been fortunate to have a wealth of texts in deciphered languages upon which to base historical reconstructions and interpretations, for example Haas (1994) on the Hittites. Others, such as students of Phrygian religion, have little written evidence available but an abundance of monuments upon which to anchor their studies (e.g. Rein [1993]; Roller [1999]; Berndt-Ersöz [2006]). The architectural decoration of royal buildings and glyptic arts have also provided valuable insights: for instance, investigations into monumental gateways and their ritual functions (Chapters 2 and 3) and studies of the imagery of seal impressions. Although having the advantage of being datable in general, these are open to misinterpretation in the same way as other artefacts (discussed above) and can be used to create erroneous synchronisms and parallels (see, for instance, the case of the Karatepe orthostats, Chapter 3, n. 240).

Studies of ancient Persian religion have fewer of these primary resources to call upon. The Persepolis Fortification (PF) archive texts of the period of King Darius have been used superbly by Henkelman (2008) to elucidate Achaemenid worship of gods other than Auramazdā, particularly those of the Elamite origin. Although the PF texts are of a later date than the events with which this thesis is concerned (509-493 BC), they cannot be thought to document practices that began only at Darius' accession, and so they may be used to illuminate practices of the Teispid era in retrospect. On the other hand, rare epigraphic texts, such as that carved on the order of Darius into the rock face at Behistun and the so-called *daiva* inscriptions of Xerxes, have proved fascinating bases for studies of imperial religious ideology,⁸⁶ but cannot be adduced safely as evidence for earlier times.

But from the period of the founder of the Persian Empire, Cyrus the Great, who reigned from about 559 BC until his death in 530 BC, none of these sources are available. Reconstructions of the history of this time based on the later sources are beset with difficulties. A main thorn in the side of studies of Cyrus' ideology has been the question of his personal religion. Because it is clear from the Behistun inscription and other evidence that Darius was an

⁸⁶ For accessible translations of the texts (denoted DB and XPh, respectively) and bibliography, see Kuhrt (2007) 141-158, 5.1; 304-306, 7.88.

adherent of Auramazdā and it is reasonable to infer that his ideology was informed by the tenets of Zoroastrianism, the same has been thought to be true of Cyrus, a case put vigorously by Boyce (1982).⁸⁷ One of the difficulties with applying later evidence to earlier circumstances is that it entails a leap of faith that the ideology connected with it has remained more or less static over time. This position, an ‘essentialist’ understanding of religion – that the defining form of the religion underlies all expressions of it – is far from tenable (Chapter 4). Instead, religious development should be viewed

“as a dynamic process, in which the original teachings of the faith naturally play a role, but which is informed at least as strongly by the way in which believers at a given time understand reality”.⁸⁸

It is for this reason that any use of the Avesta, the principal Zoroastrian religious texts (orally transmitted until the sixth century AD), including the earliest compositions, the Gāthās (translated by Insler [1975]), hymns attributed to the prophet himself, must be with the caveat that they may not represent the earliest practices of the empire.⁸⁹ The conduct of Darius cannot be deemed with any certainty to reflect that of Cyrus, even if the later king wished to insist on such continuity. His desire to associate himself with the founder of the Persian empire led him to invent a common ancestor, ‘Achaemenes’, a shared genealogy, and to forge inscriptions in Cyrus’ name (Chapter 4, n. 569), so we cannot assume faithful transmission of religious ideology. For this reason, too, the designation ‘Achaemenid’ for the dynasty of Cyrus is technically incorrect and not used in these pages. Cyrus traced his ancestry to one Teispes,⁹⁰ and so he and his sons who succeeded to the throne (Cambyses and Bardiya) are more correctly called ‘Teispids’.

⁸⁷ Chapter 4 considers why such an assumption is unsound. This was not always the case. As long ago as 1900 the scholar A. V. Williams Jackson (178) wrote: “Cyrus as a follower of the unreformed, pre-Zoroastrian creed... may well have been as tolerant as the [Cyrus] cylinder and the Old Testament represent him. Cyrus as a convert to the reformed teachings of Zarathushtra, all glowing with the fervor of the Master’s zeal, would scarcely have treated with such complacency the godlings of an alien faith.”

⁸⁸ Kreyenbroek (2010) 103.

⁸⁹ In view of our anachronistic knowledge of Zoroastrian texts, Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1993) 147-150 preferred not to use them at all, favouring instead the better-dated Achaemenid sources. However, in the case of the present discussion on the period of Cyrus, these sources can only be applied anachronistically as well.

⁹⁰ See the Cyrus Cylinder §21.

Many studies of ancient Persia have highlighted the influence of the Greeks and other conquered peoples on Iranian architecture and art (e.g. Nylander [1970]), and religious customs (e.g. anthropomorphic depictions of deities) but less attention has been given to the reverse, i.e. the effects Persian culture had on that of its more distant subjects. Discussion has usually been confined to matters surrounding administrative organisation of the provinces and taxation of their wealth. Frequently the assumption was that, so long as the conquered peoples paid their tribute and did not rise up in rebellion, traditional social institutions were left alone by the Persian overlords and religious life could proceed unaffected. Dandamayev asserted:

“[T]he subjects of the Achaemenids lived in a rather moderate ideological climate and felt much less pressure of official ideology and religious doctrines than it was characteristic [*sic*] of later periods of history... Moreover, the imperial administration was not interested in the internal intellectual life of the subjugated peoples... all their cultural and ideological alterations were due to internal development and were not considerably influenced by Persian rule. The Persian authorities were only concerned with creating a stable administration and establishing an efficient system for collecting royal taxes.”⁹¹

This is too simplistic a view, as it discounts the probable effects on local culture that the permanent presence of Persian administrators and individuals of all walks of life must have had. Moreover, it presumes no effort to unify Persian subjects ideologically, and that assimilation or acculturation of religion were not so much as encouraged. In the case of Anatolia in the first millennium BC, Lebrun (1999) demonstrated that some assimilation took place, but distinguished this from syncretism in the sense of the complete fusion of two pantheons or divinities into a new system.⁹² What he observed was a process of acculturation, i.e. the mechanisms and outcomes of cultural change brought about by contact between different cultures. A model for understanding acculturation in classical antiquity was developed by Gotter (2001), but he would not approve its use in the case of early Persian Anatolia because so little of the original “pattern” is known that its transformation cannot be clearly perceived.⁹³ Instead of a deductive approach, then, an inductive one will be applied in these pages; rather than using general knowledge to interpret details, the details will be

⁹¹ Dandamayev (1999) 280-281. Similar sentiments were echoed as recently as 2010 by de Jong, 86.

⁹² Lebrun (1999) 188, using the definition of syncretism of Laroche (1973) 103. For other definitions of the complex concept, see *BNP* “Syncretism”.

⁹³ Gotter (2000) 396-399.

scrutinised to obtain a general picture. It is my contention that the empirical evidence is sufficient to establish that acculturation was encouraged and did occur (Chapter 6).

The principal difficulty in identifying the nature and extent of Persian influence has been the absence of documentation and literature from Persian Anatolia; another is the lack of visibility of Persia in the archaeological record (although the following pages will show improvements in this area. See Chapter 5 in particular). The latter has been regarded a result of the Persians' policy of cultural tolerance. Margaret Cool Root, however, considered the theory that:

“the apparently unimposing impact of Persian culture on the western empire was a reflection of the success of a deliberate, assertive central policy – as opposed to a vaguely defined ‘tolerant attitude’. This policy might have sought to play down the conspicuous presence of Persian power in the provinces on a variety of social/cultural levels.”⁹⁴

Root suggested that assimilation practiced by Achaemenid officials abroad might have resulted in the de-emphasis of conspicuous Persianisms; the resulting low archaeological yield might even testify to the success of such a (theoretical) policy.⁹⁵ If the hypothesis could be extended to the realm of religion, the lack of alteration to local institutions would not reflect the unwillingness of local people to adopt the Persian alternative, nor the failure of Persian settlers to integrate. Instead, it would signify successful implementation of Achaemenid policy. Haubold made this point in relation to the way Cyrus is depicted as saviour in the Cyrus Cylinder and Deutero-Isaiah:

“[T]he discourse of empire as the Persians conceived it strives to blend into local culture to the point where it divests itself of any obvious signs of Persian authorship.”⁹⁶

A fruitful methodology in view of the lack of detailed information from Anatolia has been a comparative one, examining Cyrus' better-known conquests to draw conclusions about what might have been the king's policy in other regions under his control. Comparative studies are indispensable, in that they show an approach occurring in more than one region, without

⁹⁴ Root (1991) 3. The theme was explored by Root in relation to Persianisms in western art.

⁹⁵ Root (1991) 6.

⁹⁶ Haubold (2007) 52.

which a policy cannot be described as imperial. Then, too, differences in application and effect can be instructive. The two most frequently cited examples in discussions of Cyrus are Babylonia and Persian Judaea (Yehud). The Babylonian chroniclers have been regarded as the most reliable record-keepers but it will already be clear from the Introduction that it is necessary to contextualise other writings, particularly in relation to ideological documents such as the Cyrus Cylinder. Near Eastern conquest accounts, too, are apt to be treated as historical rather than literary documents, but studies have shown these also to be ideologically charged and so they must be used with caution. For understanding such Assyrian texts, the study of Younger (1990) is fundamental. His analysis of the compositions concluded that reiteration of episodes and their components in patterns not only expressed royal ideology but also enabled the public to anticipate the outcome of events such as foreign invasions.⁹⁷ This must have been true for illiterate subjects, too, who were able to receive the king's message via his artistic programme, which contained predictable, propagandistic imagery.

Discussion of the Trans-Euphrates inevitably intersects with Biblical scholarship and is less straightforward. A useful discussion of the Jewish tradition about Cyrus and Persian rule is that of Gruen (2005). An important but vexed issue is the degree to which the Old Testament books of Ezra and Nehemiah can be used to construct Cyrus' religious policies in Persian Judaea and, by extension, his approach in other subject territories during his reign. Ezra contains what is said to be an edict from Cyrus permitting the return home of Jews exiled in Babylonia and commanding the rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple but, if the decree is authentic, the text has been manipulated for the purposes of Jewish propaganda. Grabbe (2004) contains an up-to date analysis of the issues.

For the purposes of this study of the use of religion by the Persian conqueror of Anatolia, only Assyria can provide analogous political and religious material. Close interactions began in the Bronze Age when its people settled on Anatolian soil in trading colonies and at the height of its imperial power in the Neo-Assyrian period her kings made conquests there. Central to Assyrian identity was the cult of Aššur, eponymous deity of the capital city and protector of its kings. Worship of the god was integrated into the system of taxation and tribute that sustained the empire, and so inevitably his cult and the concurrent ideology of rulership was felt in all subject territories to some degree (see Bedford [2009] and discussion below, Chapters 2 and 3). The use of religion in the exercise of imperial power in Anatolia has received attention only as a consequence of Assyrian involvement in the region, usually

⁹⁷ Lawson (1990) 61-124.

as part of a discussion about whether Assyrian provinces and client kingdoms were treated differently. The long-accepted characterisation of Assyrian kings as religious fanatics imposing foreign religious practices on conquered peoples was exposed as false by the excellent groundwork of Cogan (1974). Although his work was intended to illuminate the situation in Judaea and Israel, Cogan's analysis of the extant evidence ranged across all Neo-Assyrian possessions and resulted in a more balanced view of the Assyrian use of religion. Not all of his conclusions were accepted without criticism, however, and latterly opposition has been voiced particularly over Cogan's contentions that Assyria observed a policy of non-intervention in the religious life of its 'vassal' states and for supposed Assyrian support of indigenous cults. Holloway (2002) presented an exhaustive compilation of sources and commentary on all aspects of the use of religion by Neo-Assyrian rulers outside of their homeland. He categorised the kinds of activities attested, such as destruction of temples and introduction of Assyrian cult emblems, and arranged the evidence diachronically, thereby clarifying the periods during which imperial ideology involved imposition of Assyrian religion or religious practices on non-Assyrian ethnic territories. The book encompassed Anatolia, making valuable observations on the context of Assyrian activities there that affected matters of religion, but his major contribution was the exposure of the political usage of Babylonian religion. For present purposes, it is important that Holloway proved Assyrian support for foreign religion to be limited overwhelmingly to Babylonian deities and religious institutions.

No comparable works on the use of religion in the exercise of political power in the territory of ancient Anatolia exists. This thesis addresses that lacuna, investigating whether the Anatolians were familiar with religious impositions before the period of Assyrian political dominance and examining their experience under Assyrian hegemony (Chapters 2 and 3), and makes a comparison with the period surrounding the conquest by the Persian king Cyrus the Great (Chapter 5). It will be seen that Assyria was neither alone nor first in propagating a form of religious imperialism in Anatolia. Remarkably, the principal elements of the policy can be found as far back as far as the Bronze Age Old Kingdom and traced through the Hittite period and into the Neo-Hittite kingdoms. It is only with the arrival of the Persians in the second half of the sixth century BC that a new approach to the use of religion in the exercise of political power can be detected, one which adapted or did not employ earlier conventions. Chapter 4 examines the cultures that were likely formative influences on Cyrus and his policies, namely those of Elam and Media, and their connections with the Persian homeland of Anšan. The available evidence for Cyrus' personal religion is also reviewed. Chapter 5 describes the Persian conquest of Anatolia and its aftermath, following the narrative thread set out by Herodotos but focusing on archaeological and other empirical

evidence to ascertain the sequence of events as nearly as possible. Chapter 6 makes use of the preceding discussions to identify elements of Cyrus' ideological approach and compare this strategy with that of previous conquerors in Anatolia. Finally, in accordance with Harrison's observation that "it is no less a part of the historian's role to stand back and assess a given society in as dispassionate terms as possible, even explicitly through a modern (and comparative) lens",⁹⁸ an assessment is offered of Cyrus the Great's reputation for religious tolerance.

⁹⁸ Harrison (2011) 69.

2.

RELIGION AND POLITICS IN PRE-PERSIAN ANATOLIA

The expectations of the Anatolian peoples on the arrival of Persian forces in 547 BC were no doubt shaped by their previous experience of invasion and domination by a foreign, imperial power: Assyria. It has long been claimed that Assyrian imperialism was driven by religious imperatives⁹⁹ and variously that Assyria was the originator of a religion-centred political ideology that sustained the legitimacy of its empire, underpinned its administration, and that was forced upon client kingdoms to the detriment of their religious freedoms.¹⁰⁰ However,

⁹⁹ Beginning with Rawlinson (1875) 342: “It is to spread his [the god Aššur’s] worship that they carry on their wars.” Similarly, Olmstead (1908) 171: “[I]t was ‘in the might of Ashur’ that an Assyrian king went forth to battle and each newly organized province was at once given its images of the king and of Ashur, a curious anticipation of the provincial worship of ‘Rome and Augustus.’” More recently, economic gain has been accepted as the primary motivation, but, as will be shown, Assyrian religious ideology was inseparable from any impetus for imperial activity.

¹⁰⁰ Olmstead (1908) and (1918) 65-66 on the religious character of the empire has been echoed in the century since. Postgate (1992) 247 called Assyria “the originator of the Near Eastern style of empire”. Bedford (2009) 60-61 argued that Assyria was first to use an imperial religious ideology to integrate both conquered elites of client kingdoms and provincialised populations into an Assyrian ruling-class culture, albeit on a tier below that of ethnic Assyrians, and freely alter that worldview (by moving clients to provinces when necessary to maintain control). On the underpinnings of ancient empires see Goldstone and Haldon (2009), chapter 1, and for the Neo-Assyrian empire in particular, see Bedford (2009), chapter 2. Spieckermann (1982) 369-371 maintained that the promulgation of the state cult was routine throughout the empire, contra Cogan (1974) 55-56, 60-61, who drew a distinction between

the earliest surviving written records of ancient Anatolia reveal a longstanding (and possibly indigenous) familiarity with the use of religion to exercise political control in newly conquered territories. The evidence exhibits the religious topoi that would be at the core of Assyrian imperialism hundreds of years later, namely the special relationship between king and protector god; the plundering of religious images; the concept of divine abandonment; and the honouring of the god/s of the conqueror alongside reconciliation with a selected local deity/ies.

The Old Kingdoms

This inscription of King Anitta of the (so-far undiscovered) city of Kuššara comes at the end of the Anatolian Old Kingdom period (the Middle Bronze Age) in the eighteenth century BC, when Assyrian merchants dominated a network of trading posts across Anatolia's independent principalities.

“[1-4] *Anitta, son of Pithana, became king of (the city of) Kuššara. He behaved in a manner pleasing to the storm-god in heaven. And when he was in turn favored by the storm-god, the king of (the city of) Neša was [hostile(?)] to the king of Kuššara.*

[5] *The king of Kuššara [took] Neša by storm at night...*

[38-48]... Long ago, *Uhna, king of Zalpuwa, had carried off our deity from Neša to Zalpuwa, but thereafter I, Great King Anitta, [carried] off our deity back from Zalpuwa to Neša. I brought Huzziya, king of Zalpuwa, to Neša [alive]. (The city of) Hattuša inflicted [evil on me], and I released it. But when later it suffered from famine, their deity Halmašuit (the throne-goddess) delivered it up, and I took it by storm at night. [I] sowed cress on its grounds.*¹⁰¹

[49-51] May the storm-god of Heaven smite whoever should become king after me and should resettle Hattuša...

[55-56] And I built fortifications in Neša. Behind the fortifications I built the temple of the storm-god of Heaven and the temple of our deity.

[57-58] *I furnished the temple of Halmašuit, the temple of the storm-god, my lord, and the temple of our deity with the goods I brought back from campaign.*

the treatment of lands annexed as provinces and ‘vassal’ states, contending vassals were free of cultic obligations to Assyria.

¹⁰¹ Or “weeds”: see Bryce (2005) 38. The statement symbolises the return of the land to the wild.

[59-63] *I made a vow, and I [went] hunting. In a single day I brought to my city Neša 2 lions, 70 swine, 60 wild boars, and 120 (other) beasts – leopards, lions, deer, gazelle, and [wild goats].*”¹⁰²

The inscription begins by crediting the favour of the Storm God of Kuššara with King Anitta’s successful unification of the kingdoms of central Anatolia.¹⁰³ Divine approval was the foundation of the ideology of kingship and was demonstrated by military success; in turn, the king dedicated spoils of the campaign to his protector deity. Relations with foreign gods were less straightforward, however. King Anitta followed his conquest of the city of Neša (modern Kültepe)¹⁰⁴ with a campaign against the captor of Neša’s god.¹⁰⁵ When Anitta retrieved the statue, he installed it in a new temple at Neša alongside a temple of the Kuššaran Storm-god.¹⁰⁶ It was not only a religious statement, but a political one about the unity of Neša and Kuššara under the rule of the Kuššaran king. Moreover, the fact that no temples to these gods existed already at Neša shows they had not been among the principal deities of the local pantheon and illustrates the determination of the new rulers to promote gods of their own choice in the newly-conquered territory.

While it might be presumed from this that the purpose of “godnapping”¹⁰⁷ was to demonstrate the arrest of a state cult and the power of the state that flowed from the deity, or the superiority of the victor’s god and king over those of the defeated, in fact the inscription suggests that it signified the defection of supernatural support from one king to another. The military success at Hattuša is explicitly attributed to the decision of the *enemy’s* deity to deliver the city into Anitta’s hands. Mordechai Cogan termed this ascription by a conqueror (rather than the conquered) to the will of the protector god of a defeated people “divine

¹⁰² Translation by Beckman (2006) 217-218. My emphases.

¹⁰³ A tablet that once stood at the gate of the city of Neša (A, line 33), which was made his capital, recalls its capture and the defeat of other city-states: Beckman (2006) 216.

¹⁰⁴ More accurately, a consolidation of Kuššaran control. King Pithana made the initial conquest of Neša, which was then the administrative hub of the Assyrian trade network in Anatolia, and King Anitta continued his father’s northern campaign: Bryce (2005) 37-38.

¹⁰⁵ Interestingly, Anitta refers to the theft “long ago” of “our” god; if not simply a device to emphasise his right to kingship over Neša (a device he does not use in relation to Hattuša), it may be that the inhabitants of Kuššara and Neša once worshipped the deity in common.

¹⁰⁶ The twin temples have been identified, tentatively, as a pair of buildings at Kültepe by their unique features and the discovery of an inscribed bronze spear-point in one of these, probably a dedication: Sagona and Zimansky (2009) 250 and 249, fig. 6.14.

¹⁰⁷ Term coined by Livingstone (1997) 167.

abandonment”.¹⁰⁸ The statue of Halmašuitt may have been taken from Hattuša to Neša, where in all likelihood she already had worshippers: Anitta mentions having brought back spoils for her temple and to have personally collected animals (presumably, following his “vow”) for dedication.¹⁰⁹ Endowment of the lands of the temple precinct with animals for the upkeep of personnel and/or sacrifice was an indispensable benefaction but also served to display the king’s piety.

Halmašuitt’s statue is conspicuous by its absence from the inscription. Texts describe her as a throne goddess and it is probable that, instead of being represented anthropomorphically, the goddess was in fact objectified. Her avatar was not a chair, but a raised platform used as seating by the royal couple during religious ceremonies.¹¹⁰ The throne goddess brought authority to the king with a wagon symbolising his cultic duties;¹¹¹ if Anitta brought no statue or throne from Hattuša, such a wagon might have been equally prized for its ideological associations and deposited in the temple with other prizes of the campaign.

The Hittites

Anitta’s proclamation survives in three copies¹¹² made some 150 years after the event by the Hittites. The annals of the king who chose to resettle Hattuša (modern Boğazköy)¹¹³ about 1650 BC demonstrate some continuity between the eras:

¹⁰⁸ Cogan (1974) 11, crediting the first such use of the motif by an Assyrian king to Sennacherib (r. 705-681 BC).

¹⁰⁹ In the inscriptions of later kings, the hunt is explicitly followed by endowment of the animals. Liverani (1979) 314 described the collection of specimens from distant places and their deposit in the imperial centre as politically symbolic: he mentioned the capital and royal palace, but the temple would also certainly qualify.

¹¹⁰ Popko (1995) 71. Note, *ibid.* 81, that Halmašuitt was a deity of the mountains, according to an Old Hittite ritual blessing the royal palace, anticipating the Anatolian predilection for mountain goddesses (see below).

¹¹¹ e.g. Ritual for the Erection of a New Palace: *ANET* 357 §20-25.

¹¹² In the Hittite language: Bryce (2005) 35.

¹¹³ Clearly Anitta’s curse held no fear for the new dynasty that made Hattuša the capital of its Empire. Practical considerations must have outweighed any religious concerns. The citadel was impregnable from the north, the region was forested and well supplied with water, and the site was within striking distance of enemy cities and tribes: see Bryce (2005) 69-70.

“Thereupon I marched against Zalpa and destroyed it. I took possession of its gods and I gave three waggons to the Sun Goddess of Arinna. I gave one silver bull and one silver fist (rhyton) to the temple of the Storm God. The gods that were remaining I gave to the temple of Mezzulla [daughter of the Sun Goddess].”¹¹⁴

Here we have another campaign in Zalpuwa, and repetition of the motifs of idol plunder and dedication of booty (including superfluous deities) to the king’s patron deity. Other aspects seen in the Anitta inscription had been ritualised by the Empire period: the gods of the enemy city were evoked with offerings in a ritual carried out by an “Old Woman” (implying the removal of the divinities’ statues to Hittite temples) and the destroyed city was then offered to the Storm god by the king himself.¹¹⁵ At the time of Anitta’s inscription, the influence of Assyrian merchants can be detected in aspects of Anatolian life as diverse as commerce and literacy;¹¹⁶ but the Hittite texts show the waning of Assyrian influence, whose merchants had been driven by political instability from their Anatolian colonies a century earlier. For example, the Akkadian (Babylonian) language was superseded by Hittite and a Syrian or Hittite cuneiform script was used for writing.¹¹⁷

Although some aspects of the use of religion in the exercise of political power are shared, the religious life of the Assyrians and Hittites was utterly different: while their kings each functioned as the chief priest of the principal state god, the Hittite king was also a “hero”, “a superhuman creature, resembling the gods to some extent”.¹¹⁸ Upon his death, he was deified and, like other gods, his spirit could enter his temple statue to receive offerings and

¹¹⁴ *Annals*, I 9-14, translation in Bryce (2005) 69 and n. 43. Surviving copies were made some 400 years after the event. A prayer of Mursili II describes the practice of dedicating captured gods to Arinna as a tradition dating back to this early period: Bryce (2005) 99.

¹¹⁵ Roszkowska-Mutschler (1992) 7-10, citing texts CTH 423 and the *Annals* of Hattusili I.

¹¹⁶ Sagona and Zimansky (2009) 231. Correspondence between two Anatolian kings is written in the Old Assyrian language (a dialect of Akkadian) and script (cuneiform): *ibid.* 238. The Anatolian population of this period was linguistically mixed: *ibid.* 246.

¹¹⁷ Akkadian was still used to communicate where Hittite was unknown: Sagona and Zimansky (2009) 264, 387. Also, cylinder seals were replaced by stamp seals in the Anatolian tradition: *ibid.* 261, 263. Note that stone monuments were inscribed by the Hittites not in cuneiform but hieroglyphic script, and often using the Luwian language; the scripts occur together only on royal seals: Hawkins (2000) 2.

¹¹⁸ At least from 1500BC, when King Telipinu’s constitutional edict was promulgated: Haase (2003) 2.1.3-5, 625-626.

homage.¹¹⁹ Divine favour (particularly in battle) hinged upon the right conduct of the monarch, which included honouring treaties and oaths and, in his role as chief priest, proper observance of complex cult festivals (see Fig. 2.1).¹²⁰ A wrong action by the king was believed to result in divine vengeance not only on the perpetrator, but on the entire land, which could be carried out by foreigners.¹²¹ The Hittites, then, applied the rationalisation of divine abandonment to their own misfortunes.

The Hittite concern to syncretise foreign religions is evident in a variety of sources, from their adaptation of the Cilician pantheon carved into the stone walls of the open-air sanctuary at Yazılıkaya (Alaca Höyük)¹²² to the liturgies for gods of foreign origin which were

¹¹⁹ Haase (2003) 2.1.6, 626; Bryce (2004) 182-183. See the examples of the Empire period in Hutter-Braunsar (2001) 272-275 (Appendix), e.g. 4.1: “And as soon as my father became a god my brother Arnuwanda sat upon his father’s throne.” Archi (1979) 92 demonstrated that the spirit of the king reached the residence of the gods, but scarcity of sources means we are unable to say whether this was the case also outside of royal circles. Archi suggested that the deceased may have been regarded much as the *Manes* would be in Roman times (*ibid.* 92-93). Note the ancestor cult of Luwian rulers, who appear to have retained a number of Hittite traditions. A rock relief in Karasu, near Birecik outside the central Anatolian plateau, depicts a king also bearing divine attributes, notably in costume, and standing on the back of a stag and beneath a winged solar disc: Hellenkemper and Wagner (1977) 169-170; Aro (2003) 334; another, dated to the early eleventh century BC, depicts a king of Malatya honouring his deified grandparents: Hawkins (2000) V.4. İSPEKÇÜR, 301-304 and plates 142-144. Interestingly, the king himself may not always have been convinced of his impending deification, as Melchert (1991) shows: a scribe writing verbatim the testament of King Ḫattušili I also recorded the monarch’s fears of death and burial. Cf. Haas (1994) 243, who pointed out that the deceased king’s name could be written with personal determinatives, rather than those of the god, and that therefore kings of some periods may not have been deified.

¹²⁰ McMahon (1995) 1989.

¹²¹ *Telipinu Proclamation* §13, I 42, discussed in Bryce (2005) 100-101; §§14-15, reconstructed by Goedegebuure (2006) 230-231, describes the Hittite gods summoning Hurrian troops to take revenge on a usurper king and then, apparently, sending them away again. Whether the foreigners’ gods were thought to be concerned in the matter is unclear. In another example, the Hittite king’s violation of an oath by the Weather-god resulted in pestilence. When the people of Kurustamma were settled by their Hittite overlord in Egyptian territory in the late fourteenth century BC: “the people of Hatti and the people of Egypt had (thus) been placed under oath by the Weather-god of Hatti, then the people of Hatti committed a volte-face(?) and there and then they violated the oath of the god” by invading Egyptian lands. Although the battle was won, the pestilence brought back by prisoners was interpreted as the Weather-god’s punishment of the Hittites for oath violation: Gurney (1979) 58-59.

¹²² In turn influenced by the Hurrian and Luwian religions: McMahon (1995) 1983.

preserved carefully in their original languages.¹²³ To the Hittite elite, at least, the act of relocating a statue of a god to a Hittite place of worship was a manifestation of the deity's incorporation into the Hittite state pantheon.¹²⁴ It was of the utmost importance to recognise all of the spiritual powers, which operated together to bring order: Hittite mythology reveals a belief that the withdrawal of even one neglected or angered deity from his sphere could destabilise the functioning of the cosmos.¹²⁵ "Missing deity" myths, "in which a god absents himself from his usual position in nature",¹²⁶ in fact owe a debt to earlier inhabitants of central Anatolia, the Hatti, many of whose gods, festivals and myths were absorbed by the Hittites. Hattic traditions were in turn supplanted by Hurrian (northern Mesopotamian) and Mesopotamian beliefs, including independent concepts of the Storm-god¹²⁷ and practices such as divination.¹²⁸

Assyria rarely venerated foreign gods (major Babylonian deities being the notable exception), but the Hittites deliberately expanded their pantheon¹²⁹ with each new alliance or addition to their Empire to include the deities encountered. The Hittites were also believers in the spiritual essence of the natural world,¹³⁰ viewing rivers, mountains and trees as deities¹³¹ or residences of gods or spirits.¹³² Thus their representations of gods were not only

¹²³ McMahon (1995) 1983.

¹²⁴ Zimansky (2004) 135. It should be noted, however, that the gods were not viewed as equals. For example, Hittite treaties listing the gods of contracting parties always gave priority to the gods of Hatti: Hutter (2003) 217.

¹²⁵ McMahon (1995) 1989. An example is the composition called the "Wrath of Telipinu" (Beckman, *COS I*, 1.57, 151-153). The absence of the son of the Storm god results in famine. The gods search in vain for him; it is the combination of a human ritual and the intervention of a goddess of magic that relieves the anger of the missing deity and entices him to return.

¹²⁶ McMahon (1995) 1981. A Hittite ritual existed to entice the deity to return: KUB 33.34, cited in Collins (2005) 39. It promised aromatic wood for the deity's new statue.

¹²⁷ Nine Storm-gods are named in Hittite written sources, each originating in a non-Hittite culture: Green (2003) 128.

¹²⁸ McMahon (1995) 1982.

¹²⁹ Illustrated by extensive rock reliefs of processing deities with accompanying inscriptions at the Yazılıkaya sanctuary, a unique monument in central Anatolia.

¹³⁰ See further the interesting observations of Deighton (1982) on the impact on Anatolian religion of geology and earthquakes.

¹³¹ McMahon (1995) 1986. Assyria divinised rivers, images of the king, and other objects, but, rather than being embodiments of the gods or a part of the pantheon, they seemed to have served a different purpose (perhaps oracular): see Holloway (2002) 189-190.

¹³² Bryce (2004) 135.

anthropomorphic but could be totemic¹³³ or even relatively ordinary objects functioning as receptacles of the divine presence (for instance, taking the form of a hunting bag or a vase).¹³⁴ The flexibility of the Hittite conception of divine images far exceeded that of the Assyrians, who were only rarely depicted worshipping non-anthropomorphic idols (see Fig. 2.2).¹³⁵ Inventories show that in shrines on the Anatolian plateau, far from the official cult institutions from which the bulk of our information on Hittite religion comes, the object of veneration was often a stela (known as a *huwasi* stone), a weapon, or an item associated with the god, rather than an image of the deity.¹³⁶ These could be erected within a temple or in a sacred location out in the open, or processed from one to the other during festivals.¹³⁷ The mountain god at Maraş was represented by a mace, which was later topped with a sun-disc, moon crescent and the figure of a man.¹³⁸ Although the Assyrians also erected weapons and stelai in and out of doors, theirs usually functioned as substitutes for the absent king in matters requiring a channel to the divine presence (judicial, oath-taking, etc.), rather than as objects of worship themselves (for how non-Assyrians were expected to respond to such objects, particularly the so-called “weapon of Aššur”, see below).

A late, but illuminating, inventory of the religious resources of the Hittite state regards minority traditions as assets.¹³⁹ Bryce considered this to have been a kind of survey preliminary to Queen Puduhepa and her son King Tudhaliya IV’s plans for religious reforms including rationalisations of ‘duplicate’ gods and systematisation of the ranks of the deities.¹⁴⁰ That the driving force was not theological but to promote cultural unity across the regions of the empire is shown by the inventory, which harnessed local traditions for what

¹³³ In the only extant use of an animal form, a relief at Alaca Höyük depicts the Storm God as a bull. Rather than an example of theriomorphic worship, this is to be understood as an allusion to the god’s attribute of fertility: Bryce (2004) 156.

¹³⁴ For the Hittite conception of the divine presence, see Collins (2005), especially pages 20-28. For an inventory of divine representations arranged by town, see Hazenbos (2003) 176-190.

¹³⁵ See the stone altar depicting King Tukulti Ninurta before the rectangular stone of the fire god Nusku, about 1240 BC, in the Staatliche Museen, Berlin: photograph in Freedberg (1989) 69.

¹³⁶ McMahon (1995) 1990. The weapon could also support or be supported by a statue: Hazenbos (2003) 174. See Collins (2005) 20-24 on the distinction between objects hosting the divine presence and objects sanctified by their ritual function. The question of the role of stelai in Assyrian worship is hotly debated: see Cogan (1974) 60; Holloway (2002) chapter 2, *passim*.

¹³⁷ Macqueen (1986) 111-112.

¹³⁸ Gurney (1977) 25-26.

¹³⁹ McMahon (1995) 1982.

¹⁴⁰ Bryce (2004) 137-138.

was to be an inclusive programme. That these had long been valued is clear from the reign of Arnuwanda in the previous century. Border garrisons were issued with instructions for restoring and maintaining local cults, as well as introducing their own:

“In a city through which the margrave [governor of a frontier province] drives, he shall take account of the elders, priests, anointing priests, (and) *šiwanzanni*-priestesses. He shall speak to them thus: ‘A temple which (is) in this city, either that of the Stormgod, or of some other god, is now neglected... Now attend to it again.(’) Let them restore it. As it was built before, let them rebuild it in the same way.

Furthermore: Reverence for the gods must be maintained, and special reverence for the Stormgod is to be established. If some temple (roof) leaks, the margrave and the city commander must repair it. Or (if) some rhyton of the Stormgod or any cultic implement of another god (is) ruined, the priests, anointing priests, and *šiwanzanni*-priestesses will renew it.”¹⁴¹

Assyria, Imperialism, and Religion

Reversing the conventional view of state formation that regards it as secondary, Michael Mann has held out religious ideology as the imperial key to control of both the ideology and material resources of dominated cultures in the ancient world.¹⁴² From this point of view we can begin to understand the foundational and causal role of religion “among the political/military, economic, and ideological/religious structures and elites that together constitute imperial power systems”.¹⁴³

In the mid-fifteenth century Assyria experienced a bitter vassalage under the northern Mesopotamian (Hurrian) state of Mitanni (which they called Hanigalbat). Earlier foreign rulers had restored Assur’s temples, but the Mitannian king Šauštatar plundered the city. The silver and gold door of the temple of the city’s protector god Aššur was removed to the

¹⁴¹ McMahon, *COS I*, 1.84, 223.

¹⁴² See Mann (1986) chapter 5 on empires of “compulsory cooperation” and 231-237 on Assyrian use of ideology to unify the upper and military classes. See also his chapter 7 for discussion of the more diffuse power structures of Phoenicia and Greece.

¹⁴³ Goldstone and Haldon (2009) 4.

Mitannian capital.¹⁴⁴ Steven Garfinkle credited the events of this time with the emergence of a more militaristic, expansionist Assyria.¹⁴⁵ This was fuelled by the conception of a divine right to conquer and rule, probably borrowed, but at least familiar, from their former southern Mesopotamian overlords.¹⁴⁶

The Assyria that broke away from the Mitanni in the early fourteenth century BC retained much of the identity of its city-state past, most crucially its notions of kingship and religious beliefs and institutions.¹⁴⁷ When, after some thirteen years of conflict, the Hittites at last overpowered the last great Mitannian stronghold, at Carchemish, the field was clear for Assyria to move into former Mitannian territories east of the Euphrates. Assyrian revenge was complete when Shalmaneser I, “at the command of the great gods (and) with the exalted strength Aššur, my lord”, reduced the remaining Mitannian lands to vassaldom, pointedly targeting nine Mitannian fortified cult centres before conquering the main city. His inscriptions also boast of the slaughter “like sheep” of their allies, the Hittites.¹⁴⁸ With this and the defeat of Hittite armies at Nihriya by Shalmaneser’s successor Tukulti-Ninurta I, Assyria extended its dominion to the Anatolian border of Hittite territory; fortunately for the Hittites, the Assyrian king now turned his attention to Babylon.

The lands which stood at the crossroads of trade between the Assyrian, Hittite, Babylonian and Egyptian empires were continually in dispute. The loyalties of client kingdoms here, such as Išuwa, fluctuated with the fortunes of their neighbours. The Hittites characterised their campaign against Išuwa as “vengeance” for sins that included holy oath violation.¹⁴⁹ Similarly, the Assyrian religious traditions first introduced into Anatolia during the trading

¹⁴⁴ The theft and enforced return of the door was admitted by the great-great-grandson of the plunderer, in a description of the impoverishment of the Mitanni: “Treaty between Shattiwaza of Mitanni and Suppiluliuma I of Hatti” in Beckman (1996) 44-45, no. 6b §2.

¹⁴⁵ Garfinkle (2007) 72-73.

¹⁴⁶ Since the reign of Sargon in the third millennium BC: Garfinkle (2007) 72. Note the observation of Mann (1986) 126 that one of the main tasks of the earliest Sumerian temple complexes was to formulate the ideology of just and unjust violence.

¹⁴⁷ Bedford (2009) 35.

¹⁴⁸ Grayson (1987) 183-184 §56-87. Diplomatic correspondence shows the unenviable position of the last Mitannian king, caught between his Hittite allies and the looming Assyrian threat. Denounced by spies for making concessions to Assyria, the king writes to mollify the Hittite king, claiming the events were divinely directed: “Your Majesty, my father, has heard how the Storm-god, my lord, acted.” See Beckman (1996) No. 25, §5, 142-143.

¹⁴⁹ Gurney (1979) 164.

colony period and later the ideology intended to cement the transfer or return of client loyalty often fell a casualty of political instability. Such lapses were characterised in Assyrian inscriptions as “sins” against Aššur or “failures to remember” a duty owed to him.¹⁵⁰ This exposes both the shallow roots of ideologies and concurrent obligations imposed by the sword, and the interdependency of religion with the reach and strength of imperial influence. By the Neo-Assyrian period (between the tenth and eighth centuries BC), Assyrian measures for controlling defeated populations were:

“supported by the spread of a unifying religious belief in the cult of Assur. The taxation and tribute raising (and associated bureaucratic skills) that provided a stable basis for supporting this [administrative] apparatus was integrated into a system of vassalage and dependency upon both the royal dynasty and the cult of Assur, which was quite deliberately introduced into the pantheon of conquered peoples.”¹⁵¹

Naturally, the conditions of the ‘client-patron’ relationship were set by the victor. The complete subordination of pre-existing religious belief and custom was immediately forced via an acknowledgment of subjugation expressed in Assyrian terms. Ideologically, economically, and in every way, the client acknowledged Assyrian hegemony and swore to serve it, under divine sanction. One of the goals of introducing the victor’s cult and its attendant rituals to the territory was evidently to “evolve an ideological hegemony that in turn created a consensual identity among the conquered territories”.¹⁵² Now the legitimacy of the local ruler depended on demonstrations of allegiance in accordance with his place in the Assyrian divine order. Breaches of ideological tenets were used as justification for penal measures against a polity, or even its obliteration, usually in the form of deportation of the chief gods and elite populace, and installation of an Assyrian governor along with a more pervasive state cult. Deportees could even receive instruction in the appropriate fear of god and king, which can hardly have omitted indoctrination into the state cult. In an inscription documenting such a case,¹⁵³ religion was the medium for unifying divergent subject

¹⁵⁰ See, for example, the annals of Sargon II (*ARAB II* 4 §8): “Pisîri of Carchemish sinned against the oath by the great gods and sent (messages of) hostility against Assyria to Mitâ of the land of Muski. I lifted my hand to Assur, my lord, and brought him and his family out in chains.”

¹⁵¹ Goldstone and Haldon (2009) 9. See further Bedford (2009).

¹⁵² Goldstone and Haldon (2009) 11, in relation to the Roman empire but equally relevant in the Assyrian context. See further Hopkins (2009) 178-204.

¹⁵³ Cylinder inscription of King Sargon on the founding of a new capital at Dūr-Šarrukīn (Khorsabad): *ARAB II* 65-66 §122: “Peoples of the four regions of the world, of foreign tongue and divergent speech, dwellers of mountain and lowland, all that were ruled by the light of the gods, the lord of all, I

populations and Assyrianising them. Aspects of religious identity were thereby altered to suit imperial purposes.

The god's special relationship with the King

The Neo-Assyrian or imperial period of Assyrian history had religious ideology at its core from the beginning. The king was the chief priest of Aššur and all the gods. “Aššur’s weapon”, a military standard, accompanied the army and was erected in the centre of newly conquered places. This was a lance topped with the symbol of Aššur, the winged disc (see Figs 2.3 and 2.4).¹⁵⁴ It was intended to have religious significance, according to the annals of King Sargon:

“The weapon of Assur, my lord, I appointed as their deity [in Ḫarḫār, formerly Median territory, renamed Kār-Šarrukīn]”.¹⁵⁵

carried off at Assur, my lord’s, command, by the might of my sceptre. I unified them (made them of one mouth) and settled them therein. Assyrians, fully competent to teach them how to fear god and king, I dispatched to them as scribes and sheriffs (superintendents).”

¹⁵⁴ See drawings of the reliefs from rooms 2 and 14 of the palace of King Sargon by Eugène Flandin (1849), plates 56-57 (Vol. 1), 158 and 146 (Vol. 2), reproduced in Albenda (1986), plates 113 (showing the standard mounted on the chariot during battle), 114 (showing the standard in detail), and 137 (showing standards in a cultic context within a fortified camp). The “weapon of Aššur” was equated with the pictured chariot standard as early as 1882: Mürdter and Delitzsch, pp. 21-22 and fig. 2. However, the identification of this standard with the “weapon of Aššur” described in Assyrian texts is complicated by the fact that some Assyrian deities had more than one symbol. Some commentators consider the standard pictured in Fig. 2.4 to be that of the god Adad (SAA III 42-43), or another deity. The standard or spear as representation of the chief deity may have been a borrowing from Babylonian tradition: the symbol of Marduk on an inscribed stone of thirteenth-century BC Babylonia is in the shape of a spear or oversized arrow (see, e.g., illustration in Black and Green [1992] 16, fig. 7 (after Layard [1853])). Other symbols of Babylonian gods appropriated for Aššur include the snake-dragon (Marduk) and horned cap (Anu/Enlil): *ibid.* 38. Furthermore, the standards of other gods are also known to have accompanied Assyrian forces into battle on chariots: sculptural reliefs show standards of Adad and Nergal – circles with radial patterns – were removed post-conquest from the chariot to a royal pavilion or other sacrificial context: Reade (2005) 14, 18.

¹⁵⁵ *ARAB II* 6 §11.

The weapon illustrates the very close relationship between the god and the king's military activities. Aššur granted the king the right and ability to conquer new lands, declared explicitly in the Neo-Assyrian coronation oath:

“Aššur is king – indeed, Aššur is king! Assurbanipal is the [representative] of Aššur, the creation of his hands. May the great gods... give him a straight sceptre to extend the land and his peoples!”¹⁵⁶

In carrying out this divine mandate, the king brought order to disordered realms. He was then obligated to preserve the sanctity of the territory and ensure that tribute for the god¹⁵⁷ was forthcoming from it. Cultic dues, some involving corvée, were also imposed for the benefit of Assyria's gods.¹⁵⁸ The success or otherwise of Assyria's annual campaigns was an indication of the level of the god's satisfaction with the king's piety¹⁵⁹ and thus the legitimacy of his rule.

Withholding of the annual gift to Aššur was considered a violation of “the *adū* of Aššur and the great gods”,¹⁶⁰ the oath of loyalty to the king sworn by defeated individuals and states (through their officials). The oath was sworn before “Aššur's weapon” and recognised the supreme authority of Assyrian deities, who acted as witnesses and visited punishment on infractors.¹⁶¹ Although the content of the oath was otherwise non-religious, its swearing

¹⁵⁶ SAA III.11, lines 15-17. Accordingly, “[a]ll wars were religious wars, justified by the will of Ashur”: Bedford (2009) 35.

¹⁵⁷ Postgate dismissed the attribution of “tribute and forced labour of the god Assur” in Assyrian inscriptions, preferring to see the words as form only: “these contributions do not go to the temples but to the kings”: (1992) 254. He did not acknowledge the fusion in Assyrian thinking between the god and the state, although he acknowledged that the ideology had significant import in a different context (the definition of ‘Assyria proper’): *ibid.* 251.

¹⁵⁸ The earliest mention of tribute payments by an Assyrian king, Tiglath-Pileser I, is accompanied by mention of forced labour: Postgate (1992) 257.

¹⁵⁹ Garfinkle (2007) 74. His ability to maintain the relationship between the people and gods was crucial to the wellbeing of all society. This aspect of Assyrian kingship was evidently so important that it could outweigh other considerations, such as heredity, for the kingship: the kings of one of the most successful dynasties of Assyrian history were openly usurpers, who chose the name “Sargon” (= “true king” in Akkadian): *ibid.* 85, n. 57.

¹⁶⁰ Explicitly stated, for example, on the Nimrud prism of Sargon II: Gadd (Autumn, 1954) 177.

¹⁶¹ The gods of the Greeks were invoked in juridical proceedings for the same purpose: see further Gagarin (1986). Other oaths, e.g. to agree contracts, were sworn in the Assyrian Colony period at “Kanesh in the sacred precinct at the gate of the god, before the dagger of Aššur”: Donbaz (1989) 75-

before and submission to the authority of foreign divinities cannot have been voluntary and constituted, in my view, religious coercion.¹⁶² Stelai engraved with the image of the king worshipping before the symbols of Assyrian divinities could be erected in the temples of the patron-god of conquered cities. An Urartian example is the temple of King Asau of Gilzanu on Lake Urmia, where in the mid-ninth century BC King Shalmaneser III “fashioned a splendid royal image of myself, inscribed thereon the praise of Ashur, great lord, my lord, and the victory of my might which I achieved in the land of Nairi (and) placed (it) in the midst of his city, in his temple”.¹⁶³ Evidence from the Gūzāna province (on today’s Turkish-northeast Syrian border) shows that contracts were concluded before such a stela,¹⁶⁴ which acted as a substitute for the presence of the king and god as both witnesses and benefactors. The king was thus a participant and/or intermediary in every act of worship in the temple. Stelai could be placed on the same stage as divine images and were regarded as able to give “orders”; like Aššur’s weapon, they acquired “quasi-religious” significance.¹⁶⁵ Anyone swearing an oath in such circumstances could not have failed to associate the event with the imperial religion. The presence of the stela and/or weapon in sacred spaces also served to remind the local population that their own gods were committed to Assyrian rule.

The salutations of a correspondent from Assyria to his king Sargon II encapsulate the Assyrian ideology and show its details were understood clearly:

“May the king, my lord, the good shepherd [.....] truly tend and shepherd them [all countries]; may Aššur, Bel and Nabû [add] flocks to your flocks, give them to you, and enlarge your spacious fold; may the peoples of all the countries come into your presence!

77, Nr. 1, lines 31-32; or before the “sword of Aššur”: Popko (1995) 54. See Veehnof (1976-1980) 369-371 for the context of contracts in this period.

¹⁶² Cogan described such actions as the “etiquette” accompanying political arrangements: (1993) 410. He did not consider an act religious coercion unless it implied “modification of native cultic practice”: 409. In my opinion, his view of compelled behaviour was insufficiently broad and he underestimated the sacrosanctity of oath-taking in the ancient world, which was not merely a matter of form.

¹⁶³ Yamada (2000) 281.

¹⁶⁴ Ungnad (1940) 57-59, Text 108 §21; 62-63, Text 112 §7; 63-64, Text 113 §9.

¹⁶⁵ Cogan (1974) 59-60 qualified: “Within Assyria and its provinces”, not vassal lands under native rule. In SAA VI.219 a contract for the purchase of a slave about 680-673 BC is witnessed by the king’s statue. Cole cited several texts in support of the argument that the divinity of the royal image came about because of the dogma that the king was the “image” of a god: SAA XIII xiv and n. 12.

O king, my lord, may you be the temple of kings! Each and everyone who lays down his life under [your feet] and keeps your treaty, will be pardoned in your presence by your gods, and you will dress him (in purple) and bl[ess him] as today; but whoever does not keep your [treaty] will fall into Aššur's noose and trap and [...] the *ja[mb]*s of your gates."¹⁶⁶

Alasdair Livingstone observed similarities of terminology in statements of Aššur's relationship to the Assyrian king Aššurbanipal and in the king's relationship to men trained in Assyria and later installed by him as puppet rulers of client kingdoms.¹⁶⁷ Disobeying the Assyrian king was equivalent to irreverence and neglect of Aššur, and viewed as a sign of political rebellion. Words put into the mouth of the recalcitrant Urartian client king of Šubria (southwest of Lake Van) in a letter of the Assyrian king Esarhaddon to the god illustrate this dogma:

"Whoever is negligent toward Assur, king of the gods, does not listen to the command of Esarhaddon, king of the universe, his lord... It was a grievous sin which I committed against the god Assur, when I did not listen to the word of the king, my lord..."¹⁶⁸

The so-called "Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon" connect the religious and political elements of the oath and show its gravity by outlawing any other agreement made before gods, in that doing so constituted a political alliance: "you will not make an agreement before gods... nor conspire with each other".¹⁶⁹ The question of whether client kingdoms were subject to the same religious prescriptions as those lands annexed to Assyria permanently has been much debated. Cogan contended that 'vassal' states did not experience religious dictation, citing as support the inclusion of their own gods as witnesses in loyalty oaths.¹⁷⁰ In fact, the inclusion

¹⁶⁶ SAA I.134.

¹⁶⁷ SAA III xvii, comparing 3, obv. §23 with 31, rev §12.

¹⁶⁸ *ARAB II* 232 §594-595. For a recent translation of the entire letter, see *RINAP 4* 79-86, no. 33.

¹⁶⁹ Parpola (1972) 32 §153ff; Wiseman (1958) 40-42. On Neo-Assyrian treaties and oaths taken by their subjects generally, see SAA II.

¹⁷⁰ Cogan (1974) 46-49, 60. Postgate (1992) 255 brushed aside the religious elements of the treaties (their invocation of gods as witness and religious sanctions) to consider them "secular" agreements in which deities had no part. In a later article Cogan conceded a more nuanced model may be required, suggesting an intermediate kind of arrangement between conqueror and conquered may have existed in frontier areas, particularly in the west, which was neither provincialisation nor vassaldom: Cogan (1993) 407.

of a client's own deities served to tie the client even more closely to the ideology being sworn:

“The use of client states' own deities as an ideological tool of control, as part of the imposition of Assyrian imperial ideology to recast national self-understanding, might also be seen as a form of ‘Assyrianization’.”¹⁷¹

Local gods were clearly not considered the equals of Assyrian deities. A letter to Aššurbanipal from the Babylonian front suggests that foreign gods, too, were to accept subordination:

“... Let (these) people, their sons and their wives together with their gods enter into (the ceremonies) of the oath of the king my lord...”¹⁷²

There can be no question that Assyrian clients were forced to profess the supremacy of the Assyrian gods and kings, and to submit their own ideologies and systems as the conqueror required. An Anatolian example comes from a stela erected by King Adad-nārārī III establishing the boundary between client kingdoms Kummuh and Gurgum (modern Maraş), in which the territory of the Kummuhite king is guaranteed solely by five Assyrian gods.¹⁷³ Moreover, the ideology upon which Assyrian conquest and rule was based demanded more than lip service. In another instance from the reign of Adad-nārārī III, the residents of the district of the provincial capital of Gūzāna (Tell Halaf) were instructed by the king to participate in prayer and public lamentation before the deity Adad, as well as ritually purify their lands and burn sacrifices.¹⁷⁴ The position of scholars in agreement with Cogan, who insisted that provincial obligations to Assyria made or sworn in the name of Aššur did not constitute religious imposition,¹⁷⁵ must be viewed as untenable given the Assyrians' particular identification of their deity with their state and the absolute precedence of Aššur and other Assyrian gods imposed upon the lives of non-Assyrian individuals. Given the combination of spoliation of images and loyalty oaths, it must have been self-evident that the

¹⁷¹ Bedford (2009) 55.

¹⁷² Waterman (1930) Letter 202.

¹⁷³ *RIMA* 3 A.O.104.3, 204-205.

¹⁷⁴ Weidner (1940) 13-14, Text 5, English translation in Holloway (2002) 303, n. 260, dated to 793-782 BC.

¹⁷⁵ Cogan (1974) 60. In a later article Cogan attributed disagreements with his position to “differing emphases and interpretations of the extant corpus”: Cogan (1993) 405. Actually, the matter concerns differing views of what constitutes an imposition on religion.

Assyrian gods were to take precedence over (if not replace) local ones.¹⁷⁶ From an Assyrian point of view, it was not necessary that provincial gods be obliterated or that a defeated populace engage in Assyrian rituals; the significance of local gods was substantially diminished by the removal of their political authority, not least because the blessings of these deities no longer flowed through a non-Assyrian channel. Ultimately, Aššur was king.

Divine abandonment

A belief persisted in the ancient Near East that disasters befalling a nation could be attributed to a god's displeasure with his subjects. According to Cogan, late Neo-Assyrian kings were the first to justify their conquests by claiming that such displeasure had resulted in the actual defection of the local god to the side of the conqueror,¹⁷⁷ i.e. the Assyrian victory was enabled not only by the withdrawal of the local god's protection but by the will and often active participation of that god on the enemy's behalf. However, as we have seen from the survey of pre-imperial Anatolia above, this is plainly not the case.¹⁷⁸ The "divine abandonment" theology was long-lived and widespread, coexisting in culturally diverse groups but serving a common function, i.e. providing a socially acceptable basis for imperial activity.

It has been suggested that this Neo-Assyrian rationalisation of their imperial advancement may have been brought about by an event from their own past. King Sennacherib's account of his punishment of Babylon in 689 BC for supporting a different king explicitly claimed the destruction and inundation of the city's temples, ziggurat, and its gods,¹⁷⁹ actions recognised as sacrilegious by subsequent Assyrian kings. They sought to distance themselves from the controversy by explaining the destruction at Babylon as a result of the anger of Babylonia's god Marduk and the withdrawal of his protection of the city. This justification was accepted by later Babylonian writers, perhaps reflecting the position of the Marduk priesthood or another party working for rapprochement with their Assyrian masters.¹⁸⁰ But,

¹⁷⁶ Spieckermann (1982) 370-371.

¹⁷⁷ Cogan (1974) 11 traced the motif back only as far as King Sennacherib.

¹⁷⁸ Gurney (1977) 9 contended that a text in which the goddess Inara hands over her house to the king (KBo III 7: A II §15-20) predates the Anitta inscription; however, it has also been classed a Hittite mythological text: Laroche (1965) 68.

¹⁷⁹ "So that in future days, the site of that city, its temples and its gods, would not be identifiable...": Cogan, *COS II*, 2.119E, 305.

¹⁸⁰ Cogan (1974) 12-13.

as we will see, the concept of divine abandonment was already well developed by this time and had been used by King Sargon II to great effect in Urartu. Moreover, the Assyrian apologetic at Babylon looks to have been a unique case of conciliation, albeit a high-profile one. The annals of Sennacherib's grandson, Aššurbanipal, describe a particularly vicious punishment meted out to Babylonian opponents in which their protective gods feature to shocking effect:

"I tore out the tongues of those whose slanderous mouths had uttered blasphemies against my god Ashur and had plotted against me, his god-fearing prince; I defeated them (completely). The others, I smashed alive with the very same statues of protective deities with which they had smashed my own grandfather Sennacherib – now (finally) as a (belated) burial sacrifice for his soul."¹⁸¹

Spoliation of images

The transfer of a deity's loyalty to Assyria was paralleled by the physical transfer of the god's statue from its sanctuary to Assyrian territory (see Fig. 2.5a-b). Initially, these were brought directly to the city of Assur; later texts record deposition of captured images in Nineveh and other Assyrian centres.¹⁸² This was not always the case, of course. The capture of images was selective: only the more important deities were singled out in this way, while lesser gods and their associated shrines were despoiled by Assyrian troops. We know this is the case from the above-mentioned destruction at Babylon. Although Sennacherib claimed to have destroyed the god (i.e. by smashing the cult statue) and his cult centre, later royal inscriptions reveal the Marduk statue had been plundered, along with his throne and ritual bed.¹⁸³ At least some of the captured gods and/or valuables¹⁸⁴ taken from their temples were dedicated to Assyrian deities. Examples of such dedications are found as early as the reign of Tiglath-Pileser I (1105-1077 BC):

¹⁸¹ From the annals of Aššurbanipal, recorded in the so-called Rassam cylinder from the North Palace at Nineveh: *ANET* 288. NB. The text was translated somewhat differently in *ARAB II* 304 §795: "... The rest of the people, alive, by the colossi, between which they had cut down Sennacherib the father of the father who begot me, — at that time, I cut down those people there, as an offering to his shade."

¹⁸² See Cogan (1974) 25-26 on the deposition of captured statues.

¹⁸³ Cogan (1974) 24.

¹⁸⁴ Texts show that booty was used to beautify Assyrian temples or was distributed to officials in royal cities: Cogan (1974) 28.

“The gods of those countries, which I myself took captive... to the temple of Ninlil, the greatly beloved wife of Ashur my lord, to Anu, Adad, the Assyrian Ishtar, the temples of my city Ashur and the goddesses of my country, I presented.”¹⁸⁵

An inscription of Esarhaddon boasting of the restoration of captured gods inadvertently reveals the conditions of foreign deities in Assyria. He “let them stay in comfortable quarters until he completed temples (for them)”, apparently a great concession: Cogan pointed out that the phrase “comfortable quarters” was often used to contrast with a former state of desolation, hunger, or disturbance.¹⁸⁶ Other texts speak of the place of a deity’s exile as “not fit” or unworthy of abode:¹⁸⁷ the goddess of Uruk, Nana(ya), for example, had apparently been in Elam for centuries before sending an oracle to Aššurbanipal about removing her from an unfitting place. The cult could continue without a statue or with a replacement, as it evidently did in Elam and elsewhere, for several statues of Nana were despoiled by Assyrian kings over the years. But there was no continuity of cult in Assyria while a deity was held hostage, nor any appreciable mark of consideration for the cult’s adherents.

Reconciliation with foreign cults

It is apparent from requests for the return of despoiled deities that the original cult statue and objects retained some value. Assyria returned captive images when the defeated population formally submitted to their new masters (no doubt via the *adū*), thus achieving a measure of goodwill for allowing the cult to regain its original idol. In one example, a text recounts that the Arab king so angered a goddess that she set out for Assyria and facilitated King Sennacherib’s victory over the Arab people.¹⁸⁸ Once the Arab king signalled his submission by kissing the feet of Sennacherib’s successor Esarhaddon, and begged for the return of his gods, they were returned. First, however:

¹⁸⁵ See Cogan (1974) 27. Another instance during the reign of this king occurs in Kummuh (classical Commagene): “I conquered the broad land of Kutmuhi in its entirety and brought it in subjection to my feet. At that time I offered unto Assur, my lord, one ca[u]ldron of copper and one bowl of copper from the spoil and tribute of the land of Kutmuhi; sixty vessels of bronze, together with their gods, I dedicated unto Adad who loves me” (*ARAB I* 76 §223).

¹⁸⁶ Cogan (1974) 29-30.

¹⁸⁷ See Cogan (1974) 14.

¹⁸⁸ *ANET* 301; Cogan (1974) 17-20.

“I [Esarhaddon] refurbished... the gods of the Arabs, and I inscribed the might of the god Aššur, my lord, and (an inscription) written in my name on them”.¹⁸⁹

Although the refurbishment of the images could be considered, as Cogan did,¹⁹⁰ a sign of respect to Arabian gods, the inscription leaves no doubt that the Arabs were expected to remember that they and their gods were subordinates of Aššur and the Assyrian king, to whose largesse they owed their cult.

The example of inscription is not common, but does appear again in the time of Esarhaddon on other returned statues, and during his and his successors' reigns on cult objects.¹⁹¹ Once repatriated, the cult of the god could be rewarded for expressions of loyalty. The gift of a jewelled star emblem to the Arabian goddess of the example above by King Aššurbanipal was apparently given in anticipation of future favours, including the overthrow of Assyrian enemies and support for the continuation of the king's dynasty.¹⁹² Aššurbanipal explicitly credited the goddess with his victory over a rebellious Arab king of his own time and it is clear that he acknowledged the power of the non-Assyrian deity working in his favour. Unfortunately this appears to be a late and possibly unique example of veneration of a foreign deity that was not of Mesopotamian origin.

Studies have shown that the bones of Assyrian theology were taken from their southern neighbours, particularly Nippur and (later) Babylon.¹⁹³ Originally a cult built around the holy, high-place of Aššur, the religion was expanded as the city of Assur was influenced by nearby cultures admired for their longer history and scholarship. Some Mesopotamian divinities became institutionalised at the Assyrian court. Questions put to the god Šamaš by King Esarhaddon as well as Esarhaddon's adoption of the Mesopotamian institution of the “substitute king” to cheat death¹⁹⁴ are some of the best examples of how closely an Assyrian monarch could identify with a foreign god. The questions to Šamaš did not concern Mesopotamia, so it cannot be said that Assyria consulted the gods of foreign lands in matters relating to the god's homeland (as the instance of the Arabian goddess above might

¹⁸⁹ *RINAP* 4 19, no. 1, col. iv §10-15.

¹⁹⁰ Cogan (1974) 36.

¹⁹¹ See Holloway (2002), 288-291, Table 9.

¹⁹² *ANET* 301.

¹⁹³ Livingstone (1997) 167.

¹⁹⁴ Babylonian astrologers at the king's court would predict the death of the king. A substitute would be enthroned temporarily and then executed, to bring the prediction to pass: Garfinkle (2007) 87.

otherwise have suggested).¹⁹⁵ The explanation perhaps lies in the respect evinced by Assyria for the ancient practices of Babylon, such as divination and omen-reading, which Assyrian kings adopted for the sake of their own advantage.

Assyria realised that “ritual penetration” of a society was fundamental to acceptance of the legitimacy of its rule and the stability of its socio-economic structure. Claiming the role of cult patron legitimised the king’s authority locally and “provided [the conquered with] a rationale for the prevailing political institutions and socio-economic relations”.¹⁹⁶ In the main, Assyrian support of temples was linked to economic considerations:¹⁹⁷ these could function as macro-economies and produce tribute. Religious elites and priestly classes played a central role in the management of resources locally and so ingratiation with local religious institutions was an economic investment as well as political manipulation. The institutions could also be used to secure the loyalty of non-Assyrian elites by providing opportunities for prosperity and advancement within their local (but imperially controlled and safely non-military) hierarchy. Meanwhile, the policy might engender economic solidarity. Another obvious political advantage for kings assuming the role of patron of religious centres was that any rebellion in the land could be deemed sacrilegious. This could be a powerful tool of propaganda and helped to retain the loyalty of client populations.

It was a two-sided coin, however; some measures on the part of Assyria to embed itself into the religious structure of the local community were also necessary, to ensure that it became integrated into the long-term social and economic system of its provinces. This involvement could take a number of forms, most prominently the establishment of benefices for ongoing ritual offerings and sacrifices, and sponsorship of temple and sanctuary building work. But close inspection of the Assyrian reputation for munificence toward non-Assyrian temples shows that such support was in fact extended only to selected Mesopotamian cults at Harrān and Babylonia.¹⁹⁸ With one exception,¹⁹⁹ there is no record of Assyrian restoration of temples

¹⁹⁵ Garfinkle (2007) 87.

¹⁹⁶ Goldstone and Haldon (2009) 12. See further Durkheim (1933 [1976]) for an analysis of the use of religion to account for the position of an individual or group in secular circumstances and in the realisation of identity.

¹⁹⁷ One interesting exception may be Aššurbanipal (668-627 BC), whose ambition to create a library of the world’s learning led him to value temples as repositories of knowledge. As motivation for acts of patronage in the ancient world, this may have been unique.

¹⁹⁸ Holloway (2002) 238-254 tabulated all known examples of cult centre reconstruction outside Assyria.

in provinces or client kingdoms, as was the Hittite imperial policy, for example. The Assyrian track record for establishing offerings or making provision for sacrifices at cult centres outside of Mesopotamia was also extremely poor, although one occurrence is known at Kumme (north of modern Zakho), on the Anatolian border.²⁰⁰ in 895 BC King Adad-nārārī II sacrificed before Adad of Kumme, a god equated with the Hurrian storm-god Tešub.²⁰¹ Propitiating the protector of this influential capital, where Urartian emperors were known to have sacrificed and where their influence was strong, may have been felt necessary, or the king may simply have wished to make a display here to emphasise locally the god's approval of his campaign westwards. Indicating Assyrian support for the local elite associated with the cult centre might also have been a consideration. Outside of the Mesopotamian region, then, foreign religions were simply subjugated or treated as tools facilitating imperial control.

Assyria and the Neo-Hittite kingdoms

There had been periodic conflicts between Assyria and the tribal forerunners of the later Urartian state since the thirteenth century BC; Shalmaneser I claimed it took only three days to burn the fifty-one cities and subdue the eight lands concerned, which he described as rebels, "at the feet of Aššur, my lord".²⁰² In return for submission to "the yoke of Aššur" (i.e. payment of tribute and control of the wealth of the land), kingdoms would retain some degree of self-determination. However, the Assyrian strategy to preserve the loyalty of clients through a combination of military and religious intimidation was a failure: their allegiance was won and lost repeatedly in the succeeding centuries.

With the destruction of the Hittite capital early in the twelfth century,²⁰³ the Arameans came to prominence in northern Mesopotamia. In northern Syria and Anatolia about a dozen new

¹⁹⁹ For the exception, Median temples in the cities of Karalla and Ḫarḫār (where client rebellions resulted in the cities being recast as provincial centres), see Holloway (2002) 240.

²⁰⁰ See table in Holloway (2002) 261-268. Apart from Kumme, the only example of a non-Mesopotamian location recorded is again Media. I discount the latter because the god receiving the sacrifice was "Marduk who dwells in Til-Aššuri", the chief Mesopotamian deity, in what was probably a Babylonian colony: *ibid.* 263, n. 129.

²⁰¹ *ARAB I* 114 §371. On the equation of the gods at Kumme, see Haas (1994) 331-332.

²⁰² Grayson (1987) 183 §22-46.

²⁰³ By the "Sea Peoples", according to the Egyptians: Medinet Habu inscriptions of Rameses III, *ANET* 262-263. Named because they came to Egypt over the sea, these invaders of the Near East also came by land. Apparently a loose confederation of peoples seeking to escape areas to which they had

principalities emerged, bringing with them a resurgence of religious differentiation. Among these were Biainili in the east, also known as Urartu, and Phrygia in central Anatolia. By the end of the twelfth century, the annals of Assyrian kings already reveal the beginnings of contacts with these Neo-Hittite kingdoms.

Assyria emerged from the so-called ‘dark age’ of western Asia without its imperial possessions (as did Egypt and Babylonia), and the long process of restoring them began. A state of disorder was thought to prevail in territories lapsed in their sworn service of Aššur, which was the responsibility of the Assyrian king to remedy. What this entailed might be indicated by recent discoveries at Kinalīa/Kunulua (modern Tell Tayinat).²⁰⁴ About 829 BC Shalmaneser III commemorated his conquest here by having a colossal image of himself erected in the city temple.²⁰⁵ Almost a century later Tiglath-Pileser III not only annexed the city for breaking its *adê*, but enslaved its people and annihilated its sacred precinct as well.²⁰⁶ Monuments inscribed with Luwian hieroglyphs describing and invoking favours of Luwian gods were found smashed to smithereens in the Iron Age shrine and in the street of the abutting building.²⁰⁷ The temple was renovated and an Assyrian religious complex superimposed. The Neo-Hittite cella was now used to store cuneiform records, although ritual objects and libation vessels were also discovered here.²⁰⁸ This became the pattern for punishment of recalcitrant clients, frequently involving the burning of the city and concurrent ruin of local religious institutions.²⁰⁹

been deported, or new lands to settle for security or other reasons, they included groups with Anatolian backgrounds, such as the Lukka and the Denyen (Danuna): Bryce (2005) 337-339.

²⁰⁴ Located in the plain of Antioch (modern Amuq), known to the Assyrians as Kinalua in Unqi, the city was the capital of the Neo-Hittite kingdom of the Patinities: Hawkins (2000) 361-362.

²⁰⁵ *RIMA* 3 A.O.102.14 §155-156a; A.O.102.16 §285; Yamada (2000) 287.

²⁰⁶ *ARAB* I 272-274 §769; *RINAP* I 38-40, I.12. Hawkins (2000) 363 described the annexation as the “absolute *terminus ante quem* for native monuments”.

²⁰⁷ Hawkins (2000) VII.2. TELL TAYINAT 2, 367-375.

²⁰⁸ University of Toronto (2009, August 11). “Archaeologists Find Cache Of Tablets In 2,700-year Old Turkish Temple.” *ScienceDaily*. Retrieved April 12, 2010, from <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/08/090810122133.htm>

²⁰⁹ See Holloway (2002) 109-118 on the topos of aggression directed at temples in Near Eastern sources and Table 1 for attested Neo-Assyrian temple destructions.

In the ninth century BC a number of tribes around Lakes Sevan, Van and Urmia coalesced to form the kingdom of Urartu (see map, page 94). The catalyst for the emergence of the state is thought to have been the threat posed by nearby Assyria.²¹⁰ That incursions by the Assyrians into Urartian territory were not merely theoretical is shown by the annals of the Assyrian kings. In his accession year, 859 BC, Shalmaneser III celebrated a victorious campaign waged across Urartu:

“I went down to the Sea of Nairi [Lake Van], washed the weapons in the sea, (and) made offering to my gods; at that time, I fashioned the image of my likeness, inscribed on it the praise of Ashur, the great lord, my lord, and the victory of my might, (and) placed (it) by the sea.”²¹¹

The rituals at Lake Van are engraved on the first band of the bronze reliefs that adorned the king's palace gates²¹² (Fig. 2.6). In the upper register, the king pours a libation into the water while a soldier throws the legs of a sacrificial animal into the mouths of divine sea monsters. Behind them is the king's image carved into the mountainside, two lances topped with (military? or divine?) standards, an offering table, incense burner, and pot stand. Priests holding food and wine offerings approach. Musicians, too, are present. An inscription above the illustration reads: “I set up an image on the shore of the Sea of Nairi; I made offerings to my gods.”²¹³

Yet the influence of the Assyrian empire in Urartu appears to have been embraced rather than rejected. The earliest Urartian inscriptions, at the ancient capital of Tušpa (modern Van Kalesi), were carved in Assyrian cuneiform;²¹⁴ motifs of Urartian art included Assyrian-type winged genii and stylised ‘sacred’ trees; the god Haldi, like Aššur, was associated with a

²¹⁰ Zimansky (1985) 3ff.

²¹¹ Yamada (2000) 275. Two years later Shalmaneser III campaigned the breadth of Urartu and again left monuments inscribed with the might of Aššur (at Mount Eritia and in the temple of a city in Gilzanu) commemorating “the victory of my might” and “my heroic deeds and acts of triumph”: Yamada (2000) 279-281.

²¹² King (1915) plate I. These artefacts are known as the Bronze Gates of Balawat, after the village where they were allegedly found.

²¹³ King (1915) 21.

²¹⁴ For the inscriptions of King Sarduri I, see CTU 95-100 (A 1). None of these mentions the name of a deity.

weapon of conquest, which appeared at the pinnacle of the Haldi temple at Muşaşir,²¹⁵ and Urartians also worshipped a goddess very like Ištar, the Assyrian goddess of battle and love. When the Urartian state began to decline in power, however, Assyrian iconography was given up, as numerous bronze votive plaques from a cache discovered at Giyimli, south of Van, show: the Ištar-like goddess or Assyrian design was hammered out and a goddess apparently from an earlier tradition superimposed (see Fig. 2.7).²¹⁶

Although some constituents of the new state may have been little acquainted with him, the war god Haldi was elevated to the role of principal deity and protector. The early Urartian King Išpuini (r. about 830-810 BC) conquered the then Mannae city of Muşaşir (near modern Rowanduz, Iraqi Kurdistan) and located the main sanctuary of Haldi there, in a mountainous zone bordering Urartian and Assyrian territory. He connected Urartu to Muşaşir literally, too, by establishing a “via sacra” between them.²¹⁷ The choice of Haldi could have been directed by the worship of this deity in Mannaea, where the dynasty now ruling Urartu may have originated,²¹⁸ or perhaps the decision to subordinate more widely known gods (including those of the Hurrians and Hittites) simply reflected the wish of the developing state to distinguish itself. In any event, the god was firmly associated with the Urartian royal dynasty and the expansion of the kingdom.

The routes of communication between communities across the difficult terrain of Urartu were overlooked by fortresses, usually sited on natural eminences. The focus within each citadel was a temple; these were presumably for the garrisons and their dependants, rather

²¹⁵ The *giššuri*: see Zimansky (1985) 51. For the spear-point atop the temple, see Fig. 2.8 below. According to the list of booty in Sargon’s Letter to Aššur, the temple of Haldi contained silver lances and spears inlaid with gold, 1,514 bronze lances, bronze lance blades, and bronze spears, but the hand of the statue of Haldi held a sword made of gold: §173. A ritual spear of 0.64m in height was discovered in an Urartian temple of the god Irmusi at Çavuştepe, but it is not clear which deity was honoured by the object: Mellink *et al* (1968) 28.

²¹⁶ Seidl (2004) 193-197. For the Giyimli bronze hoard see Taşyürek (1977); for the hypothesis that the “degenerated art” superimposed over more sophisticated Assyrian motifs suggests a resurgence of local religious culture as the Assyrianised Urartian elite culture faded, see Seidl (2004), reviewed in Zimansky (2006).

²¹⁷ The bilingual Urartian and Assyrian “Kelišin” stela erected by King Išpuini and his son Minua marked the beginning of the processional way: Salvini (1989) 81. For the text see CTU 141-144 (A 3-11).

²¹⁸ Ayvazian (2004) 29.

than settlements, as populations appear to have been scattered further afield.²¹⁹ In this practice, the Urartians foreshadowed Persian policy. But the form of the Urartian fortress temples indicates a special relationship between the state and religion; at least one had a throne and none suggests the existence of a priesthood or other intermediary with the god besides the king.²²⁰ Temple doorways were models for niches cut into rock walls in which offerings were placed for deities; a number of these are known to have borne inscriptions of the king, serving to remind passers-by of the connection between ruler and god.²²¹ The Urartian kings also built open-air shrines for their ancestors, but it is not known whether the deceased were deified or merely honoured. These courtyards boasted altars and stelai, before which libations were poured.²²²

Powerful and increasingly prosperous Urartu made repeated attempts to appropriate the allegiance of Assyrian clients (sometimes threatening military action) and Urartian kings displayed growing recalcitrance in the matter of payment of tribute to Assyria. It was necessary to secure the frontier territories of northern Mesopotamia and Syria, and reassert Assyrian dominance in Anatolia. King Sargon II campaigned deep into the Urartian kingdom in 714 BC. His letter to Aššur recounting the exploits of this time describes the comprehensive sack of the national temple of the state god Haldi at Mušašir:

“Because Urzana, the king, their prince, had not been afraid of the word (or name) of Assur, and had cast off the yoke of my sovereignty, and forgot to serve me, I decided to carry off the people of that city [Mušašir], and gave the order that the god Haldia, the protector of Urartu, should be led forth. As victor I caused him to sit before his

²¹⁹ Sagona and Zimansky (2009) 332, 335.

²²⁰ Sagona and Zimansky (2009) 343-344 and fig. 9.14. For a survey of fortified Urartian sites and their temples, see Forbes (1983) 5-39, 69-95. For a reconstruction of the Toprakkale throne, see Seidl (2004) 61-64 and Abb. 25.

²²¹ Compare, for example, the brief inscription of King Išpuini addressing his “Signore” in a niche measuring only 150cm in height by 120cm in width and 8cm in depth: *CTU* 110 (A 2-5); and the lengthy, 93-line niche inscription of Išpuini and his son Minua dedicating to Haldi “this door” (i.e. the niche), which resembled a temple doorway in its dimensions (4.74m in height and 1.96m in width): *CTU* 125-129 (A 3-1).

²²² Forbes (1983) 81-84 and fig. 45, a drawing of a seal impression from Toprakkale showing a figure with raised arms, jug at his feet, before three tall stelai and (apparently) a sacred tree.

(city) gate... Of Urzana, of Musasir, —Haldia, his god, Bagbartu, his goddess, together with the great wealth of his temple... I carried off.”²²³

It was an unmistakeable demonstration of the “divine abandonment” theology. The god permits the Assyrians to carry away the goods of his temple, which are enumerated at length, and finally his own statue. Rather than seeing this as a defeat of the god, the population are to understand that this takes place by the god’s will, indeed, under his supervision (via the statue). The very different fate of another cult statue of this temple was immortalised in relief sculpture on a wall in the Assyrian royal palace at Khorsabad (see Fig. 2.8).²²⁴ Axe-wielding soldiers are shown in the process of dismembering it: it may be that the most significant god of the defeated people and his consort were singled out for plunder, while the others (even ones within the same sanctuary) that were perceived to be of a lesser propaganda value counted as booty.²²⁵ According to the letter to Aššur, the temple was then burnt and a mass deportation took place.

²²³ *ARAB II* 94-95 §172, 99 §176. The letter narrates the king’s eighth campaign: TCL 3, translation in *ARAB II* 73-99.

²²⁴ Drawing of the relief from room 13 of the palace of King Sargon by Flandin in Botta and Flandin (1849), plates 140-141 (Vol. 2), reproduced in Albenda (1986), plate 133. Curiously, the same letter of Sargon II relates the burning of the temple and sanctuary of Haldi at Arbu, implying the destruction of the cult statue: *ARAB II* 91 §165.

²²⁵ Similarly, the later king Aššurbanipal destroyed the gods around Susa but despoiled nineteen from the city itself: *ARAB II* 309-310 §810. Bedford stated that “minor deities could be destroyed, while the images of the main deities of the subjugated territory, together with accompanying religious objects, were removed to Assyria”: (2009) 54. But Holloway (2002) 55 and 119 presented the argument that the statue depicted in the Khorsabad relief was a votive image, perhaps of an Urartian emperor, rather than a divinity. He contended that Assyrian artists would have considered the destruction of a divine image too controversial a subject for carving in stone and that such an event would certainly have been recorded in Sargon’s “Letter to Aššur”. However, the Assyrians were not shy of advertising the destruction of foreign temples and the disrespectful looting of their contents, and this relief was displayed in the Khorsabad palace where sensitivity to Urartian religious feeling must have been a low priority. Furthermore, in my view, the destruction of a statue of a defeated foreign ruler would have been an even likelier candidate for inclusion in the “Letter to Aššur” than the cutting up of a, probably lesser, idol; in fact, the letter does give specific descriptions of several statues of Urartian royalty, which were carried away whole (*ARAB II* 98 §173). Letters to the god listed the acts of conquest carried out to the glory of Aššur during the annual campaign and closed with the recitation of numbers of soldiers killed (see e.g. *RIMA 3* A.O.105.3, 243-244); they were constructed to be read out in public by the king at the ceremony dedicating the dead to the god. The god responded by letter, too, echoing the king’s account (*SAA III*.41-45). It is likely that the apparently over-life-size statue depicted in the

The armies of Sargon II had no need to penetrate beyond this place on the fringes of Urartian territory to bring about the submission of the entire kingdom. The destruction of the spiritual capital of Urartu, a land with several centres of power, was a blow at its heart. The Assyrians wished to convey that the dynasty receiving the blessings of the national god here had been “cultically and politically nullified”.²²⁶ Yet correspondence shows that, despite the violence it suffered and the loss of the national temple, the city of Muşaşir retained some influence. The cult was permitted to operate – there is some suggestion of the possible return of the Muşaşir gods²²⁷ – and the dynasties of Urartian kings to continue, but not without new constraints. The spies of Sargon II reported that the Urartian king and nobility were involved in temple rituals in the capital Turuṣpâ (modern Van) and elsewhere that were considered politically significant.²²⁸ The Assyrian king forbade Urzana, now puppet ruler of Muşaşir, to permit participation in temple rituals there by anyone without his express consent.²²⁹ The somewhat frustrated reply of Urzana indicates his apparent inability to prevent Urartian governors from arriving in Muşaşir and “doing service” in the temple in advance of the arrival of the Urartian king. While at one level the correspondence shows the continued importance of the national temple rituals to kingship in Urartu (so much so that the Urartian king and nobility would publicly disobey their Assyrian overlord), it also shows that Muşaşir had been left with neither means nor authority to control access. In the alternative, it may be that Urzana had no desire to comply with Sargon’s orders and was supporting political resistance by permitting the continuation of the ritual life of Urartu. In either case, Sargon’s attempted interference with temple activities had nothing to do with his economic interests but blatantly aimed to reserve the ideology of kingship to himself through control of temple ceremonies. Assyrian records show tribute was received from Urartu until the (violent but mysterious) end of the kingdom some time in the second half of the seventh century.

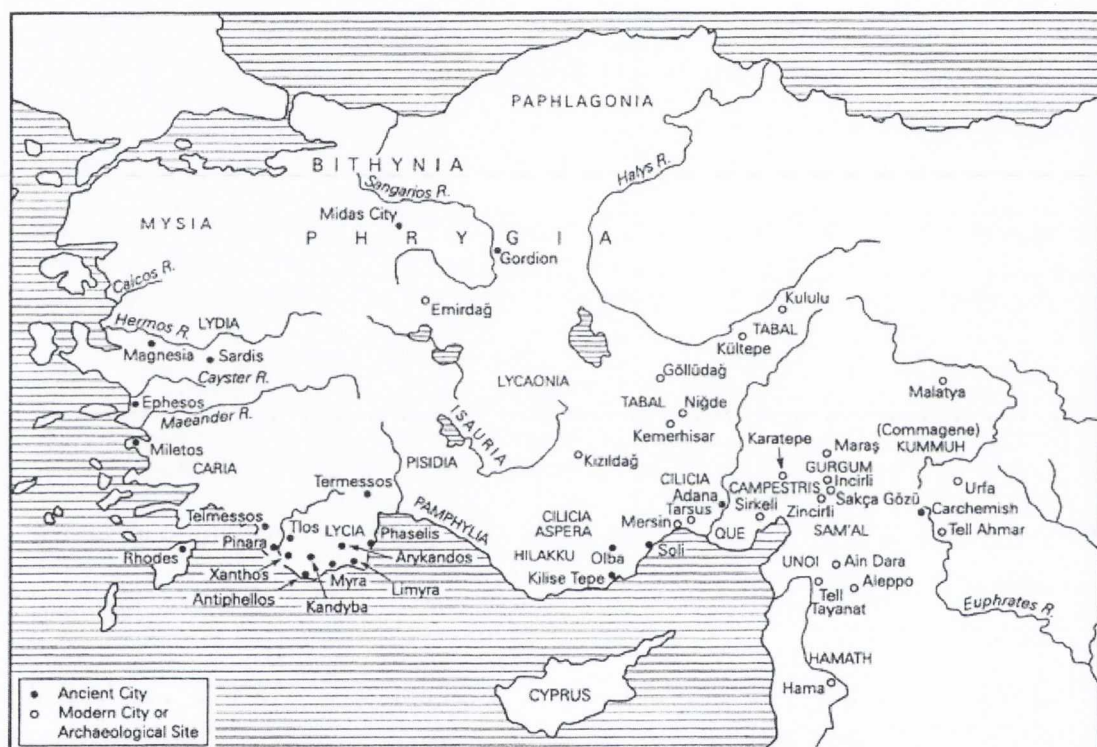
wall relief was housed within the sanctuary of the principal deity and was simply being chopped up for booty. Indeed, the episode is shown as a detail at the bottom of a panel depicting Assyrian soldiers carrying off and weighing temple loot.

²²⁶ Holloway (2002) 117.

²²⁷ SAA I.7; Tadmor (1958) 86-87.

²²⁸ e.g. SAA V.85.

²²⁹ Waterman (1930) Letter 409; SAA V.147.



Iron Age Anatolia

PHRYGIA, LYDIA, AND IONIA

Phrygia

The people of the Phrygian empire were unrelated to the Bronze Age and Early Iron Age societies that lived on the Anatolian plateau before them,²³⁰ although they may have amalgamated with the Mushki people encountered by the Assyrians of the 12th-11th centuries BC.²³¹ Tradition has it that the Phrygians were immigrants from Macedonia (*Hist.* VII.73); their language, while still Indo-European, differed from Hittite and Luwian, and their Greek-related script and ceramic traditions provide some support for this theory.²³² Archaeological evidence of monumental architecture and public spaces at the citadel of Gordion, the Phrygian capital, reveal the establishment of a central authority from about 950 BC; no definitive conclusion about their origins can be reached, however, as the construction of orthostated buildings and sculptural iconography display marked Syro-Hittite characteristics.²³³ The citadel buildings were destroyed by fire about 800 BC but the inner

²³⁰ Sagona and Zimansky (2009) 354-355.

²³¹ During the reign of Tiglath-Pileser I: *ARAB I* 74 §221.

²³² On the possible antecedents of Iron Age Gordian ceramics in Macedonia/Thrace, see Voigt and Henrickson (2000) 43-46 and 47, Table 2 comparanda. See also Vassileva (2005) on ceramics corroborating culturally similar environments; but cf. Genz (2005), who considers resemblances superficial. On parallels between Thracian rock-cut monuments and some unusual Phrygian examples, see Vassileva (2001). Compare Tsetskhladze (2007), whose review of archaeological evidence concluded that there is no proof that the Phrygians originated in Thrace.

²³³ Sams (1989) 449-450, 453.

mound was filled with debris and built over immediately. The subsequent 800-540 BC Middle Phrygian period is the one best known to us from the reorganised citadel and surrounding tumulus burial mounds; Phrygian remains elsewhere on the plateau also belong largely to this period. Unfortunately, the dearth of written records from Phrygia renders any reconstruction of its history vulnerable to doubt and even epigraphic evidence is poorly understood, owing to the paucity of examples in the Paleo-Phrygian language from which to glean accurate translations. Some information appears in the records of contemporaneous powers such as Assyria, but of course these are highly selective and without objectivity. The majority of written source material comes from Greek authors, whose interpretation of events was affected by the passage of time and a different cultural perspective. Rather than use archaeology to supplement narratives left by other peoples, we should look to the physical evidence first when forming our understanding of the Phrygian imperial period (about 950-early seventh century BC). Fortunately, the relationship between state and religion at this time is attested by plentiful monuments, and interpretation is simplified by the strongly henotheistic nature of Phrygian worship: the Mother goddess, *Matar* (Matar), is the only deity identified explicitly in the iconographic and epigraphic evidence.

The Phrygian conception of sacred space was unusual in Anatolia in that there was neither a dedicated temple for the supernatural protector of the state,²³⁴ nor a distinguished sacred precinct about which public buildings were positioned. That the Mother goddess was regarded as protector of Phrygian cities is indicated by the location of her images at city gates. Two of these statues were discovered *in situ*: outside the gate chamber of the south-east entrance at Boğazköy and at the south entrance to Delik Taş *kale* (castle or fortress). In three other cases schematic idols were found at city gates: two at Boğazköy (one in the socle of the Bastion approximately forty metres from the other inside the south-eastern gate chamber) and one in the Cappadoccia Gate at Kerkenes Dağ.²³⁵ The gate complexes were

²³⁴ Megaron 2 of the Early Phrygian citadel at Gordion is sometimes suggested as a possibility, e.g. Mellink (1983) 358. Design features, such as a platform and pebble-mosaic floor, distinguish it from surrounding megarons, although it was not the largest, most prominent, or most luxurious of these: see <http://sites.museum.upenn.edu/gordion/history/ironage>; and below, for discussion.

²³⁵ Berndt-Ersöz (2006) 148. For discussion of the idols and their possible connection to the Mother goddess, see below. For more on the religious context and indications of cult activity connected with the idols, see Berndt-Ersöz (2006) 181-194. On the Kerkenes Dağ stela specifically, see Summers (2006), and for more on the religious iconography at Kerkenes see below, Chapter 5. Shrines of Kybele stood at the gates of the city of Priene, but it is not known whether the Archaic-period city was located beneath the refounded Hellenistic city whose ruins we may visit today: Ferla (2005) 25 and 134.

sufficiently large to accommodate public rituals. Monuments and niches associated with the goddess's worship are located at other types of entrances, such as valleys, and boundaries. Evidently, the goddess played an apotropaic role in liminal contexts; but her presence conveyed an additional meaning when viewed in conjunction with imperial architecture. David Ussishkin's conclusion regarding the placement of royal statues at Anatolian city gates is equally pertinent to the case of religious monuments: "the erection of a royal monument in the city-gate was meant to symbolize authority, domination, [or] conquest [of] the city in question".²³⁶ The goddess's role, then, was to protect the king in these endeavours. The presence at city gates of sculpted orthostats of religious import and signs of ritual activity (cup marks, podia, etc.) support the idea that the goddess's role in Phrygia was not dissimilar to that of deities in earlier, better understood, Anatolian cultures where these features appeared, such as Bronze Age Troy and Hittite Hattuša. The gateway was regarded as a sacred threshold where the king conducted purification and apotropaic rituals, and made offerings to the gods for the benefit of the city.²³⁷ The new kingdoms of the Neo-Hittite period in southern Anatolia and northern Syria employed a common urban planning and ideological model, in which the religious ceremonies at city gates functioned to legitimise royal rule.²³⁸ The sculptural programme of the so-called 'Lion Gate' of Malatya, the earliest known of these dating to the 11th or early 10th century BC, includes orthostats of a princess pouring a libation before the winged goddess Sauska (who is standing on a pair of birds) and the king doing the same before other divinities, including the "Mountain-king" and the storm gods of various Malatyan cities.²³⁹ With this development in mind, the orthostats at Karatepe are particularly interesting, as it has been suggested that ninth-century slabs from the nearby site of Domuztepe were refitted into a gate-house around 700 BC.²⁴⁰ It is not known whether

²³⁶ Ussishkin (1989) 485, with regard to Anatolia and the Levant. Anatolian examples include the 'Sphinx Gate' south of Hittite Hattuša (modern Boğazköy), which served as the entrance to a cultic area with numerous temples; the 'Lions' Gate' of Neo-Hittite Malatya (Assyrian Melid; modern Arslantepe); and the east gate of a city on the plain of Amuq whose ancient name is uncertain (perhaps Kunulua) located at modern Tell Tayinat.

²³⁷ Haas (1994) 280-282.

²³⁸ Mazzoni (1997) 308.

²³⁹ Hawkins (2000) V.7. MALATYA 6, 307-308; V.8. MALATYA 7, 308-309; V.9.-V.11. MALATYA 8-10, 309-312. On the dating of the orthostats, see Hawkins (2000) 306.

²⁴⁰ See Aro (2003) 297, 316-317. Deshayes (1981) discovered that the choice of themes, details of execution, and the arrangement of reliefs recall the Neo-Hittite ninth century rather than the eighth or seventh centuries, concluding that the South gate was renovated, while most of the North gate was preserved in its original state; Winter (1979) posited that the reliefs of Domuztepe were re-used at Karatepe. But note Çambel's observation that any such refitting of old slabs would have required

the inhabitants across the Ceyhan river were Cilician dynasts: if so, the reuse of their orthostats in Karatepe might imply a continuity of ideology over the centuries; if not, then the builders of Karatepe may have plundered the imagery of a rival city. Similarities occurred, too, in contemporary Carchemish (through which ancient city the modern Turkish-Syrian frontier is drawn): a corner orthostat in the Processional Way depicting an enthroned goddess is similar to a corner orthostat of a seated figure with footstool that was probably displayed in the gatehouse passageway of the Early Phrygian imperial citadel at Gordion²⁴¹

However, the most common and perhaps the earliest type of Phrygian religious monument occurred in rural settings. These consist of a series of steps leading up to a recessed wall or flat area carved into natural rock, usually surmounted by a stela or large schematic idd. In the opinion of Susanne Berndt-Ersöz, the stepped monuments represent a divine throne, in which the rectangular stela forms the back of the throne and the semicircular disc atop it represents the deity/ies.²⁴² There is no evidence connecting these idols with the Phrygian Mother, although it is often assumed that the goddess was represented in schematic form before her anthropomorphisation early in the imperial period. Lynn Roller deduces from one particular idol flanked by stelai depicting the hunting iconography characteristic of Mother goddess worship that it was definitely the Mother goddess being venerated here.²⁴³ That several idols were positioned in pairs or with more than one other idol is intriguing, but there is no indication that these represented multiple facets of the same goddess, or that the additional idols were companion gods, goddesses or attendants, or even whether beings other

trimming, of which there is no evidence: (1999) 10-11. There may have been no orthostats on the walls at Domuztepe, but there may have been a school of artists working from here. See now Çambel (2003) 155-156 for a summary of the inconclusive arguments. Domuztepe has also yielded stelai of the Weather-god and the goddess Kubaba, and other Neo-Hittite sculptures of symbolic importance, such as portal lions and bull socles, more of which later in this chapter.

²⁴¹ Sams (1989) 450 and plate 130, no. 3. Sams suggested that the Gordion motifs may have been archaising, i.e. modelled on tenth-ninth century BC Syro-Hittite styles, and worried that the stylistic inspiration was so different to the (as he thought, contemporary) Assyrianising orthostats at Ankara (*ibid.* 452-453), but the recent re-dating of the destruction level at Gordion from ca. 700 to ca. 800 BC justifies his comparison with the Neo-Hittite example. Accordingly, Gordion may now be added to the list of Anatolian places featuring a goddess at entranceways to imperial cities. For the Carchemish orthostat, see Woolley (1921) 19a, and below on the Processional Way. On the revision of dates at Gordion, see DeVries (2007) 79-101 and Voigt (2007) 311-324; and summary in Sagona and Zimansky (2009) 353-354, 357, and Table 10.1.

²⁴² Berndt-Ersöz (2006) 174.

²⁴³ Roller (1999) 78.

than the goddess were depicted. Berndt-Ersöz makes an interesting case for the worship of a superior, male god in the Early Phrygian period, for whom she believes the ‘thrones’ with semicircular discs were intended.²⁴⁴ A miniature relief from Gordion depicting the Mother goddess and a bull in frames placed side-by-side (giving equal weight to each depiction) suggests the animal was not an offering or an attribute but another deity, in zoomorphic form. He may have been equivalent to the Hittite Weather god, as suggested by orthostats at the Alaca Höyük city gate showing the worship of a bull opposite an anthropomorphic goddess. Alternatively, the bull may have represented a Father figure later syncretised with the Greek Zeus, whom foundation myths assert protected the newly established Phrygian kingship.²⁴⁵ If this deduction is correct, then even the earliest Phrygian monuments were connected with kingship. Berndt-Ersöz hypothesises that Zeus was superseded by the goddess about 700 BC, for whom anthropomorphic images were made, perhaps at the time King Midas chose to elevate her to the status of state goddess.²⁴⁶ Of six stepped monuments with inscriptions, only one – but without a stela or idol – explicitly identifies a deity: *Matar kubileya*, ‘Mountain Mother’.²⁴⁷

The upper section of five stepped monuments without a semicircular disc, but with a deeper top step and (perhaps) elbow-rests is also suggestive of a throne: a clue as to their meaning may be found in a separate category of stepped monuments located near the entrances of the archaic Phrygian citadel known as Midas Şehri/City (near modern Afyon). With functional

²⁴⁴ Berndt-Ersöz (2006) 163-166.

²⁴⁵ For the legend of Gordios see Aelian, *NA* XIII.1; Arr. *Anab.* II.3.2-6; Plutarch, *Vit. Alex.* XVIII. In the retellings of Curt. III.1.11-18 and Just. *Epit.* 11.7 §5-14, the deity is called Jupiter. On the ‘temple’ of Zeus where Alexander cut the Gordian knot and sacrificed to the Greek god – the scene of Zeus’ handing of the kingship to the conqueror – see Alfred Körte (1904) 169-170. The legend contains an example of divine abandonment (see Chapter 2): the Phrygian chief deity grants a foreigner the right to rule.

²⁴⁶ Berndt-Ersöz (2006) 209. Rein (1996) 233 speculated that the change from schematic to anthropomorphic form was inspired by late Hittite iconography: she cited Mellink (1983) 354-356 for support, who credited the influence of Neo-Hittite cult reliefs.

²⁴⁷ In the south of the Köhnüş valley of the highlands. The monument is cut into rock and the inscription is carved into a recessed wall above its steps; a rock-cut niche around the corner also associates the monument with the Phrygian goddess. The only other known use of *kubeleya* (with slight variation of spelling) occurs below and beside a rock-cut niche near Germanos, Bithynia, but is associated only with a platform beneath it. See Berndt-Ersöz (2006) 245, 239. An inscription on a limestone bomos reading in part “[M-]ητρι Κυβέλη” was discovered re-used in the foundations of a ruined house at Nacolea (Seyit Gazi) and therefore lacks a stratigraphic date: Cox & Cameron (1937) 102, no. 213.

steps and culminating in a seat, these are associated with features indicating public ritual, such as cup marks and platforms, familiar from stepped monuments located elsewhere and known to have been part of Hittite rituals at city gates.²⁴⁸ The rock wall behind one of these bears an inscription with what is probably the word for cult image, *iman*, leading Berndt-Ersöz to suggest that a portable idol may have been placed on the seat.²⁴⁹ These monuments may be connected to a Phrygian version of the Hittite ritual following a royal death, where the cremated remains were placed on a chair or stool, then moved to a bed in a crypt.²⁵⁰ An image of the deceased was placed on a golden throne, where offerings were burned and ceremonies took place before it.²⁵¹ Some elements, such as wine rituals and attributes differentiating male from female (bow and arrow; spindle and distaff), were still occurring in southeastern Anatolian (Luwian) religious practices in Neo-Hittite times.²⁵² If this hypothesis of cultural survival is correct, then the Phrygian stepped monuments with thrones/seats may have been a development ritualising the memory of kings and prominent family members who were intimately connected with their protector deity.

The connection between the Phrygian elite and the deity is borne out by another kind of monument, elaborate architectural façades cut into mountain rock. These resembled the fronts of large buildings with deep niches in place of doorways, were decorated with geometric patterns and could feature dedicatory inscriptions. They were often associated with one or several of a variety of other rock-cut features, such as platforms, shafts, and smaller doorway-shaped niches nearby. A clue as to the purpose of the façade monuments comes from their resemblance to the gable-roofed, megaron-type buildings of the Early Phrygian citadel at the capital, Gordion. A stela from Sincan, outside Ankara, depicts twin schematic idols beneath just such a gabled roof, topped by an acroterion (Fig. 3.4); in addition, three incised sketches of such gable-roofed buildings survive, one featuring the same kind of acroterion as carved on the stela, gable arms crossing at the apex and curving into open volutes (Fig. 3.5). Each of the sketches features a niche analogous to the rock-cut ones for the Mother goddess found in façades across Phrygia. The stela and the sketches connect the gable-roofed buildings to religious contexts; meanwhile, an acroterion found before Megaron

²⁴⁸ Berndt-Ersöz (2006) 148-149.

²⁴⁹ Berndt-Ersöz (2006) 76, 175. Brixhe (2008) 78-79 considers *iman* to be appellative; *Iman* also appears as a typical Phrygian name.

²⁵⁰ The ritual is described by Haas (1994) 219-228 and Popko (1995) 154-155.

²⁵¹ Haas (1994) 225-227.

²⁵² Hutter (2003) 260, 262.

2 at Gordion resembles the one on the Ankara relief,²⁵³ showing that the artistic concept had a real-world counterpart (Fig. 3.6). The sketches were carved into the side and rear walls of this megaron; one of these is overlaid by the symbol of the Phrygian goddess, a hawk-like bird (see Fig. 3.5).²⁵⁴ The archaeology of most of the other megaron buildings, of which a dozen have been identified on the Gordion citadel, is suggestive of a palace economy, where raw materials were brought for processing.²⁵⁵ Thus the deity was linked to the organised Phrygian state and the strength of this connection was reflected in the choice of architectural iconography for rock-cut façades.²⁵⁶

Architectural façades on rock-cut tombs, rock-cut doorways, niches, and carving or erecting freestanding stelai out of doors were direct parallels of Urartian practices. Assyrian records show Urartu and Phrygia to have been allies, if informally, by the eighth century BC.²⁵⁷ Artistic motifs were borrowed from Neo-Hittite art, such as hybrid creatures and the winged disc symbol,²⁵⁸ in turn probably derived from the history of Anatolian contact with Assyria. Most importantly, in this period anthropomorphic images of the Phrygian goddess began to appear. Roller ascribed the adoption of Neo-Hittite forms to the lack of “an indigenous sculptural tradition to draw on to represent their deity”.²⁵⁹ Of course, this lack could have been filled by the traditions of their place of origin (perhaps in the Balkans, Macedonia or Thrace), so the explanation may lie in acculturation and/or the desire to present themselves and their protector deity in a visual language readily understood by their Anatolian

²⁵³ Young (1956) 261-262 and pl. 93, fig. 41. The symbol also appears on rock-cut façades southwest of Gordion. See the excavators' website: <http://sites.museum.upenn.edu/gordion/history/ironage>.

²⁵⁴ Young (1957) 323 and pl. 90, fig. 12.

²⁵⁵ <http://sites.museum.upenn.edu/gordion/history/ironage?start=1>.

²⁵⁶ Roller (1999) 112 suggested that the façades may represent royal residences, rather than temple buildings, on the basis that the king and royal family held the most prestigious cult offices. If it is correct that all the Phrygian façades are of the Lydian era (see Lydia, below), then the continued appearance of the acroterion shows it became a fixed part of religious iconography, as opposed to associated with a particular Phrygian monarch.

²⁵⁷ *ARAB II* 26-27 §55.

²⁵⁸ Both occur rarely in Phrygian art. One example from Etlik (Ankara) showing a part lion/part human creature is illustrated in Roller (1999) 58, figure 9. Note her suggestion that disparities in the positioning of the disc (i.e. not above the head of the deity) could mean the Phrygians attached a different meaning to the symbol: *ibid.* 49. Assyrian and Urartian influences distinguish Phrygian sculpture of the eighth and seventh centuries BC from the earliest Lydian stone sculpture, which is dependent on eastern Greek art: Hanfmann and Ramage (1978) 14, 16.

²⁵⁹ Roller (1999) 53.

neighbours. From the discovery of a head of the goddess and her bird in the east gate chamber at Büyükkale we know that Phrygian worship occurred over places of Hittite cult.²⁶⁰ Alternatively, the spur may have lain in imperial rivalry.

“We can imagine that Phrygian kings who wished to consolidate their power would have wanted to develop an impressive court religious iconography to serve as a visible manifestation of the favor they claimed to enjoy from the Phrygian Mother Goddess, and the most prominent Neo-Hittite female deity, whose name included the symbol of the bird of prey, furnished a particularly handy model.”²⁶¹

The Syrian goddess Kubaba was the patron deity of the powerful city of Carchemish, whose influence expanded on the collapse of the Hittite empire. Kubaba featured in official imagery and temple sculpture, where she reinforced her special relationship with the king: the mid-eighth century BC king Kamanis addresses her in an inscription as “Queen of Karkamiš”, as others did before him.²⁶² Epigraphy of the Anatolian plateau of this century declares Kubaba’s love and support for named kings, and invokes her protection of monuments or inscriptions by means of a curse.²⁶³ The Phrygian Mother borrowed from images of Kubaba in costume and frontal pose²⁶⁴ and shared similarities such as the role of city protector. Although Kubaba was not associated with a hunting bird or hunting, which was characteristic of the Phrygian goddess, the Luwian hieroglyph for ‘hawk’ appears between phonetic symbols in the writing of Kubaba’s name and is known in Anatolia to have stood in place of the goddess’s name altogether: i.e. in a podium inscription by the wife of King Suppiluliumas of Kummuh.²⁶⁵ The hieroglyph is surely evidence that the bird attribute was of importance to the goddess in Carchemish and beyond, and that the Phrygian goddess’s attribute could have been suggested by this source, as well as bearing additional Phrygian

²⁶⁰ The Phrygian statuette is dated to the last third of the eighth century BC on stylistic grounds, but was found in a level of the second half of the sixth century BC: Boehmer (1972) 207-209, no. 2148.

²⁶¹ Roller (1999) 53.

²⁶² Hawkins (2000) II.26. KARKAMIŠ, 140-143, §7. A tenth or early ninth century BC occurrence is documented in Hawkins (2000) II.19. KARKAMIŠ, 118-121, A23, §3.

²⁶³ Hawkins (1981) 149-150, 169-175. Note that other deities are often named with her in these endeavours.

²⁶⁴ Mellink (1983) 354-355; Roller (1999) 71-72.

²⁶⁵ Hawkins (2000) VI.1-2. BOYBEYPINARI 1 and 2, 334-340, specifically 1.§10 and 2.§§1, 8a, and 10 (appearing with *ku-* in §20). The king is attested in Assyrian sources in 805 and 773 BC.

connotations of the hunt.²⁶⁶ The bird signified sovereignty, as is clear from the inscription of King Kamanis referred to above: in it he recorded having established Kubaba's sacred precinct at Carchemish and his expectation that "Kings and... lords will come in to pray to her".²⁶⁷ But the Phrygian goddess was differentiated, particularly, by her independence and by her ubiquity: while Kubaba had a place in a pantheon of gods and had a consort, the Phrygian goddess had attendants but was apparently a lone deity; and, rather than being confined to a temple or public buildings and associated primarily with state ideology, the worship of the Phrygian goddess occurred in contexts ranging from funerary to isolated rural environments. Doorway-shaped niches cut into natural rock featured prominently where she was venerated²⁶⁸ and some of these still contain a relief carving of the goddess. Empty niches are presumed to have held portable statues, as some contain cuttings for statue bases.²⁶⁹ The Phrygian goddess's associations with the natural world, such as running water, referred to her command over the environment and inclination to direct its bounties to Phrygia, and account for the perception of the goddess in the imperial period as mother as well as protector of the state. As was the case with Urartu, the relationship between Carchemish and Phrygia was sufficiently close by the eighth century BC to forge an alliance against Assyria; any similarity between their patron goddesses can only have served as a uniting force in their joint military efforts.

To the Assyrians, Phrygia was the kingdom of Mushki, at first a centre of anti-Assyrian resistance in southeastern Anatolia, led by King Mita – the late eighth-century BC historical

²⁶⁶ The bird signified sovereignty across the eastern Mediterranean, according to Munn (2006) 86. In relation to Phrygia in particular, he noted the story of the Gordian knot, in which the eagle portends the future kingship of Midas: see Arrian, *Anab.* II.3.2-6. Roller (1999) 62 considered the hunting iconography to be a survival of the Hittite era. A bulla from Boğazköy bearing a seal impression of a seated goddess with a bird in the right hand opposite a lion hunt scene could support this hypothesis: Mellink (1983) 351. Roller (1999) 109 also suggested that the bird of prey and lion attributes were influenced by Anatolian Bronze Age religious symbols. However, note that later Lydian and Greek use of lion imagery in representations of Kybele came from Kubaba, in all probability, as the lion so rarely appeared in Phrygian religious iconography.

²⁶⁷ Hawkins (2000) II.26. KARKAMIŠ, 140-143, §8.

²⁶⁸ These resembled the Urartian mountainside 'doorways' from which the goddess could make her epiphany, but the concept was not necessarily a local one. A Mesopotamian cylinder seal from as long ago as the Akkadian period shows the Sumerian god Šamaš emerging from a mountain, where the doors of heaven are located: see Black and Green (1992) 183, fig. 152, drawn by Tessa Rickards.

²⁶⁹ e.g. the Hyacinth Monument at Yazılıkaya, below the Midas City *kale*. Moveable statues are also indicated by the graffiti in the vacant niche of the Midas Monument façade: see below.

figure who gave rise to the King Midas of Greek legend. While Phrygia attacked the Assyrian tributary state of Que (classical Cilicia)²⁷⁰ from the north, Greek ships harassed the city by sea. After a battle against Ionian forces in 715 BC and regaining fortresses in Que lost to the Phrygians,²⁷¹ King Sargon II of Assyria annexed Que, impeding Phrygian and Ionian trade along the southeastern Anatolian and north Syrian coasts. That simultaneous attacks by both Greek and Phrygian forces may have been the result of a strategic alliance, rather than coincidental occurrences, is supported indirectly by stories of Midas' conspicuous attentions to Greek religious centres and their gods. Herodotos (*Hist.* I.14) records the donation of Midas' throne to Pythian Apollo, whose oracular pronouncements were authoritative across the Greek world. No doubt borne with great ceremony to Delphi and coupled with an inquiry of the oracle, such a prestigious gift may be construed as an attempt to win allies through the seal of approval of this pan-Hellenic institution. The appearance of Phrygian votive offerings at a number of other Greek sanctuaries, notably those of goddesses bearing similarities to the Mother goddess, may signify the establishment of trade relations.²⁷² The beginnings of Phrygian exports to the West can be observed in the archaeological record in this period.²⁷³ Midas' marriage to a Greek princess of Kyme (an Aiolian city) may also have had political significance, symbolising unity with the Anatolian Greek elite.²⁷⁴ Thus his motive for cultivating Greek connections may have been economic and/or, as we have seen, part of a strategy to obtain military assistance for action against Assyrian imperial expansion.

Midas' use of religion in the assertion of his rule at home is recorded by Polyaeus (*Strat.* VII.5):

²⁷⁰ Que became tributary to Assyria by 738 BC, in the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III: *ARAB I* 273 §769; 276 §772. A cult statue of the principal god of Que already displayed Assyrianising traits in the period before Que was annexed, particularly the rendering of hair and beard. The 1.9m statue of the Storm-god in a chariot drawn by bulls was found in Çineköy, near Adana (possibly the provincial capital of Que); the author of its bilingual inscription was King Warika of Que, identified with the eighth-century King Urikki of Que named in Assyrian sources. See Aro (2003) 327 and Hawkins (2000) 41-42.

²⁷¹ Cylinder inscription of King Sargon: *ARAB II* 61 §118. In this context, scholars can confirm "Ionians" as an ethnicity, but not determine a geographical point of origin. On this and the identification of Ionians with the *Yamnāiu/Yaunāiu* of Assyrian texts, see Lanfranchi (2000) 13, n. 20.

²⁷² Muscarella (1989) 339-342.

²⁷³ Lanfranchi (2000) 19-21, who also pointed out how the Greeks might have benefited by Assyrian consolidation in Cilicia, so that their possible support of Phrygia was perhaps due to interests in Aiolis and Ionia.

²⁷⁴ For Midas' marriage to a Greek princess: Aristotle, *Frag.* 611.37; Pollux, *Onomasticon* IX.83.

“Midas, pretending that he was going to perform a solemn sacrifice to the great gods, led out the Phrygians in the night as in procession with flutes, and timbrels, and cymbals: each of them at the same time privately carrying swords. The citizens all left their houses to see the procession: when the musical performers drew their swords, [they] slew the spectators as they came out into the streets, took possession of their houses and invested Midas with sovereignty.”

Herodotos describes the Lydian conquerors of Ionia emulating this behaviour, accompanying their military action with ritual music (*Hist.* I.17. See further, below). While the stories may be apocryphal, they preserve the customary linkage in Anatolia of ritual procession with territorial possession. The act of procession marked out lands under the protection of the god and symbolized their appropriation in both religious and military terms.²⁷⁵ The association of these concepts is borne out in artistic examples, small and large, such as a bronze plaque in the arsenal of Argishti, king of Urartu, depicting figures in war chariots processing behind bearers of ritual rods,²⁷⁶ and the rock reliefs of the Hittite open-air ceremonial space at Yazılıkaya, outside the city of Hattuša and where their kings were buried: the processing pantheon includes deities of foreign lands absorbed into the Hittite empire. From the point of view of human participants in such rituals, ceremonial procession honoured and pleased the deity, securing his/her continued support; naturally, this entailed a reinforcement of loyalty to the god’s choice of ruler.²⁷⁷

A letter of King Sargon II to the governor of Que at the end of the eighth century BC marks a shift in Phrygian relations with Assyria. It records an exchange of prisoners with King Mita. Gifts changed hands too: a bronze, lion-headed situla found in the royal tumulus MM at Gordion resembles closely those depicted on the reliefs of Sargon’s palace at Dûr Sharrukîn (Khorsabad).²⁷⁸ Sargon observed that Phrygian loyalty was won without battle, which he

²⁷⁵ Munn (2006) 194. The concept may be seen in the lists of conquered territories declaimed during Hittite rituals, e.g. *ANET* 351-353; 399-400. The custom of the king processing with the statue of a deity was known also in Assyria: *SAA* XIII.149.

²⁷⁶ Inscribed “From the arsenal of Argishti”, it is not known which of the eighth or seventh century BC kings of that name is meant.

²⁷⁷ Connor (1987) 46 described the same cultural pattern in Archaic Athens: “The citizens are... actors in a ritual drama affirming the establishment of a new civic order, and a renewed rapport among people, leader and protecting divinity.”

²⁷⁸ Compare the Gordion situla in Young (1981) 121-122, catalogued MM 45 and pictured in colour on plate III and in black-and-white on plate 62C-F, with the drawing of a relief from the palace wall, designated Façade L, slabs 26-27, by Eugène Flandin (1849), plates 16-17, reproduced in Albenda

attributed to the will of his gods.²⁷⁹ The acknowledgment of Assyrian supremacy was a sharp political move on the part of Midas at a time when Assyrian power was resurgent in Anatolia and a buffer was required against the Kimmerians, invaders from southern Russia or the region south of the Black Sea, who had defeated the Urartian king about 714 BC and now threatened central Anatolia. An overlord would have been expected to intervene to prevent the same outcome for Phrygia;²⁸⁰ the price probably included acknowledgment of Assyrian claims to southeast Anatolian territory. By virtue of both prudent acquiescence and the good fortune of distance from Assur, Phrygia evaded much of the interference in civic life that was the lot of its Anatolian allies, who lost their kings and had Assyrian governorship forced on them.²⁸¹ Midas was free to associate the local cult exclusively with his own power. The stability of his rule and the prosperity he and his people enjoyed under the protection of their goddess became legendary. Mark Munn suggested that:

“the Phrygian Mother of the Gods, the personification of nurturing forces in nature, and Phrygian Midas, the personification of ideal kingship, were envisioned as attributes of each other. The ideal king, in other words, is seen as the one who evokes

(1986) plate 47. In Assyria such lion-headed beakers were connected to ceremonial drinking banquets in celebration of the king’s military and hunting successes: see Álvarez-Mon (2010) 154-159.

²⁷⁹ *SAA* I.1. However, Sargon’s annals mention military action in Phrygian territory, namely the capture and sack of fortresses by an Assyrian governor in 709 BC. In addition, the Tang-i Var mountain pass inscription (in modern Kurdistan), the only rock relief of Sargon II, records Phrygian losses of settlements and lands, but it is not known whether this commemorates a separate campaign: Lawson Younger, *COS II*, 2.118J, 299-300. Either of the events, or indeed one unknown to us, may be connected to the king’s instructions about a particular deity, for whom he ordered the construction of housing on a riverbank: *SAA* I.251 §4-8.

²⁸⁰ It was perhaps while battling Kimmerians in Tabal that Sargon was killed in 705 BC: *ABC* Babylonian Chronicle 1 ii 6 and commentary (p. 76) shows Sargon marched to Tabal in his final regnal year. Alternatively, he may have fallen in battle against Gurdî of Til-garimmu (located on the Tabalian border), judging by the subsequent brutal siege of the city by Sennacherib in 695 BC, who reduced it to ruins and “the people, together with the gods dwelling there, I counted as spoil”: Luckenbill (1924) 62-63, col. V §12. Still another possibility is that Sargon died in the city of Kuluman in western Iran: see *SAA* I, 70, n. 76 and the Eponym Chronicle C^b 6, rev. §9-11 (entry for the year 705): Ungnad (1938) 435.

²⁸¹ For Gurgum (annexed 711 BC and renamed Marqas), see Gadd (1954) 183-184, col. v §41-73; for Malatya/Melid, see *ARAB II* 11-12 §26; for Tabal, see Sargon’s inscription at Nimrud, which boasts of having removed the king of Tabal while only having “placed his yoke on the land of Muski”: Lawson Younger, *COS II*, 2.118I, 298-299.

the beneficial forces of nature, and the divine forces of nature in turn sustain the ideal king²⁸².

The so-called ‘Midas Monument’ in western Phrygia (after which Midas Şehri/City, situated in the citadel above it, is named) illustrates that an imperial overlord was not necessarily an impediment to the use of traditional religion in support of local political power (Fig. 3.7). The principal inscription dedicates this 16.7x16.4m mountainside façade to Midas.²⁸³ One of three graffiti concerning the Mother goddess in the niche at the centre of the monument, where the statue of the deity once stood, includes the name “Midas”. This is indicative of the strength of the connection believed to have existed between that ruler and the goddess.²⁸⁴ The location of the Midas Monument in the landscape reinforces the impression that the benefits of the earth that made Midas such an envied archetype, namely gold and agricultural plenty, were in the Mother’s gift. The construction of the monument has been dated broadly to the Middle Phrygian period (about 800-540 BC): to the late eighth century BC by comparing geometric patterns with those on wooden furniture and textiles from tumuli at Gordion²⁸⁵ and that there is no sign that the main inscription naming Midas was created later than the façade;²⁸⁶ alternatively, a date in the first half of the sixth century BC is proposed by association with the archaeological evidence nearby and arguments concerning decorative development.²⁸⁷ In the latter case, the Midas of the inscription could have been a later bearer of the dynastic name.

²⁸² Munn (2006) 79.

²⁸³ Brixhe and Lejeune (1984) 6-9, M-01a; English translation in Brixhe (2008) 78.

²⁸⁴ Berndt-Ersöz (2006) 74 suggested that the “Midas” graffito in the niche be understood as a personal name, rather than a reference to the former king. However, its occurrence in this context (as the name of the author of the graffito?) would seem to be too coincidental.

²⁸⁵ Haspels (1971) 103-104. For a dissenting view, cf. Berndt-Ersöz (2006) 99-104.

²⁸⁶ Sagona and Zimansky (2009) 358-362.

²⁸⁷ Very few finds were discovered dating before 600 BC and none close to a façade or step monument: Berndt-Ersöz (2006) 98, 104-105, 129. Also, on the basis that the façade and the stoa beside it were contemporaneous, the façade is dated by the stoa inscription to between 600 and 550 BC: *ibid.* 131. The rosette and sphinx motifs appearing on some Phrygian façades appear to have been inspired by a mixture of Neo-Hittite and Greek models, respectively, and so may have developed in a period of close contact with Greece: Roller (1999) 101.

King Mita made his last appearance in the Assyrian archives in 709 BC; Eusebios gives 696 or 695 BC as the end of Midas' reign.²⁸⁸ The date coincides with a rebellion in southeastern Anatolia against the status of Assyrian tributary, first imposed by Shalmaneser III in the 830s BC. The unrest emanated from Hilakku in the west Cilician mountains and stretched eastward as far as the city of Taurus in Tabal (respectively, west and north of Que). Apparently, the rebels received military support from Greek Ionia,²⁸⁹ but to no avail. Generals of the Assyrian King Sennacherib carried out a reprisal campaign.²⁹⁰ The destruction of the allied cities of Mersin and Tarsus brought the uprising to an end.²⁹¹ The weapon of Aššur and a royal stela before it were set up in the centre of Illubru in Hilakku. Mersin and Tarsus were denuded of their populations and the lands granted to Greek settlers.²⁹² The Assyrian policy of encouraging the growth of trading emporia or foreign settlement once annexed territory was firmly in the grip of the empire, previously in evidence as far as the Syrian coast, now began to be extended into Anatolia. Earlier Greek hostility toward Assyrian expansion generated by Phrygian opposition and fed by the religious imprimatur of Delphi dissipated with the growth of commercial activity. Sennacherib claimed to have built a temple "of the Athenians" for the new arrivals.²⁹³ The cost to indigenous traditions is difficult to ascertain from the scarce indications of religious life in southeastern and southwestern Anatolia at this time, when native Luwian-language texts disappear and in the absence of Iron Age sacred architecture. For the latter, too little excavation and also the regional practice of outdoor worship might be held to blame.²⁹⁴

²⁸⁸ In the first or second years of the twenty-first Olympiad: *Chron.* 89,11 and 92,16 (Helm); 182 and 184 (Karst).

²⁸⁹ For discussion, see Lanfranchi (2000) 30-31. The Armenian word *yoyñ*, used in the translation of both Polyhistor's and Abydenos' transmissions of Berossos' account of the battle, means both 'Greeks' and 'Ionians' (see commentaries at *BNJ* 680 F 7c and *BNJ* 685 F 5, respectively). Polyhistor describes the involvement of Ionian land forces, while Abydenos records naval support.

²⁹⁰ Luckenbill (1924) 61-62, col. IV §61-91.

²⁹¹ See Forsberg (1995), esp. 55-56, on the destruction level and fill, over which extensive building activity took place, providing a *terminus ante quem* of 680 BC.

²⁹² See Lanfranchi (2000) 10-11, 24-25, 31. Note also Haider (1996) 82-85 on pottery evidence describing the growing Greek presence.

²⁹³ Eusebius (Arm.), *Chronographia* *BNJ* 685 F5 (Abydenos). On the merits of the extract from Berossos' *Babyloniaka* which relates this deed, see Dalley (1999). Haider (1996) 88, n. 153, suggested the temple was for an Assyro-Babylonian goddess (perhaps Ištar) or a local goddess, whom the Greeks equated with Athena. However, no grounds for assuming such a syncretism exist.

²⁹⁴ An inscription of the later part of the eighth century BC describes offerings to the Tabalean divine mountain Harhari (Argaeus/Erciyes Dağ); another records the prosperity awarded by the deities Tarhunzas and Kubaba to the steward of divine Mount Muti (modern Toros Dağ): Hawkins (2000)

Onomastics and theophoric elements in names hint that the Storm-god Tarhunt, the “conqueror”, who was the principal god of the Luwian-speaking peoples,²⁹⁵ and other Luwian deities were still known in the second half of the first millennium in Anatolia.²⁹⁶ However, the effects of acculturation, if not syncretism, were evident in religious expression already before the end of the eighth century BC in the Assyrianisation of public inscriptions and sacred art. On the Anatolian plateau, for instance, the Luwian Moon-God Arma had been supplanted by his Harranean (Mesopotamian) equivalent, who was called upon explicitly by Tabalean dynasts to guarantee curses alongside Kubaba.²⁹⁷ About the same time, the famous rock carving of the Storm-god at Ivriz with King Warpalawa of Tuwana (in southern Tabal) displayed markedly Assyrian traits, such as bracelets and (perhaps) earrings, an Assyrian-style beard and hair in ringlets. These examples stand in contrast to the Cilician city of Karatepe (Aslantaş). Standing in what was probably a sacred precinct about six metres from the inner entrance of the South Gate, a 2.45 metre statue of the Storm-god on a 0.78m double-bull socle was palpably the chief divinity in a local style at the end of the eighth century BC. The front, back, and sides of the basalt statue, and the top and side of the left-hand bull on the socle bore a Phoenician inscription that included an identification of the deity as Ba‘al.²⁹⁸ Two city gate walls were faced with orthostats bearing substantial, parallel inscriptions in both Luwian hieroglyphic and Phoenician that continued onto portal lion and sphinx sculptures. The texts declared that the dedicatory’s achievements for the good of the city were all blessings of the god Tarhunt (Luwian) / Ba‘al (Phoenician); the fortresses are built at the gods’ behest; and a place for the statue of the deity is erected where he will be *begun* to be honoured and receive offerings – evidently, his worship was an innovation of the

X.19. HİSARCIK 1, 483-485; X.45. BULGARMADEN, 521-525. Note that a century earlier King Shalmaneser III had placed his image on Mount Muti: Yamada (2000) 286. The action was in keeping with the Assyrian practice of placing royal monuments in areas of religious significance following a conquest.

²⁹⁵ Hutter (2003) 220. His main cult centre may have been at the former Phrygian citadel on Göllüdağ (near Niğde): *ibid.* 224. In the eighth century BC this became part of Tabal, where Tarhunt was worshipped as “Storm-god of the mountain(s)”: *ibid.* 248. His companion here was the Hurrian-Hittite goddess Hebat, who had been the consort of the Hurrian Storm-god Teshub: Hutter (2003) 271-272.

²⁹⁶ Hutter (2003) 221 (Tarhunt into Hellenistic times); 276, n. 54.

²⁹⁷ e.g. inscribed stelai translated in Hawkins (2000) X.14 SULTANHAN, 463-472, and X.15. KAYSERİ, 472-475, both of which evoke Kubaba and explicitly the Harranean Moon-God (§31; §16).

²⁹⁸ Röllig in Çambel (1999) PhSt/C I-V, 63-68. For the identification of the statue, see PhSt/C III, lines 15-16.

ruler here.²⁹⁹ His military successes are attributed to the deity, in whose power lies the gift of “victory over all kings” and the annihilation of any future conqueror of the city.³⁰⁰ No Assyrian annexation is attested at Karatepe, although other parts of Cilicia were then controlled by Assyria, and the sentiment of the inscription is in tune with Anatolian precedents. Although the Phoenician translation equates Tarhunt with Ba‘al, there is no sign that the commingling of Luwian and Semitic people at Karatepe affected the character of the indigenous god. The iconographic style of the statue is typical of an Anatolian weather god, accompanied by bulls. Other motifs and themes in the sculptures at Karatepe are known from western, rather than eastern, art.³⁰¹

Although the wane of Assyrian power toward the end of the seventh century BC enabled most of its Anatolian clients to reassert their independence, it was not long before the weight of another imperial intruder began to be felt. From early in the new century southeastern Anatolia suffered incursions by Babylonian troops into Que (which they referred to as Hume) and Hilakku or Pirindu (‘Rough’ Cilicia); one king claimed to have conquered as far north as Lydia.³⁰²

Lydia

After his death, landmarks associated with the Midas legacy became places of ceremony honoured by those who sought to obtain kingly authority and prosperity through a similar relationship with the Phrygian goddess. The earliest evidence of this phenomenon³⁰³ comes

²⁹⁹ Hawkins (2000) I.1. KARATEPE 1 (the Bilingual), 50 §X 49-55; 53 §XL 209-216; 54 §XLVII-XLVIII 261-272 and 64, notes.

³⁰⁰ *ibid.* 55 §LII 297-302. In place of “victory” the Phoenician version reads “power, strength”: *ibid.* 66; 58 §LXXIII 385-400.

³⁰¹ Özyar in Çambel and Özyar (2003) 138-140.

³⁰² “(20) [In] conquering from Egypt to (21) Humê, Piriddu, Lydia...”: Lambert (1965) 10, rev. col. V §20-21. According to Weidner (1939) 934-935 and Lambert (1965) 2, the king in question was Nebuchadnezzar II. Also re Pirindu and Lydia: *ABC* 103-104, Chronicle 6.1-13, 25-26. In the years before the advent of the Persians, King Nabonidus also campaigned in Hume: *ABC* 105, Chronicle 7.i.7-8.

³⁰³ The abundant Greek celebrations of Midas as the epitome of sovereign success, from Tyrtæus in the seventh century BC, were surveyed by Munn (2006) 68-73.

in the period when control of Gordion passed from Phrygia to Lydia, probably during the reign of King Gyges (about 680-645 BC).³⁰⁴

Lydian ideological use of religion in the rule of a conquered territory may be betrayed by the inscription atop the Midas Monument façade:

“Ates... has dedicated [this monument] to Midas, lavagtas and vanax”.³⁰⁵

This names a certain Ates as high priest of the cult of the Mother: Ates was also the name of the son of the last Lydian overlord of Phrygia, King Croesus, who reigned about 560-546 BC. If the identification of the two is tenable, the inscription would support the hypothesis that the Lydian elite took over the highest religious offices of annexed lands.³⁰⁶ In such a case, the dedication of the Monument to the former ruler Midas perhaps sought to link the royal houses and perpetuate the connection between sovereignty and patronage of the Mother goddess. The Lydians appropriated the legacy of Midas by assuming stewardship of the state cult, perhaps even mythologising him in the process.³⁰⁷ The number and variety of religious monuments in the area of the citadel make it probable that this was the most prominent religious centre of the time. There is no evidence of the introduction of Lydian cult, so it may be presumed that the Phrygian goddess continued to feature in the management of Phrygian territories. Interestingly, if the sixth-century BC date for the Midas Monument is accepted, all of the imposing rock-cut façades of Phrygia occur in the period of Lydian control. Inscriptions in the Phrygian language might signify Lydian respect for the goddess's origins by publicly embracing the heritage of the cult. The 17-metre stoa erected adjacent to the Midas Monument (Fig. 3.8) and dated to the second quarter of the sixth century BC³⁰⁸ would then be contemporaneous with the Midas Monument and indicate Lydian commitment to

³⁰⁴ It should be noted, however, that Herodotos attributes the conquest of Phrygia to the sixth-century BC king Croesus: *Hist.* I.28.

³⁰⁵ M-01a: Brixhe and Lejeune (1984) 6-9; English translation in Brixhe (2008) 78.

³⁰⁶ Berndt-Ersöz (2006) 72, 130, 166. But note that Dioskorides in the 3rd century AD has Atys, “chamberlain of Cybele”, a Phrygian: Pedley (1972) 8-9, no. 13.

³⁰⁷ It has been suggested that the perception of the relationship between Midas and the Phrygian Mother was so strong that it may have resulted in the king being granted divine honours after his decease: Roller (1999) 111. The hypothesis is perhaps supported, firstly, by the main inscription on the Monument showing the king to have been the recipient of a cult dedication and, second, by his intimacy with the goddess in Greek legend. Cf. Berndt-Ersöz (2006) 72 and 162, n. 149, who pointed out that Midas is addressed in the inscription by two non-divine titles.

³⁰⁸ Described and analysed by Berndt-Ersöz (2006) 65-66, 94, 177-178.

religious integration with their Phrygian subjects. Two monuments of traditional Phrygian stepped type but culminating in thrones and featuring carvings of animals (? lions), situated in the Köhnüş valley in the Phrygian highlands and on Karahisar, near Alaca Höyük, may be another effort in this vein, as might the previously unknown combination of both a throne and bench for offerings or sacrifices on the Karahisar monument and another at the main (eastern) entrance of Midas City.³⁰⁹ The building programme endeavoured to monumentalise cult space and introduce Lydian and Ionian Greek elements without affecting the Phrygian tradition of outdoor worship. The elaborate façades may be considered Lydian innovations intended to deepen the public's association between the state (signified by the architectural motifs), now in the care of a Lydian dynasty, and pre-existing religion (through integration of the goddess's niche in the design). The ostentatious contributions of Mermnad rulers to religious monuments in other regions under their control are well known, notably in Ionia at Ephesos and Branchidai-Didyma.³¹⁰ Another sixth-century BC example of innovation was located at Değirmen Yeri. What appeared to have been a room cut out of rock, containing a wall with a niche and a shaft behind it, may never have been a roofed temple. Openings in the walls suited the solar calendar, directing light on the vernal and autumnal equinoxes at the niche. Unfortunately, the monument no longer survives and the documentation is insufficient to make further inferences.³¹¹ It is interesting to observe, however, that while there is no suggestion of a solar cult in Phrygia, the east-west orientation of the Kuvava altar at Sardis is suggestive of its existence in Lydian religion.³¹²

³⁰⁹ The date of the step monuments with animal reliefs is uncertain. While the thrones and lion imagery would tend to suggest construction in the Lydian period, the monuments feature idols with semi-circular discs rather than anthropomorphic images of the goddess and so may be of an earlier date. There is also a relief of (possibly) antithetical lions above a pair of niches at Findik that may be mid-sixth century BC in date: see Berndt-Ersöz (2006) 114. On Lydia and lion imagery, see further below.

³¹⁰ Herodotos (*Hist.* I.19-22, 25) describes King Alyattes sponsoring Greek religious institutions, building two temples for Athena at Assesos (in Milesian territory) and sending gifts to Delphi. For columns of the Artemision at Ephesos inscribed “BA[σλευς] KP[οῖσος] AN[έθηκ]EN” (i.e. “King Croesus dedicated”), see the British Museum catalogue by Smith (1892) 26-27, no. 29, and Pryce (1928) 38-39, B16, and 40, B32; for gifts to Branchidai-Didyma and other Greek shrines, see *Hist.* I.50-52, 92; V.36. For the contribution of Lydian patronage to the Archaic Ionian building tradition, see Ratté (2011) 62-63.

³¹¹ See further Berndt-Ersöz (2006) 66-67.

³¹² The orientation of the altar at the Pactoclus North refinery, discussed further below, was east-west, judging by a substantial step on the west side of the altar and the east-facing lion sculptures: Ramage (2000) 72; Hanfmann (1978) 96.

If, however, scholars championing a pre-Lyidian date for the Monument are correct, then it may be that the very site of the Monument was associated with the font of rulership. It could not be moved, as a statue of the goddess might, and so Lyidian kings were required to legitimise their rule and develop their religion here, in the environs of the Phrygian Mother, who was the source of Midas' sovereignty. Their dynastic name may also have suggested the desirability of the goddess's patronage. The Mermnads may have perceived a logical link between the Greek meaning of 'Mermnos' ('hawk'³¹³) and the hunting-bird attribute of the Phrygian deity. It is a small step from here to the 'divine abandonment' concept used by earlier Anatolian kings (see previous chapter).

Votive reliefs depicting the Phrygian Mother goddess begin to appear in the archaeological record of Lydia and the Greek cities of western Anatolia about 575 BC. The iconography is a Hellenised version of that found in Phrygia: the goddess's costume and pose resemble statues of korai and the frame in which she stands displays Greek architectural features, such as Ionic columns and volutes.³¹⁴ A noteworthy development is the use of symmetrically placed lions in a manner seen in Phrygia only on the Arslankaya rock relief. The lion would become an identifying characteristic of the goddess's imagery on the Mediterranean. The animal had appeared in Phrygian religious settings – in apotropaic and funerary contexts³¹⁵ – but the meaning of the attribute in Lydia is likely to have come from a context where it was less rare, i.e. from Hittite tradition or Neo-Hittite Kubaba. In both of those cases, Billie Jean Collins suggested,³¹⁶ the lion was symbolic of the city and its king, and its association with the goddess was intended to reinforce the royal connection to the deity. Kubaba we have examined above. The official depiction at Yazılıkaya of Hebat, protectress of the Hittite

³¹³ The word may be derived from a Hittite word for a kind of bird: Naumann (1983) 69, n. 155. In Nicolas of Damascus' foundation myth of the Mermnad dynasty two eagles appear over the bed of a Mysian princess, as a sign that she would be the wife of two kings: *FGrHist* 90 F47.6. Note Aelian's association of the species of hawk known as "mermnus" with "the Mother of the Gods": *NA*, XII.4.

³¹⁴ Roller (1999) 126-127. In other departures, another female divinity occupies the frame or an additional frame is dedicated to the Greek Nymphs.

³¹⁵ Apotropaically in a large relief carving at the side of the Arslankaya rock-cut façade overlooking the plain of Emre Gölü, with two smaller lions in a niche on this monument flanking the image of the Mother goddess; and on the Arslantaş tomb façade. The instances of the lion motif in sculpture in western Phrygia may be a sign of regional variation in attributes of the Mother, according to Roller (1999) 104. Simpson (1998) 632-636 suggested that the legs of the wooden screens discovered in the great tumulus MM at Gordion were schematic representations of lions flanking the goddess, herself represented symbolically by a rosette.

³¹⁶ Collins (2004) 90, 94.

royal family, shows her wearing the “mural” crown of a city goddess and standing on a feline. The earliest sculptural lion found at the Lydian capital, Sardis, resembles late Hittite examples.³¹⁷ A Phrygian step monument probably of the Lydian period bearing images of lions on the throne and bench beside it (mentioned above) is located on the site of a former Hittite place of worship.³¹⁸ Southeastern Anatolia provides other possible sources of inspiration, such as the Luwian tradition of depicting gods and dead/deified kings standing on the backs of lions³¹⁹ and the gates of the Phrygian (later Tabalian) mountaintop citadel of Göllüdağ, which featured impressive double and quadruple lion sculptures on column bases.³²⁰ Thus, the choice of the lion symbol may have represented cultural continuity to the Lydian people, who are thought to have been indigenous to Anatolia.³²¹

The attribute may also have been derived from its pervasive use as a royal emblem or from the lion hunt as indicator of royal power in the art of the Assyrians. An early Anatolian example of such a borrowing may be seen in an inscribed portal orthostat at the Assyrian client kingdom of Gurgum at the end of the ninth century BC, which was in the shape of a lion with the king on its back.³²² Like Gurgum and other Anatolian kingdoms, Lydia paid tribute to Assyria for a time. Geography, however, may have helped to preserve its autonomy. Until an ambassador arrived offering the fealty of King Gyges (‘Guggu’ in Assyrian records), King Aššurbanipal had never even heard of Lydia; moreover, he had difficulty understanding what the messenger was saying. There could be no other explanation but that the Lydian hoped to engage the might of the Assyrian god in pursuit of some conquest:

³¹⁷ Dating to about 600-570 BC: Hanfmann and Ramage (1978) 22.

³¹⁸ Popko (1995) 146; Berndt-Ersöz (2006) 171. Hittite texts mention a sacred well of a goddess and a stone or cult object on the sacred mountain of the city of Zippalanda, Daha; nearby was a cult stela where animals were sacrificed to the Mountain/Storm god and (perhaps) a shrine. NB. The location has been identified with Alaca Höyük and the mountain with Karahisar/Kalehisar but is not completely certain.

³¹⁹ e.g. an inscribed stela depicting the goddess Hebat of the City seated on a lion-footed throne, the god Šarruma standing on a lion, and an eleventh-tenth century BC king of Malatya also standing on the back of a lion: Hawkins (2000) V.5. DARENDE, 304-305, plates 145-146.

³²⁰ Mellink (1969a) 213.

³²¹ The relationship between Lydian and other Anatolian languages indicates that, unlike the Phrygians, the Lydians were indigenous to Anatolia: see Melchert (2008) 56.

³²² Although the relief of the king does not survive, a mirror-image of the orthostat introduces the inscription on the lion, which shows the king pointing to himself (the hieroglyph for “I am”) and standing on the back of a lion. See Hawkins (2000) IV.4. MARAŞ 1, 261-265, plates 112-113.

“...the god Ashur, my creator, revealed my very name to him [Gyges] in a dream: Take hold of the feet of Ashurbanipal, king of Assyria. By (acknowledging) his name, conquer your enemies.”³²³

Gyges inflicted defeat on the Kimmerians and sent booty and captives to Aššurbanipal (about 663 BC)³²⁴ but his support of rebellious Egypt meant Lydia had to face fresh attacks without Assyrian protection. Gyges had broken his sworn treaty with Assyria (“he did not heed the word of Assur, the god who created me, but trusted in his own strength”) and died at the hands of the Kimmerians about 644 BC.³²⁵ Herodotos’ report that the Kimmerians penetrated as far as southern Sardis may find corroboration in the “fiercely burned” clay floors discovered in the strata of the first half of the seventh century BC.³²⁶ However, the invaders did not settle here and Lydia’s quick recovery is attested by the enlargement to colossal proportions of the central mound (Karniyarık Tepe, about 220 metres in diameter and fifty metres high) of the three great tumuli at Bin Tepe, the burial ground near Sardis, and the building of a burial chamber in it, presumably for one of Gyges’ successors.³²⁷ Gyges’ heir, Ardys, had returned a measure of stability to Lydia by reverting to the protection of Assyria. According to King Aššurbanipal:

“He sent me, by the hand of his messenger, (an account) of the evil which the gods, my helpers, visited upon him (in answer) to my prayers, and he laid hold of my royal feet, saying: ‘Thou art the king whom the god has favored (*lit.*, looked upon). Thou didst curse my father and evil was visited upon him. I am (thy) slave, who fears thee, be gracious unto me and I will bear (*lit.*, draw) thy yoke.”³²⁸

³²³ Sagona and Zimansky (2009) 363; *ARAB II* 297-298 §784; 326 §849; 351-352 §909. Once again, the Assyrian combination of king, divinity and military action is evident.

³²⁴ *ARAB II* 297-298 §784; 326 §849; 352 §910; Piepkorn (1933) 46-49, historical prism inscription B, col. ii §93-col. iii §4, directly relates the appearance of Gyges with the imminent threat of Kimmerian invasion.

³²⁵ *ARAB II* 298 §785.

³²⁶ Hanfmann (1965) 13.

³²⁷ See Hanfmann (1965) 34 for the suggestion that this was the tomb of Gyges. As the tomb mound was constructed in two phases, it may contain two or more burial chambers of different periods: Ratté (1996) 27. However, pottery found behind and in front of the crepis or retaining wall of the earlier tumulus dates some time from Alyattes; the masonry of the crepis is like that of monuments dated to the first part of the sixth century BC: Ratté (2011) 7.

³²⁸ *ARAB II* 298 §785.

The legend of a lion cub born to an early Lydian king and carried by order of the Telmessian oracle around the fortifications of Sardis to render it invincible (*Hist.* I.84) illustrates the conception of the lion as divinely appointed for the protection of the king and his city.³²⁹ The lion was adopted as the symbol of the Lydian royal family and was used conspicuously in cult art; lions appear on a third of all sculpture of the Lydian (and Persian) eras at Sardis.³³⁰ King Croesus famously dedicated a gold lion to Apollo at Delphi, according to Herodotos (*Hist.* I.50). Royal promotion of the lion symbol along with the motifs of the protector goddess may have been the catalyst for the growing association of the animal with the imagery of the goddess in Lydian-controlled Ionia.

An altar located in the metal-refining precinct outside Sardis provides a key piece of evidence for the presence of the goddess at the heart of the Lydian state apparatus in the sixth century BC (Fig. 5.13).³³¹ The mid-century altar was freestanding, made of mountain rock, and was rectangular in shape. It was hollow in the centre with a cobbled floor covered in alternating levels of ash and earth, in which excavators discovered fragments of bone and horn: the workers here burned offerings to the deity. Sandstone lion sculptures identify the altar with the goddess; scorch marks indicate these were placed at the corners of the cavity, facing east toward the rising sun or moon. Evidently, the lion symbolised the goddess's protective presence at the king's refinery and its image on Lydian coinage was literally a stamp of her approval of the ruler and his city.³³² The earliest Lydian attestation of the goddess by name is a potsherd graffito found in the vicinity of the refinery and altar: it reads 'Kuvava', an easy derivation from the Hittite 'Kubaba'.³³³

³²⁹ Munn (2006) 127, n. 124, proposed that an iconographic type was then current of a king or hero carrying a lion cub.

³³⁰ Hanfmann and Ramage (1978) 15.

³³¹ See Ramage (2000) 74ff. for further details on the altar and excavations in the goldworking area of Pactolus North.

³³² For Sardian royal coinage of the sixth century BC featuring the lion see Johnston (1981) 33, catalogue items 132 and 133 (a gold stater found about 3.5 km south of Sardis and a silver obol from the refinery sector of Pactolus North); and 70, items 393-395 (silver coins of uncertain mint). Lion heads or foreparts decorated the obverse of most electrum and silver coins struck at Miletos in the sixth century BC: Rubinstein and Greaves (2004) 1087-1088. As Miletos was an independent kingdom still in the sixth century BC, might this suggest rivalry for the goddess's patronage?

³³³ Rein (1993) 9-10. She cited Diakonoff (1977) 336-337 on the exchange of the long vowel '-a' with long '-e' in Lydian words taken from Hittite to explain the Greek version of the goddess's name, 'Kybele'. The linguistic evidence is slim but critical to Rein's distinction between the Lydian and Greek goddesses: Lydian Kuvava is related to the Hittite Kubaba, while the titles of the Greek goddess

During the mid-sixth century BC the Anatolian iconography of the goddess diverged further from the Phrygian model. Heretofore always standing, now the goddess began to be shown enthroned and frequently holding a lion cub in her lap. The earliest seated poses of the Phrygian goddess are statuettes found in the Greek cities of Ionia in the period of Lydian domination.³³⁴ The merging of the symbols of divine and earthly authority – the throne, lion, and predatory bird – emphasised, none-too-subtly, the unimpeachable source of Lydian authority. Munn described the goddess as “both divine mother and consort of the Lydian ruler”.³³⁵ But, unlike the Phrygian kings, Lydian rulers were not content with the patronage of a single deity. They recognised a parallel power to Kuvava in the goddess Artemis, who also had Anatolian mother-goddess origins³³⁶ and shared the ability to direct the forces of the natural world to the good of the public, doing so through the person of the ruler enjoying her protection. Nicolaos of Damascus relates that King Croesus turned to Artemis, chief deity of Ephesos, when attempting to secure Ionia.³³⁷ Ephesos was then perhaps the most prominent of the Greek cities in Ionia, located where the trade route from central Anatolia met the sea, and was Croesus’ initial goal. Although the city suffered a siege and its tyrant was unseated through military action, the story goes that Croesus respected its connection – a literal one, with a rope – to the temple of Artemis and left it unviolated (*Hist.* I.26; *Ael. VH* 3.26). That the rule of Croesus received the imprimatur of Artemis is evident from his subsequent generosity to her temple and the growth of her cult there and at Sardis, where she may have

Kybele are taken from Phrygia: Rein (1993) 26 and (1996) 224. The distinction calls into question the origin of the Lydian cult from Phrygia: *ibid.* 27. Cf. Munn (2006) 122-125 for the derivation of the name ‘Kybele’ from ‘Kubaba’ via the epithet ‘Kubeleya’ formed by speakers of Hittite and Luwian.

³³⁴ Roller surveyed a number of possible influences, from Minoan to mainland Greek: (1999) 105, 108, 131-136. Munn (2006) 129 saw an expression of Lydian tyranny in this imagery. Rein (1993) 40-44 suggested that the sculptural tradition of Miletus was responsible for the introduction of the throne into the goddess’s iconography. Seated representations of the priests controlling the sanctuary of Apollo at Branchidai-Didyma were prominent here and may have suggested an appropriate precedent for religious sculpture when disseminating Phrygian traditions gleaned from the colonies. Note the demonstration of Ehrhardt (1998) 13-16 that Branchidai was a place and not (or not yet) a family or association of priests, as is commonly supposed: Herodotos uses the term ‘Branchidai’, while epigraphy refers only to Didyma.

³³⁵ Munn (2006) 4.

³³⁶ Popko (1995) 179. Morris (2001) 151 posited that the Anatolian tutelary deity of the citadel of Apasas (equated with Ephesos) was conflated with the Greek goddess by Ionian colonists, a position emphasising Artemis’ powers of protection and fecundity rather than her supposed ‘mother-goddess’ persona.

³³⁷ *FGrHist* 90 F65.

been conceived as Kuvava/Kubaba's daughter,³³⁸ so closely were they both concerned in the support of the Mermnad dynasty; one of her three known sanctuaries in the environs of the capital was located close to the tombs of Lydian kings at Bin Tepe. However, Croesus' motivation at Ephesos may have been political, to check conflict between the mixture of ethnicities here. A new temple was superimposed over two pre-existing cult sites.³³⁹ In the process the deities worshipped here were either superseded by or syncretised with Artemis. Aristophanes (*Clouds* 598-600) tells us that Lydian priestesses were installed. The ancient sacred way boasted new altars for Artemis, who now assumed the Phrygian Mother's role of protectress of the dead buried along its route around (the hill) Panayır Dağ.³⁴⁰ The only settlement of Archaic times known to us was located on its northern slopes; about this time the Ionians left the hill to synoecise with the inhabitants of the area surrounding the Artemision.³⁴¹ Three temples to Artemis were rebuilt and enlarged at Ephesos during the Archaic period.³⁴² Samos, too, boasted a temple to Artemis.³⁴³

³³⁸ Munn (2006) 167. A c. 400 BC relief of the goddesses Kybele and Artemis survives depicting them being worshipped side-by-side as equals. Found re-used in the Roman period synagogue with other reliefs and sculptures, it is presumed that the stela is a votive from the Sardian sanctuary of the Mother of the Persian period, perhaps located nearby: Cahill (2010) 101 and Cat. No. 35. Hanfmann (1978) 91-92 and (1983b) 221, 224-225 preferred Artemis to Kuvava in the position of great goddess of Sardis, but note that no architecture associated with Artemis prior to the late sixth century BC has yet been uncovered in the goddess's Sardian sanctuary.

³³⁹ Apart from detecting two separate cultic sites, excavations have been unable to determine the nature of worship here before the erection of the temple sponsored by Croesus. It seems to have been a cult site as far back as the late Bronze Age, probably connected to the Hittite capital Arzawa, which was located on the acropolis above the Artemision on the Ayasoluk hill: Bammer (1990) 141-142; Morris (2008) 57-58. Strabo relates that the Artemision was built over a Carian and Lelegian site: *Geog.* 14.I.21.

³⁴⁰ Knibbe (1993) 10-13; (1995) 144. But note that only one funerary inscription invoking Kybele survives: Gusmani (1964) 252, no. 4.

³⁴¹ Note the discovery of a small bronze group, interpreted as a Hittite priest with ritual vessel, which suggests cultic activity taking place at an Anatolian settlement here well before the arrival of the Greeks: Hanfmann (1962) 1-4. Kerschner and Steskal (2008) 123-124 pointed to ceramic evidence that the Panayır Dağ may not have been vacated, even if the story of the relocation and synoecism under Croesus is historical.

³⁴² For the excavator's recent reassessment of the stages of building, see Bammer (2008a).

³⁴³ Tsakos (1980) 318. Snodgrass (1986) 55-58 and Greaves (2010) 161 raised the possibility that temple rebuilding and construction of unnecessarily fine city walls were partially driven by political competitiveness, whether with other Greek cities or Anatolian neighbours.

In addition, the Lydian ruling house had a longstanding relationship with the Greek deity Apollo. Apollo and his oracle at Delphi were concerned in the political life of Lydia in several cases reported by Herodotos: legitimising Mermnad usurpation of the Lydian throne from the Herakleid dynasty (*Hist.* I.14), requiring propitiation prior to the conquest of Greek settlements in Ionia (I.14-17), fostering a peace between the warring king of Lydia, Alyattes, and Thrasybulus, tyrant of Miletus (I.19-22, ostensibly in order to rebuild a temple), and being appealed to for authorisation before Croesus' attempt to expand his empire (I.46, 53-56, 73), notably recommending an alliance with a Greek power (I.53, 69).³⁴⁴ Croesus was also remembered to have patronised Ismenian Apollo at Thebes (I.92). There may have been a sanctuary or temple to the god at Sardis, and at Branchidai-Didyma, the location of his famous Ionian oracle, two temples to Apollo were rebuilt in the Archaic period.³⁴⁵ The reasoning behind Lydian attentions to this deity may have lain in the Anatolian (Carian or Phrygian) origins of the cult site³⁴⁶ but also at least partly in his role as catalyst and sponsor of Greek colonial activity in Ionia. The extent and purpose of this kind of oracular activity during the Archaic period is a matter of conjecture, but appears to stem from the fact that the institutions acted as centres for information exchange and advice for visitors from all over Greece.³⁴⁷ Fifth-century BC foundation myths emphasise the necessity of consulting an oracle before establishing a colony and obtaining divine approval for the concomitant relocation of a deity. According to Munn, the role of the *oikistes* "as leader of the new community was analogous, in several respects, to that of a conquering king. Through the god-supported oikist, a new orderly and prospering community was brought into existence."³⁴⁸ Offerings to Delphi from Midas, Gyges and other tyrants may have been made when conquest of Apollonian foundations was imminent, or else were intended to mollify the prestigious oracle after the event and establish the legitimacy of their rule in Greek eyes. The victims in such cases faced the loss of their independent civic identity and sometimes preferred to reconstitute their communities elsewhere rather than accept the change. When

³⁴⁴ Herodotos relates that King Croesus also tested the Greek oracles at Abae in Phocis, Dodona, of Amphiaraus and Trophonius, at Branchidai-Didyma outside Miletos, and of these was only convinced by the oracle of the Boeotian hero Amphiaraus at Oropus: *Hist.* I.46.

³⁴⁵ For Sardis see Ktesias, *Persika*, Frag. 9 §5 (Photius); for Branchidai-Didyma see Greaves (2010) 175.

³⁴⁶ Gorman (2001) 187 argued that the name 'Didyma' is Carian. But also note that this was the location of Arzawa, neighbour and sometimes client of the Hittites; Luwian gods here were consulted in cases of pestilence, as were the oracles of Apollo later: Hutter (2003) 236. See Brown (2004) on the evidence for Anatolian origins of Apollo.

³⁴⁷ Munn (2006) 139.

³⁴⁸ Munn (2006) 191.

Gyges took the citadel of Kolophon about 660-650 BC (*Hist.* I.14), the city's inhabitants took their religious emblems – the bones of their prophet Calchas – and settled at the mouth of the Siris river, in southern Italy.³⁴⁹

But another persuasive reason for developing relations with the Greek world must have been as a political precaution against the rise of the Median Empire, forging alliances on the Mediterranean as the Medes advanced deeper into Anatolia. In the early sixth century BC these newcomers were already managing their western possessions from what had been a Phrygian dynastic centre at Kerkenes Dağ.³⁵⁰

The Lydian empire provides the clearest instance of the use of indigenous and foreign religious traditions in combination for the purposes of establishing political legitimacy in Anatolia prior to the Persian period. The peoples conquered by the Lydians shared neither the same understanding of kingship, nor the same religious traditions, but became united through an inclusive Mermnad policy. That strategy respected the Phrygian and Greek belief systems, while developing upon commonalities to legitimise the Lydian dynasty at the heart of cultural and political life in the subject territory.

Ionia

Pioneers from the Greek mainland began to settle on the central west coast of Anatolia in the first millennium BC and quickly prospered. Of the colonies, twelve cities came to define Ionia geographically and make up the Classical *dodekapolis*: Phokaia (the northernmost), Chios, Erythrai, Klazomenai, Teos, Lebedos, Kolophon, Ephesos, Samos, Priene, Myous, and Miletos (the southernmost). The cities held in common a sanctuary of Poseidon Hellenikos, known as the Panionion, located over a formerly Carian site in the Mycale mountain ranges (modern Çatallar Tepe). The Ionian League formed by the cities here was

³⁴⁹ *Geog.* 6.I.14; *Ath.* XII. 523. On the prophet: *BNJ* 566 Fr. 56a. This is the earliest long-distance relocation of a settled Greek polis known to us: Demand (1990) 32.

³⁵⁰ See the website of the excavators: <http://www.kerkenes.metu.edu.tr/kerk1/12propub/articles/ancanat/index.htm>. Interpretation of the site changes as excavations progress. Equated by some with the Median city of Pteria mentioned by Herodotos (*Hist.* I.76), Phrygian remains suggest Kerkenes Dağ was an Anatolian dynastic centre, perhaps occupied or (?re-)established by the Medes campaigning against Lydia: Summers (2000) 58. See further below, Chapter 5.

intended for mutual aid but there is scant evidence for any activities taken in concert.³⁵¹ Instead, they appear to have been rivals and gone to war with one another, usually over claims to land: notably, a thirteenth Ionian League member, Melie, was destroyed and its territory divided between other cities at the Panionic festival.³⁵² That the Greeks were in close contact with indigenous cultures is clear from the religious sphere, where Carian influence is particularly marked. Evidence includes puppy bones at the Artemision of Ephesos, attesting to the practice here of Carian (or Lydian) “ritual dinners”;³⁵³ the use of a local toponym as an epithet of the Milesian goddess Aphrodite, which suggests a Carian aspect to her worship here;³⁵⁴ and an inscription from Miletos describing a ritual involving the Carian goddess Hekate at the city gates.³⁵⁵ A building on the west slope of Kalabaktepe, the acropolis to the south of Miletos, appears to be a shrine incorporating Phrygian features (mountain location, niches, bench cut into the rock, water channel).³⁵⁶ The ready accommodation of non-Greek traditions is unsurprising when viewed in light of the history of Ionian occupation. Recent archaeological work has revealed that many of the sites were occupied by Anatolian settlers long before the arrival of the colonists.³⁵⁷ Evidently, pre-colonial contact and subsequent centuries of co-existence familiarised the Greek population with local beliefs and customs. The Ionians also felt Assyrian influence: the annals of King Shalmaneser III for 858 BC record his ritual washing of weapons in the Mediterranean Sea and erection there of “a splendid lordly image of myself, inscribed thereon the praise of the

³⁵¹ *Hist.* I.142. Greek *poleis* not included in Herodotos’ definition of Ionia were either dependencies of the larger cities or did not fit the ethnic criteria for *dodekapolis* membership: Rubinstein and Greaves (2004) 1055. For discussion of Ionia as a political entity, see *ibid.* 1053-1058.

³⁵² *Ins. v. Priene* 37-43, no. 37, §53-60; 309, no. 37. Some territory was lost by other Ionian cities at this time. But note the disagreement of Roebuck (1979) 60-61 that the League could have had a hand in it.

³⁵³ Kerschner (2010) 261. See Sardian assemblages of the sixth-century BC that include the skeletons of sacrificed puppies: *ibid.* 441-445, Cat Nos. 38-47, which Hanfmann (1978) 96 considered to have been made by Carian merchants; and Pedley (1974) 97-99 for connections to Carian religious ritual.

³⁵⁴ Greaves (2002) 82.

³⁵⁵ *Milet I.3* 277-284, no. 133; translation and discussion in Gorman (2001) 176-186; Greaves (2002) 86 and 193. The fifth-century BC ‘Molpoi’ decree (re-inscribed about 100 BC) concerns the continuation of a pre-Greek ritual involving the procession and libation of stone cubes, perhaps aniconic images of Apollo, before the sanctuary of Carian Hekate at the gates of Miletos and at the doors at Branchidai-Didyma (§25-29).

³⁵⁶ Brinkmann (1990) 51-55.

³⁵⁷ e.g. Ephesos since the fifth millennium BC, the main sanctuary in the second millennium BC: Scherrer (2001) 57, 59; Phokaia from the third millennium BC: Özyiğit (2003) 115. Note also the Hittite bronze group at Old Ephesos, above, n. 341.

god Ashur, great lord, my lord, and the victory of my might which I achieved in the land of Hatti".³⁵⁸ Pottery shows Lydia had economic and cultural contacts with Ionian Greeks since the tenth century BC and an elegy of Xenophanes of Kolophon tells us that Ionian Greeks imitated Lydian practices even before they were subject to its tyrants, so that on the advent of Lydian hegemony its traditions were already familiar.³⁵⁹

At the time the Mermnad dynasty of Lydia took power over the Greek Ionian cities, beginning sometime during the reign of King Gyges (about 680-645 BC), tyranny was the most common form of sovereignty in Greek experience. In fact, the earliest surviving use of the word 'tyrant' in Greek concerns Gyges: the Parian poet Archilochos admitted Gyges' wealth and *μεγάλης... τυραννίδος* ("great tyranny") were works of the gods, borrowing the Luwian title *tarwanis*.³⁶⁰ It should be noted that, with the exception of the Spartans and their unique system of dual rule,³⁶¹ the Greeks of the Archaic era eschewed the institution of kingship. *Nomos*, encompassing "custom", "tradition", and "law", was regarded as the highest authority and kingship was considered either a relic of the heroic age or a feature of barbarian – that is, non-Greek – cultures.³⁶² Archaic Greek tyrants felt free to introduce new deities to further their political ambitions: Kleisthenes of Sikyon, for example, planned to expel the Argive hero Adrastus and establish Melanippos in his place (*Hist.* V.67-68).

No evidence suggests that Gyges and his successors Ardys and Sadyattes were anything but conquerors in the Anatolian mold. Rites associated with conquest, like other aspects of their religious customs, probably derived from the Kubaba traditions prevalent in the Neo-Hittite kingdoms. A Luwian building inscription of King Katuwas of Carchemish of the tenth to early ninth centuries BC describes the goddess's role in his military success and subsequent ceremonies consolidating the legitimacy of his actions. Seated in a war chariot with the gods Tarhunzas and Karhuhas, Kubaba led the king's campaign to expel a usurper and to achieve victory over the city of Kama (perhaps Que?).³⁶³ Once in control of Carchemish, he reconstructed the destroyed temple and reinstated religious rites; the procession of the

³⁵⁸ Yamada (2000) 277; see also *RIMA* 3 A.0.102.5, ii §4-5a.

³⁵⁹ Kerschner (2010) 248 on pottery; *Xenophanes*, Fr. 3.

³⁶⁰ Archilochus, *IE*², Fr. 19. The Luwian title *tarwanis*, describing a form or attribute of just leadership, appeared on the monuments of Anatolian rulers of north Syria, Cilicia and Cappadocia: Munn (2006) 116-117.

³⁶¹ For Spartan opposition to tyranny, see Plutarch, *Mor.* XI 21 (859B-D).

³⁶² Munn (2006) 16-17.

³⁶³ Hawkins (2000) II.11+12. KARKAMIŠ A11b+c, 101-108. On the HUHURPALI as a war-chariot, see 106, §10 commentary; on the possibility of identifying Kama with Que, see 105, §7 commentary.

returning gods, religious personnel, musicians, and soldiers was subsequently immortalised on monumental orthostats lining the Processional Way into the city.³⁶⁴

- “§9 but me my lord celestial Tarhunzas, Karhuhas and Kubaba loved because of
my justice,
§10 for me they sat on (/dwelt in?) the HUHURPALI,
§11 they marched before me,
§12 and I wasted those countries,
§13 I brought in the *trophies*,
§14 and then glorified by the countries I came up –
§15 these *upper floors* in that year I built myself.
§16 I myself beheld my lord Karhuhas’s and Kubaba’s procession,
§17 and I myself seated them on this podium.”³⁶⁵

The connection between victory in war and sacred ceremonials was common to the Near East and Anatolia, as we observed earlier. The theme crept into Anatolia first in the iconography at the gates of Zincirli from the tenth century BC. The citadel outer gate was lined with tutelary figures, scenes of war, and defeated enemies; the triad of the Storm-god, Kubaba, and the god of war faced those who enter the gate. On the opposite wall, scenes facing into the citadel depicted rituals, banqueting and hunting. The Mermnads, too, associated the transfer of political power with divine will and religious pageantry: King Alyattes’ annual intrusions into Milesian territory were akin to ritual processions accompanied by music (*Hist.* I.17). Precise information is lacking, but the cities of Ionia fell to Lydia at different times in the seventh century BC, with the exception of the southernmost, Miletos. This city was apparently the target of all of the Mermnad kings but no conquest is attested before the reign of Croesus. A curious story in Herodotos (*Hist.* I.17-22) explains how Miletos retained its independence through the intervention of the Delphic oracle and the Corinthian tyrant Periander. During a Lydian campaign in the *chora* of Miletos the temple of Athena at Assesos (modern Mengerevtepe) was burned accidentally; a destruction level beneath a later temple may provide confirmation of this part of the story.³⁶⁶ Falling ill shortly afterwards,

³⁶⁴ For photographs of the orthostats see the Carchemish excavation publications: Hogarth (1914) B2a and b, B3a and b (soldiers processing); and Woolley (1921) 18b (horn-blower and ?soldiers), 19a (Kubaba), 19b-22a (women holding ritual objects), 22b-24a (men carrying goats).

³⁶⁵ Hawkins (2000) II.11+12. KARKAMIŠ A11b+c, 101-108, §§9-17.

³⁶⁶ Weber (1995) found evidence of an earlier temple, but thought it unlikely that it was destroyed by fire. On the destruction layer, see Lohmann (1995) 313-314.

King Alyattes sent an inquiry about his health to the oracle of Apollo at Delphi. When he was refused a response until the temple at Assesos was rebuilt, he determined to negotiate a truce with the tyrant of Miletos, Thrasybulos, which would permit reconstruction. Forearmed by Periander of the oracle's stance, Thrasybulos was able to anticipate Alyattes' overtures and conclude a peace deal preserving Miletos' sovereignty. Herodotos' story may mask the alliance of Delphi, Periander and Thrasybulos and their use of a religious pretext to obtain a politically desirable cessation of hostilities. The veracity of the Greek intervention aside, the account contains a twist in the elements of the traditional Anatolian method of warfare: the attack on the foreign protector deity was usually followed by reconciliation only once the loyalty of the god and its followers was assured but Alyattes propitiated Athena in advance of military success (in the form of temple building). Alyattes may have gone so far as to sponsor a second temple to Athena at Assesos (*Hist.* I.22). Even without the construction of this additional temple to the goddess before Lydian hegemony was secured, we might be justified in suspecting Alyattes of a waging a proactive campaign through local religion. Thrasybulos had retained his seat but ceded to his enemy a significant foothold in the *chora*, where Lydian influence could be felt and take root.

It may even have been the events at Assesos that sparked a realisation that the approach to conquest in Ionia could be different. There was no need here to overcome a line of kings who had the direct imprimatur of a particular deity; Alan Greaves described the cults of Ionia as "mutable in a way that would have facilitated syncretism and the accommodation of new populations, such as the Greeks, or new ruling elites, such as the Lydians or Persians".³⁶⁷ The Greek system of rulership was amenable to change, inasmuch as the tyrant could be anyone who had enough popular support to usurp power. The Greek practice of installing a tyrant involved the incumbent or his son being led in procession by his protector deity to the site of his sacred marriage, and sometimes his actual marriage to cement some political alliance. According to W. R. Connor, the public ceremony "served as an expression of popular consent".³⁶⁸ The return of the tyrant Pisistratus to power about 560 BC, driven in a chariot to the Acropolis by a woman posing as Athena and followed by his marriage to the daughter of his political rival, if historical, shows the manipulation of the tradition at Athens. While this story in Herodotos (*Hist.* I.60-61) and vase paintings depict the literal presence of the deity in procession and as a participant in or presiding over the solemnities, actually a statue or some symbol of the god or goddess is likely to have been involved.

³⁶⁷ Greaves (2010) 227.

³⁶⁸ Connor (1987) 44.

Rather than attempting to usurp the loyalty of Greek gods or impose Lydian customs in Ionia, Lydian tyrants appear to have acted upon similarities between the traditions to accommodate political and religious expectations on both sides. The procession was one element familiar to both Anatolians and Greeks, and its meaning was intelligible to Ionians of either background. The sacred marriage was another; the custom held in common may have influenced the decision of Alyattes to marry his daughter to the tyrant of Ephesos (Ael. *VH* 3.26).³⁶⁹ The Sacred Ways from the principal cities to extra-mural sanctuaries where oracles were located, such as from Ephesos to the Artemision, could certainly have played host to the tradition of ritual procession and supernatural sanction in the transfer of power to Lydia. Column reliefs and parapet sculptures of the Artemision famously donated by King Croesus featured scenes of procession.³⁷⁰ In return for recognition of Lydian sovereignty, the deity and his or her institutions escaped pillage and received the acknowledgment and benefices of Mermnad tyrants. Moreover, finds in Ionian sanctuaries indicate that where Lydian kings led, the people followed: votives thought to be of Lydian origin include jewellery, appliquéd clothing, electrum coins, and perfumes.³⁷¹

When the cities lost their sovereignty to Lydia, the protector deity of the ruling house was quickly assimilated. Her theonym ‘Kuvava’ was transliterated into ‘Kybebe’,³⁷² familiar to us from the work of Herodotos and the poet Hipponax of Ephesos.³⁷³ ‘Kybebe’ began to be replaced by ‘Kybele’³⁷⁴ until it fell out of use completely,³⁷⁵ as a consequence of the

³⁶⁹ Munn (2006) discussed Greek beliefs about the relationships between humans and divinities that lead to sovereign power. Examples from the classical era show that sacred marriage legitimised civic institutions and was commemorated publicly in recurring festivals and rituals (37-42). He deduced that the role of the goddess at Sardis was played by the tyrant’s consort/tyrant’s son’s bride (170).

³⁷⁰ Pryce (1928) 47, B 103, B 128, B 133-135 (on columns: votaries or priestesses, men and children, horses and armed men); 66-67, B 145-170 (on parapet, some of which may have been carved in the fifth century: two processions of chariots and men, horsemen and grooms), B 195 and B 197 (men), B 214-236 (two processions of women, priestesses or worshippers).

³⁷¹ Kerschner (2010) 260.

³⁷² Rein (1996) 227.

³⁷³ Herodotos, *Histories*, 5.102; Hipponax, *IE*², Fr. 127, 158; West, *GLP*, 123.

³⁷⁴ The earliest reference to the derivation of a noun from the Phrygian goddess’s epithet *kubileya* (“of the mountain”) is found in Hipponax in the mid-sixth century BC, where he equates ‘Kybelis’ with the Greek Mother goddess Rhea: *IE*², Fr. 156, 165. On the origins of ‘Kybele’, see Laroche (1960). The earliest survival of Kybele (“Κυβέ[λ]ης”) is found in Pindar, fr. 77 (Bowra).

³⁷⁵ By the late fifth century. The title ‘Mountain Mother’ endured, e.g. *Schol. Eur. Hipp.* 141-144, along with the practice of combining the goddess’s name with that of a mountain or other topographical feature: see Roller (1999) 125.

conflation of regional Mother goddess figures. The co-existence of indigenous and Greek cults in Ionian cities is amply attested by archaeology. At the Greek city of Phokaia from the first quarter of the sixth century BC a substantial temple to their protector deity Athena stood on a fifty-metre podium on the peninsula by the harbour; beneath it, overlooking the harbour, a sanctuary of Kybele was carved into the rock.³⁷⁶ Two other sanctuaries of Kybele have been uncovered within the extensive fortification walls of this important city, as well as sanctuaries offshore on Orak Adası and İncir Adası.³⁷⁷ Erythrai, too, boasted a temple of Athena situated near a group of rock-cut niches containing images of Kybele.³⁷⁸ It seems possible that the worship of the Greek goddess at these sites was an outgrowth of pre-existing veneration of the Mother goddess. Phrygian-style cult in Ionia extended beyond what is believed to have been the reach of the Phrygian empire;³⁷⁹ if so, the Greeks' familiarity with the Mother goddess might have developed from early trade contacts with central Phrygia. Mary Jane Rein posited the alternative theory that Milesian and Phokaian colonies on the borders of Phrygian territory in the Pontus and Propontis in the late eighth through the sixth centuries BC were the source of Greek borrowings from the Mother goddess cult.³⁸⁰ However, there is no evidence to prove that Ionians brought Phrygian gods along with their Greek deities to or from their colonies. The existence of the Kybele cult along the Black Sea is certain only from the mid-sixth century BC: a letter inscribed on a vase sent by a priest at Hylaea, on the outer estuary of the Borysthenes (modern Dnieper), to a highly-placed official at the Milesian colony of Olbia, situated on the Hypanis (modern Bug) river, reports damage to altars of the Mother of the Gods, the Borysthenes, and Herakles.³⁸¹ Herodotos' anecdotes (*Hist.* IV.76-80) about the fatal interactions of Scythian

³⁷⁶ Özyiğit (2003) 117-118.

³⁷⁷ Özyiğit (2003) 118, but note that no date is suggested for the island sites.

³⁷⁸ The iconography bears similarities to Phrygian images of the goddess: Greaves (2010) 196; or the image may be of a syncretised Kybele-Athena goddess: *ibid.* 99. See the Current Archaeology in Turkey website giving preliminary results of recent excavations in Turkey: <http://www.une.edu.au/cat/sites/erythrai.php>.

³⁷⁹ Archaeological evidence elsewhere in Ionia includes another sanctuary of Kybele near Ephesos, niches with terracotta images of a seated goddess with lions at Priene; and a number of other possibilities: Greaves (2010) 195. Rock-cut cult installations of uncertain purpose and date at Myous and Ephesos have been identified as Phrygian and may be associated with Kybele: *ibid.* 104-105, 195; Vassileva (2001) discusses the parallels between these and Thracian rock-cut monuments.

³⁸⁰ Rein (1993) 24-26; (1996) 229-230.

³⁸¹ Johnston (1996) 103-104. The inscribed Milesian 'Fikellura' potsherd was discovered in an archaic level of the excavation, fixing its date to about 550-530 BC: Braund (2007) 46, n. 31. A dedication to

noblemen with the religious practices of Greek colonists may preserve some indigenous aversion here to elite abandonment of tradition in favour of foreign customs. In the first tale, the festival of the Great Mother at Kyzikos makes such an impression on a Scythian traveller that he worships her in the Greek manner when he is at home; he is killed as a consequence. The second story concerns the son of a Scythian king and a Greek woman from the Milesian colony of Isthria living at Olbia: he marries the Greek woman, participates in Greek cult, and is murdered by Scythians for taking part in Dionysiac rituals. The veracity of the stories can certainly be challenged, but it rings true that the Scythians may have resented the settlers' use of anthropomorphic gods to establish rights over pastoral land. The altars damaged at Hylaea were probably set up for ritual defence of the Greek community's boundaries, i.e. the frontiers of Greater Olbia.³⁸² Furthermore, we know of no myths in Scythian religious tradition, so the Greek development of Herakles, son of Zeus, as ancestor and civiliser of the three indigenous peoples of the area may have further aggravated relations.³⁸³ Attempts to entice a Scythian prince into a sedentary, foreign way of life might indeed have aroused the kind of response Herodotos describes and resulted in religious reprisals like the one at Hylaea.

The Mother goddess in Ionia was not united to or replaced by a Greek deity, unlike other cases where Anatolian or Lydian cults were adopted.³⁸⁴ However, her character underwent a significant change here. It is important to note that Ionian votives to the goddess rarely bore signs of any political connection; she was not designated the protectress of ruler, state, and empire in the way she had been of imperial Phrygia. The change should perhaps be connected with the rise of Lydia and its kings' appropriation of the goddess's patronage. In the absence of evidence to suggest that Lydia imposed her worship and in view of the fact that the Greeks retained their own protector deities, what can account for the continued prominence of the Mother goddess in Ionia?

the Mother of the Gods on a krater made about 550 BC has also been discovered: *SEG* 44 (1994) 188 §668.

³⁸² Rusyayeva (2007) 97.

³⁸³ Rusyayeva (2007) 95 compared one of Herodotos' stories concerning the origins of the Scythians (*Hist.* IV.8-10) with accounts of Heracles' tenth labour and concluded that the story was created in the earliest phase of Ionian colonisation in the lower Bug region in the seventh century BC.

³⁸⁴ Such as the Luwian god Šanta/Lydian Šanta/Cilician Herakles: Popko (1995) 93, 184. Where once the Luwian gods of Arzawa were consulted in relation to pestilence, the oracle of the Greek god Apollo assumed jurisdiction: Hutter (2003) 236. Other syncretisms suggested by Roosevelt (2009) 82 include Lydian Baki/Dionysus and the deities named in the Droaphernes inscription: Agdistis, Ma, and Sabazius.

Munn argued that Mother goddess worship in Ionia was not a phenomenon of personal choice, but of “state and sovereignty”; she was not (yet) representative of the Ionian Greek sense of order.³⁸⁵ The Greeks, he contended, understood the dynamics of power on earth through their stories about the gods and the mortals closest to them, that is, their religious mythology.³⁸⁶ Community rituals, honours and ceremonies concerning past heroes and kings all referred to the cosmic system of rulership, with the head of the pantheon, Zeus, at its centre. Crucial to the construction was the nurture and support of goddesses; in fact, the goddesses Gaia and Rhea brought Zeus to power in the first place (*Theog.* 453-491).³⁸⁷ Lydian Zeus was worshipped on Mount Tmolus, where the eighth-century BC Corinthian poet Eumelos put the deity’s traditional birthplace.³⁸⁸ The link between Zeus and the institution of kingship is most apparent in the association of the sacred wagon of the god in its shrine and with the legend of Gordios, the poor farmer whose son Midas became king after eagles symbolising the god landed on his cart.³⁸⁹ Individuals sought priestly office to achieve proximity to the god, or made dedications to win favour: at Sardis a fragment of a jug of the mid to late sixth century BC bears a painted dedication to Lydian Zeus (*Levs/Lefs*).³⁹⁰ Early Greek literature makes clear that Zeus was the fount of earthly authority and commanded victory in battle.³⁹¹ The ruler or would-be tyrant was required to make the most extreme sacrifices in order to elicit a reciprocal supernatural response. It was another custom shared by Anatolian rulers, who relied on this barter time and again, suffering the loss of their most precious possessions and even the lives of loved ones, but expecting in return successes of comparable degree. The legend that Midas’ son Anchyros gave his life for the benefit of the state, told by Kallisthenes, is a blatant example of how extremes of

³⁸⁵ Munn (2006) 7, n. 8.

³⁸⁶ Munn (2006) 21.

³⁸⁷ Munn (2006) 30ff. It should be noted that even the Spartan institution of kingship devolved from Zeus, as both kings claimed descent from him via Heracles, and served as Zeus’ chief priests and generals.

³⁸⁸ Eumelos quoted by Joannes Laurentius Lydus, *De mensibus*, 4.71: translation in Pedley (1972) 9, no. 14.

³⁸⁹ For the legend, see above, n. 245. On the aition of the wagon, see Alfred Körte (1904) 16.

³⁹⁰ Hanfmann (1965) 13 and 15, fig. 13; discussed in Gusmani (1975) 38-39, A III 2 and Abb. 32 and 33; Hanfmann (1983a) 93 and fig. 144; Greenewalt (2010) 237 and 239, fig. 14. See also occurrences in Gusmani (1964) 160: “levs” (251, no. 3) from the Sardian necropolis, and “lefs” (267, no. 50) from the Cayster valley.

³⁹¹ Plain examples can be found in Hesiod’s *Theogony*: “Kings are from Zeus” (96); it is Zeus’ right to direct *Nikē* (Victory), *Zēlos* (Rivalry), *Biē* (Force) and *Kratos* (Superiority) (383-403). See Munn (2006) 21, nn. 21, 22.

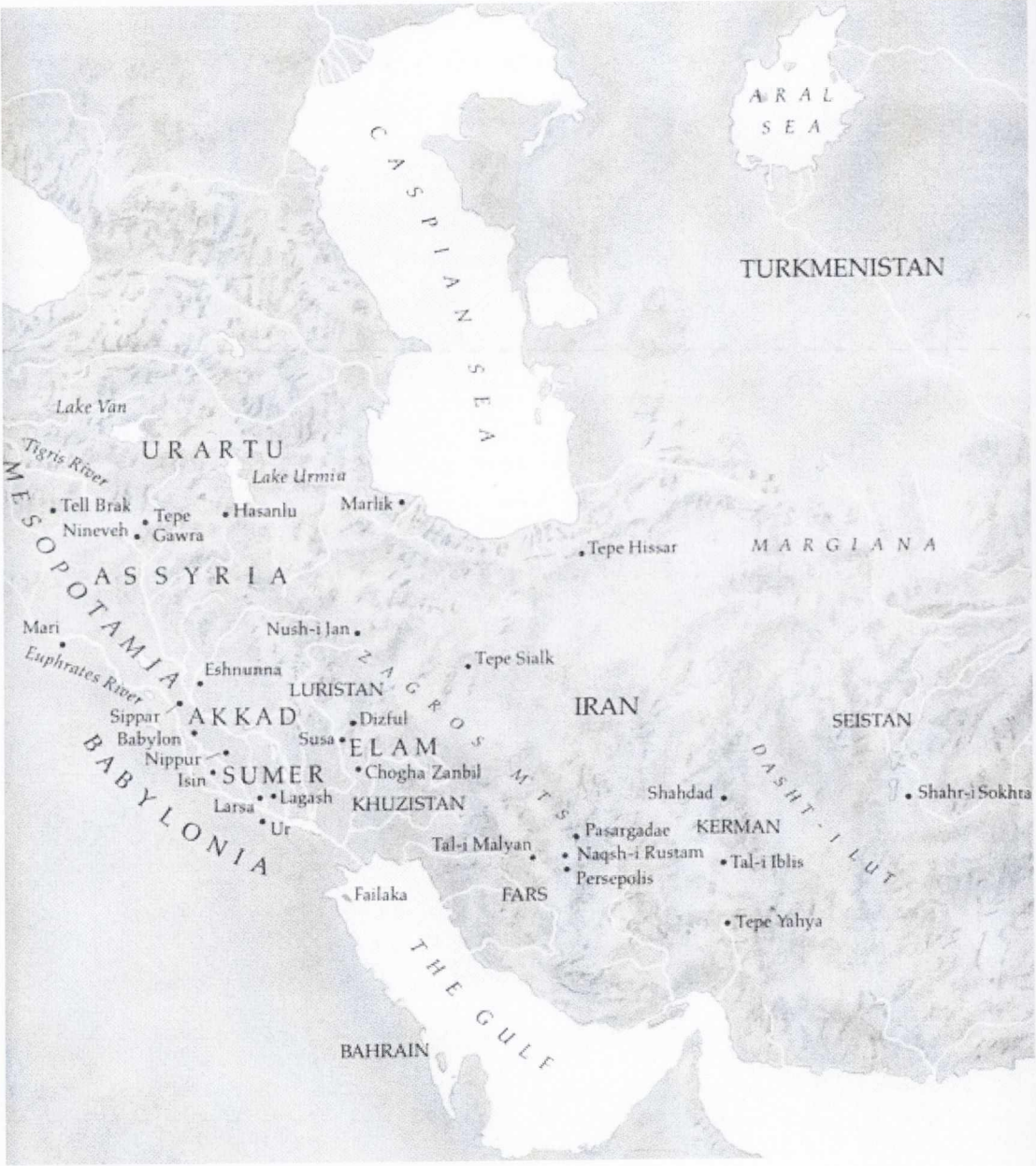
sacrifice were thought to evoke reciprocity. Herodotos' anecdotes exemplify how the paradigm of give-and-take created ties of obligation: to take only two cases, Gyges' donations to Delphi after the oracle proclaimed in favour of his usurpation of the Lydian throne and before a military expedition (*Hist.* I.14); and Croesus' animal sacrifices and gifts to Delphi "in the hope of binding the god more closely to his interest" (I.50), after the inexplicable death of his heir and in anticipation of a campaign to stem Persian expansion.³⁹² In looking to a supernatural benefactor the Greeks were no different to the other cultures discussed in these pages. Assyrian monarchs regularly conducted the ritual sacrifice of substantial numbers of animals and offered other commodities to the gods; these were supplied by the cities it controlled, which were assigned days in the cultic calendar.³⁹³ But the Greeks also believed that the sovereign powers devolved onto a mortal leader were held imperfectly and could easily be lost, along with all the associated kudos: the story of King Croesus of Lydia and his spectacular rise and fall would encapsulate this understanding for centuries to come.

At the beginning of the sixth century BC Lydian control extended south and east, encompassing Ionia and even the former Phrygian capital, Gordion, while the Medes had expanded into territory east of the Halys River (modern Kızılırmak, the Red River). Clashes between the powers were halted on May 28, 585 BC, by an eclipse of the sun during a battle on the Cappadocian Plain.³⁹⁴ This sign from the gods was the catalyst for a peace agreement. The Halys would serve as the border between Median and Lydian territory, and the marriage of the kings' children sealed the pact. By 550 BC, when Croesus' brother-in-law Astyages, King of Media, was overthrown by Cyrus II of Persia, Croesus was master of all Ionia and had established ties with the kings of Sparta, Egypt and Babylon (*Hist.* I.77; *Cyr.* VI.2.10).

³⁹² On reciprocity in Herodotos, see Gould (1991). For the legend of Anchyrus, son of Midas, see *FGrHist* 124 F56 (Kallisthenes of Olynth). When the rage of Zeus opened a chasm in the sea that threatened the people, an oracle revealed to Midas that the most valuable thing a man possessed should be thrown in the vacuum to close it; Anchyrus, reasoning that nothing could be more valuable than human life, sacrificed himself.

³⁹³ *SAA* X.96 reports irregular deliveries from places, including Guzana (now on the Turkish/north Syria border), that were intended for Aššur.

³⁹⁴ *Hist.* I.74. On Herodotos and the western expansion of the Medes, and on the Halys as a boundary especially, see Rollinger (2003). Details of the eclipse, including astronomical data, can be found in G. D. Summers' article "Medes, Lydians, the 'Battle of the Eclipse' and the Historicity of Herodotus" online: <http://www.kerkenes.metu.edu.tr/kerk1/12propub/wwwpaper/eclbygds/index.html>.



The ancient Near East

THE INFLUENCE OF ELAM AND MEDIA

In the early centuries of the first millennium BC, Persian tribes settled in the southeastern Iranian territory of present-day Fars. Between them and the Medes in the northwest lived the Elamites (in modern Khūzestān).³⁹⁵ In the first half of the millennium, dubbed the Neo-Elamite period, Elam prospered with the growth of international trade to Babylonia through its territories; this southern route was an alternative to those in the west controlled by Assyria and its client states. Unsurprisingly, Elam found itself in harm's way during Babylonian and Assyrian struggles for supremacy. Midway through the millennium, the Elamite and Persian cultures merged; although the Persians attained dominance, it has been little appreciated how thoroughly their religious and political life was saturated with Elamite traditions. The Medes, too, were also absorbed into Persian society by this time; the two rapidly achieved such thorough acculturation as to be virtually indistinguishable in the historical record. This chapter will review Elamite and Median experiences of religion in the exercise of political power and examine contemporaneous archaeological evidence in an effort to understand how these could have had a formative influence on the ideological views of Cyrus the Great.

³⁹⁵ The basic history of the region in the first millennium BC recounted in *The Cambridge History of Iran, Volume 2* (1985) should now be supplemented by recent developments set out by the contributors to Lanfranchi, Roaf, and Rollinger (2003).

The use of religion in the conquest and exercise of political power in much the same manner as in Anatolia is attested since the earliest period of Elamite history. Elamite kings called on the most senior god of the official pantheon, Inšušinak, for aid against enemies and in wars of expansion.³⁹⁶ Oaths were sworn before his *kiden* or taboo-emblem.³⁹⁷ Only later, when Inšušinak failed to prevent Persian hegemony, does evidence for his invocation disappear utterly.³⁹⁸ The king functioned as high priest and was first in battle. The practices of targeting sanctuaries in war and removing cult statues as trophies were remembered long afterwards. For instance, a poetic narrative written in the Persian period (sixth to fourth centuries BC) recalled the twelfth-century BC attack of the Elamite king Kudur-nahhunte that devastated the sanctuaries and temples of Nippur:

“He obliterated [Esharra – the temple at Nippur], he carried off its cult objects,... he entered Borsippa, The vile Elamite toppled its sanctuary... He [plun]dered all the temples. He took their possessions and carried them off to Elam. He destroyed its walls...”³⁹⁹

These tactics were employed throughout Elamite history, as epigraphy of the Middle Elamite king Šutruk-Nahhunte attests: he engraved his philosophy on these matters on many war prizes, describing himself as the beloved servant of the god Inšušinak, at whose behest he had undertaken the military action that resulted in the removal of the booty to Susa.⁴⁰⁰ Similarly, enemy hands seized Elamite gods, which had to be recovered by force.⁴⁰¹ The

³⁹⁶ Koch (1995) 1962-1963. The pre-eminent god may have been different before the 13th century BC: prior to this time, other gods or their festivals were named first in texts at the Haft Tepe tomb and temple complex. See Negahban (1991) 111, 119.

³⁹⁷ Koch (1995) 1965. Occasionally the *kiden* of another Elamite god sufficed.

³⁹⁸ NB. Hekelman (2008) 60 cautioned that this lack may be owing to the absence of any source about cults at Susa dating to the Achaemenid period.

³⁹⁹ Foster (2005) 371, 374, III.11(b). In another composition we learn that the king of Elam “all the cult centres of Akkad and their sanctuaries he burned [with fire]”: Foster (2005) 375, III.11(c).

⁴⁰⁰ Potts (1999) 233-235 and Table 7.9.

⁴⁰¹ e.g. a stela of King Šilhak-Inšušinak recalls: “The Balahute have plundered cult vessels and... of Inshushinak, but I brought them back. O Inshushinak, my god, therefore I ask you,... my camps and... my... and Susa... Anshan... Ulan”: Potts (1999) 242. Cameron (1936) 116, 120, based on a stela of the king noting where he stopped on his journey after recovering the vessels (Scheil [1901] 78-81, no. 54), puts Balahute/a in the “modern Holwan region”, in the central Zagros.

repatriation of cult statues and paraphernalia is also recorded.⁴⁰² Acts utilising religion for domestic political ends are known, too. King Humban-numena (1350-1340 BC), who apparently did not come to the throne by direct succession, used his building of a temple over one that had been destroyed to bolster his claim that he had restored the kingship;⁴⁰³ Šutruk-Nahhunte (1190-1155 BC) also conducted some internal religious politicking, emphasising the pre-eminence of Susa by relocating items of religious significance there, for example, stelai and statues from the sacred precinct at Čoḡā Zambīl and an Anšanite relief of deified royal ancestors.⁴⁰⁴ Such acts served to signify divine approval of the ruler's regime.

Just as it did in Assyria and Anatolia, the belief persisted in Elam that campaigns of conquest could not be successful without the express will and participation of the state deity. A relief depicting marching warrior gods was found in the southwestern building on the Susa acropolis where Šutruk-Nahhunte's rededicated Mesopotamian booty and other relocated objects were uncovered (Fig. 4.1).⁴⁰⁵ Suzanne Heim interpreted it as a sanctuary and chapel dedicated to Inšušinak.⁴⁰⁶ The quantity of glazed decoration discovered here, then regarded as precious and reserved solely for religious architecture, makes it highly likely that this was a religious structure of some importance. Françoise Grillot described it as a *suhter* or royal chapel for the dynastic and/or funerary cult.⁴⁰⁷ If this were correct, then an argument might be made that the Elamite kings sought to reinforce their proximate relationship with the principal state deity by situating their *suhter* either inside or very close to a temple of the chief god and make the relationship palpable to the people through conspicuous use of glazed bricks. Some of the bricks found on the acropolis were also moulded into shapes in order to depict royal figures.⁴⁰⁸ Made with a new and highly valued technique, the glazed bricks were

⁴⁰² For example, the Elamites joined the Assyrians in plundering Mesopotamian deities. *ABC* 1.ii §48-iii §4: "[48] On the first day of the month Tishri the army of Assyria entered Uruk (and) [1] plundered the gods and inhabitants of Uruk. [2] After the Elamites had come and [3] carried off [2] the gods [3] and inhabitants [2] of Uruk Nergal-ushezib [4] did battle against the army of Assyria". The return of these plundered gods, apparently to court favour, is also recorded. *ABC* 1.iii §28-29: "[28] The eighth year of there not being a king in Babylon: On the third day of the month Tammuz [29] the gods of Uruk went from [Ela]m into Uruk."

⁴⁰³ Potts (1999) 211-212.

⁴⁰⁴ Amiet (1992) 11.

⁴⁰⁵ For the inscription naming the deities, see König (1965) 144, EKI 69.

⁴⁰⁶ Heim (1992a) 125.

⁴⁰⁷ Grillot (1983) 11.

⁴⁰⁸ Amiet (1976) reconstructed two figures. For the inscription identifying the figures as royalty, see Lambert (1978) 15, no. 24.

the precursors of the famous architectural faience of the Persians; apart from the *suhter*, they were used to embellish doorways of the chief god Inšušinak, as well as a temple and gates dedicated to other deities.⁴⁰⁹

The city of Untaš-Napiriša (modern Čoḡā Zānbīl) illustrates the relationship between politics and religion in Elamite thought (Fig. 4.2). The king Untaš-Napiriša founded the new city about 1340-1300 BC in an attempt to supplant Susa at the centre of Elamite life. Prior to this time the influence of Mesopotamia politically and economically was reflected in heavy devotion at Susa to the deities of that region. The king (re)introduced Elamite deities to Susa, such as the goddess Upurkubak, for whom he built a temple,⁴¹⁰ but evidently the desired progress was too slow. Some forty kilometres away, Untaš-Napiriša co-located his new palace with a kind of federal religious centre, in the act emphasising his physical as well as spiritual proximity to the gods. Here he instituted the concurrent worship of both lowland and highland deities:⁴¹¹ in place of the original, modest pair of temples dedicated to Inšušinak, a new, massive ziggurat was constructed and topped with the shrines of both the god of the Susiana plain Inšušinak and the god Napiriša of the Elamite highlands (location of the principal city of Anšan). This four-level, 12-metre high construction dominated the centre of a walled religious precinct containing the temples and shrines of at least twenty-five deities from Elam, Susa and Mesopotamia.⁴¹² Among the artefacts discovered within the Čoḡā Zānbīl religious complex were alabaster vessels and other objects testifying to the acculturation of Assyrian and international artistic styles in Elamite court and temple contexts.⁴¹³ King Untaš-Napiriša even made use of Mesopotamian imagery in a sculptural depiction of Elamite mythology.⁴¹⁴

In spite of the demonstrable existence of elements so clearly in keeping with ancient Near Eastern kingship, some doubt has been cast on the piety of Elamite kings. Vallat wrote that although the kings' inscriptions attest to devout building and restoration of religious buildings, they were permeated by a "secular spirit" in comparison to those of Mesopotamia, where all wars occurred at the behest of the gods. In second-millennium Elam, according to Vallat, "religion was more likely to be manifested among the masses than within royal

⁴⁰⁹ Heim (1992a) 123; Steve (1968) 290-295.

⁴¹⁰ König (1965) 68, EKI 14.

⁴¹¹ Carter (1992) 121.

⁴¹² Potts (1999) 223 and 213-216, Table 7.8. See the hypothesis of Henkelman (2008) 310-311, 350-351 on the Suso-Mesopotamian descent of 'Babylonian' gods here.

⁴¹³ Potts (1999) 227.

⁴¹⁴ Benoit (1992) 127, 130.

circles, the kings turning to it strictly for political purposes”.⁴¹⁵ However, a rock relief at Sar-e Pol-e Zohāb in Luristan early in this period exemplifies the similarities between Elamite and Near Eastern kings’ religious philosophies. Anubanini, king of the Lullubi, stands with one foot on the body of a defeated enemy before the goddess Ištar and beneath her symbol. She leads more naked captives to him and presents him with a ring symbolising his authority as king. That the imagery was well known can hardly be doubted, as Darius’ victory relief at nearby Behistun is remarkably similar, although in his version it is the deity Auramazdā who hovers above the king in a winged disc and proffers the ring signifying his legitimacy. Later in the millennium, too, the religious sincerity of Untaš-Napiriša can hardly be doubted, for within the protective boundary of the Čoḡā Zanbīl religious sanctuary were also located the royal palace, with elaborate sacred gate and courtyard complexes, and extensive subterranean, vaulted royal tombs. Veneration of the bones of royal ancestors must have taken place here, an Elamite practice we are familiar with from an Assyrian text which mentions an Elamite ruler fleeing along with “the gods of his whole land, with the bones of his fathers, (who lived) before (him), (which) he gathered from their coffins”.⁴¹⁶ These examples attest in the strongest possible terms to the desire of the Elamite kings for proximity to the state pantheon in life and death.

The weight of archaeological evidence from Susa and its environs also tends against Vallat’s contention. Middle Elamite period discoveries on the three main mounds – called the Acropole, Apadana, and Ville Royale – show the personal devotion of kings to their deities, as well as their public emphasis on buildings and monuments with a religious character. Personal religion is evidenced by valuable, even unique, offerings made to deities but hidden from human eyes. A solid gold statuette of a king carrying a goat and a dove carved from a large block of lapis lazuli are particularly good examples. These were among objects deposited on a modest six-brick glazed base and then buried beneath a pavement beside the ziggurat on the Acropole.⁴¹⁷ At the same time, resources were lavished on the construction and augmentation of temples and gate structures,⁴¹⁸ just as their contemporaries in Anatolia were doing. The regions displayed other religious commonalities. Outdoor places of worship, or holy groves, were not unusual in Elam;⁴¹⁹ at the centre of these stood an altar, often equipped to drain the blood of sacrificial victims. Processions with the cult statue also

⁴¹⁵ Vallat (1995) 1031-1032.

⁴¹⁶ *ARAB II* 153 §345.

⁴¹⁷ Tallon (1992) 145-148, 151-152.

⁴¹⁸ Heim (1992a) 126.

⁴¹⁹ On holy groves, see further below, n. 602.

formed part of Elamite ritual and were accompanied by music. A ceremonial way has been discovered at Čoḡā Zambīl leading to the east gate of the perimeter wall and the position of a holy grove postulated by the discovery of inscribed bricks of the king dedicating irrigation works to the two chief gods of the ziggurat.⁴²⁰ Reliefs on rock and boulders at Kūl-e Farah (Īzeh in western Fārs) illustrate the customs of sacrifice, festive procession and prayer that endured in religious practice into the Neo-Elamite period (see discussion below and Figs 4.3a-c). Similar motifs are also evident, including the lion. A bronze plaque once hanging above an entrance gate within the 14th-century BC temple and tomb complex at Haft Tepe depicts a male deity carrying weapons and standing on top of a lion.⁴²¹ The apotropaic lion endured in Elamite iconography: glazed ceramic lions guarded an eighth-seventh century BC temple of the religious complex on the Susa acropolis.⁴²²

Only the excavations at the highest point of Anšan (modern Tall-e Malyān) can illuminate the religious life of the Middle Elamite period outside of Susa. Inscribed bricks describe a temple built by King Hutelutuš-Inšušinak (about 1125 BC) for Napiriša, Kiririša, Inšušinak and Šimut,⁴²³ deities of mixed provenance. Memoranda reveal that he devoted large amounts of gold and silver to make ornaments for one or more temples in or near Anšan.⁴²⁴ The excavator at Malyān linked the expansion of the Middle Elamite kingdom into the highlands partly to the demand for raw materials and luxury goods at the kings' sanctuaries in Elam and Babylonia.⁴²⁵ Even though we have no idea of its creator, the *sit shamshi* bronze model could be considered an example of such specialised cultic goods (see further below and Fig. 4.10). At key locations across the kingdom the Elamite kings founded temples which served as foci for the communities engaging in trade and exchange, in this case of highland metals.⁴²⁶

⁴²⁰ On the ceremonial way, see Tourovets (1997) and Ghirshman (1968) 109-119; for the hydraulic installation see Ghirshman (1968) 93-100; for the inscribed bricks, see Steve (1967) 50-51, TZ 25; 72-74, TZ 34.

⁴²¹ Negahban (1991) 114-115, no. 481 and Ill. 48. Two somewhat smaller figures, a fully-clothed "priest or priest-king" and a naked woman, also appear to be balancing on the lion's tail and head, respectively.

⁴²² Amiet (1966) 524-525, fig. 402. On the lion in Anatolian royal religious iconography, see Chapter 3.

⁴²³ Lambert (1972) 65-66.

⁴²⁴ Carter (1996) 49; for the texts, see Stolper (1984) 122-125, no. 86.

⁴²⁵ Carter in Carter and Stolper (1984) 181.

⁴²⁶ Carter (1996) 50.

Elamites (and Medes: see below, and map, page 94) first appear in written history in Babylonian and Assyrian cuneiform texts. These describe warfare on the fringes of Elam and incursions into its territory in efforts to establish and maintain Assyrian rule up to the foothills of the Zagros mountain ranges and in places west of the *Chaine Magistrale*, its most prominent ridge.⁴²⁷ The Assyrian kings Assurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III campaigned in the northern Zagros and east Tigris in the ninth century BC;⁴²⁸ in the eighth century BC Tiglath-Pileser III's battles against Aramean tribes in southern Babylonia spilled over into Elam and in the north he campaigned in Mannea, Ellipi, and elsewhere in the upper mountains;⁴²⁹ and Sargon II battled in the upper and central Zagros.⁴³⁰ Elamite attempts to check the expansion of Assyrian influence in the region were in vain, notably their open support of the failed candidate in a power struggle for the kingship of Ellipi. The allegiance of the king of Ellipi was strategically important, as the kingdom was located in the Zagros, between Assyrian provinces in western Iran and Elam, and also bordered Media; the territory probably corresponds to modern Luristan and the area south of Kermanshah.⁴³¹ Statuettes of worshippers from Susa and Luristan attest to close connections between Ellipi and Elam in the Neo-Elamite period.⁴³² However, strong ties to Assyria have also been identified. The style and iconography of eighth to seventh century BC artworks at Susa are characteristic of Neo-Assyrian art. One such example is a limestone plaque decorated with apotropaic figures that was affixed to a home or other small structure:⁴³³ Assyrian elements, notably the raptor-

⁴²⁷ *CAH IV*² 10-12. Young suggested the object was to disrupt trade along the Great Khorasan Road, which stretched from Ecbatana over the Zagros to Babylonia, forcing it north through Assyrian possessions and then east. If so, this would help to explain forces deployed to Urartu, which was attempting to expand southwards into this region.

⁴²⁸ See Potts (1999) 263 and references.

⁴²⁹ *RINAP I* 26-29, I.5 and 6; Levine (1972) 19 §24-27. He boasted of leaving stelai in all the lands of the campaign: "The great gods, my lords, I engraved thereon. I depicted a likeness of my majesty on it" (*ibid.* §32-33).

⁴³⁰ Levine (1972) 37-45 §§26-70. Apparently to pre-empt the possibility of Elamite reinforcements ahead of his strike at Babylon: Potts (1999) 265.

⁴³¹ Potts (1999) 267.

⁴³² Heim (1992b) 204-205 §143; Amiet (1966) 486-487, figs 365A and B. For examples that show the influence of Elam on religious practices of Luristan and links with Elamite culture, see the human figurines reported in Schmidt, van Loon, and Curvers (1989) 234, 244, 246-247, 252, 271, 310-311 and plates.

⁴³³ Muscarella (1992) 201-202.

footed creature, also occurred at Cyrus' so-called palace S (the Audience Hall) at Pasargadae, and in the Cappadocia gateway at Kerkenes Dağ, Phrygia, in the mid-fifth century BC, indicative of how far the Near Eastern aesthetic and, perhaps, associated religious meaning had travelled and how long it had endured (see Figs 4.4a-d). Burial goods in northwestern Luristan of this date are in the Assyrian (or north Syrian) style and show no links to Elamite areas.⁴³⁴ The evidence describes a multiplicity of religious cultures in Neo-Assyrian Elam and sheds light on cosmopolitan practices, despite the constant threat to its political independence.

When Ellipi had been lost to the Assyrian sphere of control, the Neo-Elamite king Šutruk-Nahhunte II (717-699 BC) sought to distinguish his kingdom from those of the Assyrian enemy and also of his Babylonian sometime rival, sometime trading partner. Exploiting the precedent of the founder of Čoḡā Zانبیل, Untaš-Napiriša (who, as we saw above, utilised religion to distinguish Elam from Mesopotamia), he laid claim to both Anšan in the highlands and Susa in the lowlands⁴³⁵ and grounded his assertion of Elamite independence in domestic religion:

“I removed the statues which Untash-Napirisha had placed in the *siyan-kuk* [the Čoḡā Zانبیل temple complex] when Inshushinak, my god, demanded it of me, and at Susa dedicated them to Inshushinak, my god”.⁴³⁶

Installing the statues of earlier Elamite kings before the cult image of Inšušinak⁴³⁷ at Susa emphasised both the pre-eminence of the Elamite protector deity as well as the god's relationship with the Elamite crown. In the process, he accomplished the transfer of kingly authority back to the ancient city of Susa, now a thriving centre of commerce.

Our first glimpse of a neo-Persian polity in what would become the heartland of the empire (modern Fārs) and its relationship with Elam dates from this period. In a letter written in 707 BC the deputy governor of Der informed Sargon II that the Elamite king was appealing for military assistance from the ruler of Parsumaš.⁴³⁸ At this time, during the war of succession

⁴³⁴ Vanden Berghe and Tournay (1995); Haerinck and Overlaet (1998) 42-43; (1999) 177; Carter (2007) 150.

⁴³⁵ König (1965) 148-149, EKI 73.

⁴³⁶ König (1965) 75-76, EKI 21. English translation in Potts (1999) 220.

⁴³⁷ Carter (2007) 146-147; Montagne and Grillot-Susini (1996) 24-25.

⁴³⁸ SAA XV: 88-90, Letter 129 §6-9. There is also a reference to Anzanaan(s) in the Epic of Sargon II: SAA III: 18 §14.

in Ellipi, the highland and lowland kingdoms were once again separate, but perhaps allied. A few years later, about 692 or 691 BC, the new Elamite king Humban-numena (Umman-menanu to the Assyrians; Menanu to the Babylonians) created an alliance with tribes of the Iranian highlands that joined with the Babylonian king in military action against Assyria.⁴³⁹ Among them were forces from the Zagros: rebellious Ellipi and Parsua(š) (a name meaning ‘borderland’ in Old Iranian).⁴⁴⁰ The separate mention of Anšan in the Babylonian records as a member of this confederacy may indicate the emergence of an independent kingdom in Fārs at this time, before conflation with Parsumaš: a nascent Persia. According to the inscriptions of King Sennacherib, the anti-Assyrian alliance was funded by the treasury of the chief god of Babylon, Marduk.⁴⁴¹ Battle was joined on the Tigris at the (now lost) site of Ḫalule and Sennacherib was deflected from Elamite territory: Babylon, however, he continued to assail relentlessly and with eventual success. The king was ruthless in taking his revenge on the temple that had sponsored political opposition, allowing his soldiers to desecrate it, smash its idols and deport the statue of Marduk (as the Hittite King Muṣṣili I and the Elamite king Kudur-Nahhunte had done before him). Finally, the holy site, where the Babylonian king received the imprimatur of the god for his reign, was razed and inundated.⁴⁴²

Sennacherib was murdered in 680 BC by one of his sons, who had been passed over as heir presumptive in favour of the younger Esarhaddon.⁴⁴³ In the ensuing power struggle Esarhaddon triumphed with the aid of Median, rather than Assyrian, bodyguards (perhaps loyal to the older sons). These guards remained faithful to the oath of fealty to Assyria sworn by their chieftains at home.⁴⁴⁴ A letter shows that Median magnates sent supplies to the temple of Nabû, the Assyrian god of victory, which were allocated to the Assyrian cavalry.⁴⁴⁵ The murderer and his accomplices fled to Urartu; meanwhile, a rebellion against Assyria led by the governor of the Sealand failed and its leader sought sanctuary in Elam, but sheltering

⁴³⁹ *ABC* 1.iii §16-18; OIP 2: 43, col. V §43-44; 88 §44-46; 91-92, rev. §9-10.

⁴⁴⁰ Diakonoff (1991) 14. The Parsua should not be confused with the later Persians. While Parsumaš can be equated almost certainly with at least a portion of Fārs, the Neo-Assyrian province of Parsua has been located variously: e.g. Potts (1999) 288 and references; SAA XV: xxiv.

⁴⁴¹ OIP 2: 42 §31-37; 91, rev. §2-7.

⁴⁴² Brinkman (1973) 94-95.

⁴⁴³ *ABC* 1.iii §34-35. Parpola (1980) deduced that the murderer was the second son of Sennacherib, Arad-Ninlil/Arda-Mulišši.

⁴⁴⁴ Liverani (1995) 61. See further below, The Medes.

⁴⁴⁵ SAA XIII: 72, Letter 82.

the rebel was evidently too provocative a policy and the Elamite king had him executed.⁴⁴⁶ Recent events clearly marked a conciliatory phase in relations between the new king of Assyria and Elam, for the nations concluded a treaty about 674 BC, sealed before Marduk.⁴⁴⁷ An important aspect of this agreement involved the return of some plundered cult statues to Babylonia (now under Assyrian control). According to the Babylonian Chronicle:

“[17] In the month Adar Ishtar of Agade and the gods of Agade [18] left Elam and entered Agade on the tenth day of the month Adar.”⁴⁴⁸

Esarhaddon's heir Aššurbanipal adhered to the treaty of friendship, sending assistance and grain to Elam during a famine and sheltering refugees until it passed;⁴⁴⁹ but the Elamite king Urtak reneged, launching an attack on Babylonia. Aššurbanipal's army succeeded in putting down the rebellion and “Assur..., (and) Ishtar..., his [Urtak's] royal dynasty they removed. The dominion of the land they gave to another”.⁴⁵⁰ The Assyrian deities were held to be responsible equally for the enemy's rise to power as for his destruction: inexplicably, the increasingly belligerent stance of this new Elamite king, Te-Umman, was also attributed to Ištar, who had “confounded his reason”.⁴⁵¹ While in Arba'ili, the holy city of the goddess, Aššurbanipal received the news that Te-Umman was mustering for an attack. In his annals he described a theophany in which Ištar reassured him and how a campaign in Elam was encouraged by the dream of a temple seer who explained Ištar's message. This the king undertook in the propitious month of Ululu “(month) of the work of the goddesses, feast of exalted Assur... I trusted in the omen of Nanna, the brilliant, and the message of Ishtar, my lady, which cannot be changed”.⁴⁵² A decade of aggravated relations between Assyria and Elam ended in a battle on the Ulai river (the modern Kerkha), in which Te-Umman was decapitated. A ceremonial procession accompanied the enemy's head to the temple of Ištar at Arbailu, where the king poured a libation over it, just as he did after ritual lion killings, effectively conflating the defeated king with a beast representing disorder slain by the

⁴⁴⁶ *ABC* 1.iii §40-42.

⁴⁴⁷ BM 99020 §3-7, German translation by Dietrich (1970) 165.

⁴⁴⁸ *ABC* 1.iv §17-18; 14 §21-22.

⁴⁴⁹ Waterman (1930) Letter 295 and notes; Piepkorn (1933) 56-59, historical prism inscription B, col. iv §20b-26.

⁴⁵⁰ Gerardi (1987) 133.

⁴⁵¹ Gerardi (1987) 136; or “whose reason Ishtar has dethroned”: Piepkorn (1933) 64-65, historical prism inscription B, col. v §22.

⁴⁵² Gerardi (1987) 137.

goddess's champion.⁴⁵³ Aššurbanipal's annals declare a combined religious and propagandistic motivation for the action:

"I presented the severed head of Teumam as an offering opposite the central gate of Nineveh so that the severed head of Teumam, king of Elam, would reveal to the people the might of Ashur and Ishtar, my lords."⁴⁵⁴

The central gate at Nineveh was also the scene for another punishment. The sons of one of the chief rebels were forced to commit sacrilege here by grinding up the bones of their father.⁴⁵⁵ Without his remains to venerate, practice of the ancestor cult was impossible. Other rebels were found to have spoken insults against the king's creator, the god Assur, and had their tongues ripped out before being flayed.⁴⁵⁶

The war against the Elamites was immortalised in relief sculptures that decorated the walls of two royal palaces in Nineveh. Inscriptions above these vivid scenes make clear Aššurbanipal's view that the Elamites had no divine mandate to rule:

"I pulled down and destroyed the tombs of their earlier and later kings, who had not revered the deities Ashur and Ishtar my lords,... and I exposed them to the sun. I took away their bones to Assyria, I put restlessness on their ghosts, I deprived them of food-offerings and libations of water."⁴⁵⁷

Aššurbanipal had acted to deprive the Elamites of their ruler cult by beheading their king and his eldest son, and by destroying their heritage. The episode inaugurated a prolonged period of military and ideological intervention, between 653 and 645 BC, directed against Elam itself. The state had already begun to fracture, with rival centres of power growing up in the

⁴⁵³ Reade (2005) 21 and 51, Fig. 20, for the relief panel depicting this incident.

⁴⁵⁴ Melville (2006) 367.

⁴⁵⁵ Melville (2006) 368. See the fragment of a relief from Room XXXIII of the southwest palace of Sennacherib (carved during the reign of Aššurbanipal) at Nineveh (part of the upper register of slab 1) in Barnett, Bleibtreu, and Turner (1998) plate 289, §381b (detail).

⁴⁵⁶ Perhaps captives from reprisals carried out against Elamite allies in Gambulu on the return journey: Gerardi (1987) 154-157. For the epigraph recording the event, see Weidner (1932-1933) 185 §28; Gerardi (1987) 276-277, Appendix A (Room XXXIII, upper register of slab 4); Bleibtreu in Barnett, Bleibtreu, and Turner (1998) 97 §384.

⁴⁵⁷ Saggs (1984) 114. The epigraph text is very like that found in Prism F describing the destruction of Susa: see André-Salvini (1992) 271.

uplands of Khuzistan at Madaktu (perhaps northwest of Susa in Luristan) and Khidalu/Hidalu (probably southeast in the Ram Hormuz or in the region of Behbahan), but Susa remained at the centre of Elamite identity.⁴⁵⁸ The Elamite crowns passed through a number of hands during these unsettled years and there were frequent swings of allegiance between internal factions, Assyria, and Babylonian rebels. In this period two kings were installed by Assyria, although each soon renounced Assyrian overlordship and sought to rule independently.

Aššurbanipal continued to use religion as a tool of politics, treating cult statues seized throughout the years of campaigning as leverage, in one notable instance withholding them until the “elders of Elam”⁴⁵⁹ facilitated the extradition to Assyria of a Babylonian political rebel sheltering there. He wrote:

“Send to me Nabû-bēl-šumāti and those with him, and then I myself will send to you your gods and make peace. However, if you delay or do not comply, by Aššur and my gods, I swear that under the aegis of the gods I will make your future become your past.”⁴⁶⁰

The correlation between religion and politics could not be clearer. The plight of the gods is both carrot and stick in a crucial political question. An end to the conflict will result in repatriation and resumption of religious order, but recalcitrance will result in reprisals in the name of the Assyrian deities.

When in spite of such threats the enemy was not delivered, Aššurbanipal sent his armies to brutalise the core of Elamite cultural life, the ceremonial capital of Susa. The details of the annihilation of the enemy’s religious centre appear repeatedly in clay tablets, cylinder and prism texts, and were recounted with some pride:

“Susa, the great holy city, abode of their gods, seat of their mysteries, I conquered according to the word of Ashur and Ishtar... I destroyed the ziggurat of Susa [...]; I smashed its shining copper horns. [In]shushinak, god of the oracles, who resides in secret places, where no man sees his divine nature [along with the gods that surround

⁴⁵⁸ See Carter (2007) 145-147 on Susiana in the Neo-Elamite II period (774-522 BC).

⁴⁵⁹ §1. This political structure is otherwise unattested in Elam and its role is uncertain, but the letter makes clear the body’s authority to decide an extradition and receive the statues of the state gods.

⁴⁶⁰ §§15-20: Waters (2002) 82.

him], with their jewelry, their wealth, their furniture, with the priests, I brought as booty to the land of Ashur [...]. I reduced the temples of Elam to naught; their gods, their goddesses, I scattered to the winds. The secret groves where no outsider had ever penetrated, where no layman had ever trod, my soldiers entered, they saw their mysteries, they destroyed them by fire.”⁴⁶¹

This devastation found an additional, religious justification. The campaign recovered sacred items captured by earlier Elamite kings, notably the cult statue of the goddess of Uruk, Nana(ya). The king’s annals relate the repatriation of the goddess and link this service to her with the establishment of Aššurbanipal’s rule:

“Nana, who was angry for 1,635 years, went (and) dwelled in the midst of Elam, an improper place for her. But in these days, she and the gods, her fathers, called my name for the rulership of the lands. She waited for me to return her divinity (and spoke) thus: ‘Ashurbanipal will bring me out from the midst of evil Elam and he will make me enter Eanna.’”⁴⁶²

One of the many texts recounting the return of Nana even attributes the entire Elamite war to the king’s pious mission to recover her.⁴⁶³ It was alleged that a request to return the goddess’s statue was refused. During her sojourn in Elam, Nana had become a fixture in the Elamite pantheon; we will return later to Nana and the relationship of her cult with that of the Persian goddess Anāhitā (Chapter 5).

At last, one of the Elamite rulers, Huban-haltaš III, delivered the long-sought Babylonian quarry and entered into a treaty relationship with Assyria, evident in his mode of addressing

⁴⁶¹ André-Salvini (1992) 270-271. The removal of one of the apotropaic guardians of the temple, perhaps a deity in the form of a bull, as booty may be depicted in a wall relief from the North palace of Aššurbanipal: BM 124946 (Room M, slab 13) (see Fig. 4.5). Reade (1976) 104 and Taf. 27.2 suggested that this may depict Aššurbanipal’s boast: “I gathered together the colossi, the guardians of the temple, all that there were, I removed the fierce wild-oxen which adorned their gates.” (*ARAB II* 310 §810.)

⁴⁶² Melville (2006) 367.

⁴⁶³ K.1364: Bauer (1933) 51-53 with Streck (1916) 174-175. Alternatively, as Cogan (1974) 15 suggests, the emphasis on her repatriation may have acted as an incentive for Urukian forces during the Elamite campaigns, or perhaps was the price for their support.

Ashurbanipal as “my brother”.⁴⁶⁴ The rulers of the highland territories could no longer rely on a stable Elamite buffer against Assyria and capitulated, sending tribute and hostages to Assyria: among these was King Cyrus (Kuraš) of Parsumaš, a likely ancestor of the founder of the Persian empire, Cyrus II.⁴⁶⁵

We are told explicitly of the thorough looting and vandalism of Elamite districts by Assyrian troops en route to Susa, but Aššurbanipal’s records are very clear that religious targets were singled out for annihilation. The king’s account of the march contains a triumphalist statement about the gods of the locality ruled by King Ummanaldas:

“I smashed their gods. I calmed the heart of the lord of lords (Assur). His (Ummanaldas’) gods, goddesses... I brought to Assyria.”⁴⁶⁶

Religious centres as far as the sanctuary at Sorkh-e Dom in Luristan (which, it is hypothesised, had a role in the performance of oaths and other legally binding acts) were abandoned as a consequence of the turmoil caused by the Assyrians about this time.⁴⁶⁷ However, if one of Aššurbanipal’s aims was to suppress Elamite religious culture, perhaps because of associations with the indigenous monarchy, circumstances thwarted him. The decline of Assyrian power at home soon began to erode Assyria’s ability to control events in Elam. Though severely diminished in territory and weakened militarily, there remained a

⁴⁶⁴ According to the Inscription of Aššurbanipal from the Temple of Ištar §109-110, Aššurbanipal received only the corpse of Nabû-bêl-šumâti and he refused to bury it: translation in Thompson and Mallowan (1933) 95. On the events surrounding the treaty, see Waters (2002) 85-86.

⁴⁶⁵ Aššurbanipal Prism H 2 §7-12, German translation in Weidner (1931-1932) 4; and the inscription of Aššurbanipal from the Temple of Ištar §115-118, translation in Thompson and Mallowan (1933) 95. In this period the seal of a probable ancestor of Cyrus the Great read: “Kuraš of Anzan, son of Šešbeš (Teispes)”: Henkelman (2008) 55. The Neo-Elamite seal was preserved and still in use in an elite context during the reign of Darius I. For a late Assyrian date for the seal on the grounds of imagery, see Garrison (2011); but cf. Quintana (2011) 188, who argued for an Achaemenid date, principally for paleographic reasons. Note also objections to the identification of the Kuraš of the seal with Kuraš of Parsumaš. Potts (1999) 287-288, 306 with references, dated the mounted-rider glyptic of the seal later than the time of the Assyrian king Aššurbanipal and his contemporary client king Kuraš of Parsumaš. If correct, then Kuraš of Parsumaš may not be identified as the grandfather of Cyrus II. Waters (2011) 288 approached the seal from a different point of view, describing the usage of ‘Anzan’ as a mark of ethnicity and observing that it did not occur in the Neo-Assyrian corpus as a toponym after Sennacherib’s reign, unlike Parsumaš. He suggested that the toponyms had become synonymous.

⁴⁶⁶ Gerardi (1987) 196.

⁴⁶⁷ Schmidt, van Loon, and Curvers (1989) 489-490.

political entity at Susa that survived the upheavals and continued to direct and/or trade with a network of towns and tribal polities in the region.⁴⁶⁸ Epigraphy and the so-called ‘Acropole’ archive of Neo-Elamite administrative tablets (about 625-550 BC)⁴⁶⁹ show sufficient independence and means to build and restore temples, and conduct sacrificial feasts.⁴⁷⁰ In this period Elamite allegiance was courted by the Babylonians, who returned cult statues looted from Susa and left at Uruk by the Assyrians.⁴⁷¹ The event echoed the return of captured Akkadian deities by the Elamite king Urtak a generation earlier, to the Assyrian king Esarhaddon (then master of Babylonia).

Elam was able to embrace these overtures because of the decline of Assyria in the late seventh century BC and also ally with the rising force of the region, Media (*Isaiah* 21:2), although it never regained any significant military power. It was Babylonia and Media that joined forces in the campaigns fatal to the Assyrian empire. The Old Testament (*Jeremiah* 49:34-39) suggests Elam lost its independence soon afterward, early in the reign of King Zedekiah of Judah (597-586 BC):

“37 I will terrify Elam before their enemies, and before those who seek their life; I will bring evil upon them, my fierce anger, says the Lord. I will send the sword after them, until I have consumed them;

38 and I will set my throne in Elam, and destroy their king and princes, says the Lord.”

It is possible that Elam suffered a period of Babylonian control or that it came into the possession of the Medes in the reign of King Astyages (584-550 BC);⁴⁷² but all of the

⁴⁶⁸ Henkelman (2008) 6 put an entirely different construction on the Assyrian “destruction” of Susa when he described the events as “raids”.

⁴⁶⁹ Henkelman (2008) 6: these predate by about 50-80 years the Persepolis Fortification Archive upon which the study of Persian ideology is largely based (509-493 BC).

⁴⁷⁰ Henkelman (2008) 17, 33.

⁴⁷¹ *ABC* 2 §16-17.

⁴⁷² Potts (1999) 290-299 assessed the evidence. Zawadzki (1988) 143 concluded that Elam was incorporated into Media under Astyages. However, the influence of Media was probably felt much earlier. A hoard of Elamite objects inscribed poorly in Elamite cuneiform script about 900-600 BC have been found in a cave near Khorramabad: Median was probably the spoken language among the Elamite inhabitants here. In a further sign of mixed influences in what has been long thought of as Median territory, one of the votive objects with an Elamite inscription features the name of the goddess Venus written ‘Dilbat’ as in Babylonian: Mahboubian (2000) 31.

formerly Elamite territories had probably passed into Persian hands by 540 BC, as the following year King Cyrus II moved on to take Babylon.

Elamite religion and Persian rule

Elamites and Iranians had been interacting as neighbours for at least half a century before the time of the formation of the Persian empire. The predecessors of the Persians in the highlands, Indo-Iranian pastoralists, may have acquired their familiarity with Elamite culture through relations on the plateau where they settled or through interactions in the lowlands of Khūzestān. By the Neo-Elamite period relief carvings of a religious nature provide evidence of an Elamite presence in the highlands;⁴⁷³ conversely, Iranian names and loanwords in Neo-Elamite administrative texts show Persians settled in Susa in the early sixth century BC.⁴⁷⁴ Acculturation of Elamite ways inevitably exposed the nascent Persian empire also to Assyrian and Babylonian traditions.

When Cyrus II came to power in Anšan, this city and its territory formerly claimed by the Elamite crown had for several generations been under the control of the Teispid dynasty. Cyrus styled himself “king of Anšan” in the manner of Neo-Elamite kings⁴⁷⁵ and his inscriptions claim the title for his father Cambyses I, grandfather Cyrus I, and great-grandfather Teispes.⁴⁷⁶ In describing his ancestors thus and calling himself by the Elamite name ‘Kuraš’,⁴⁷⁷ Cyrus identified himself as part of the Neo-Elamite cultural landscape and a recipient of its heritage. It is known neither how the fusion of Elamite and Persian ethnicities came about, nor with any certainty how Cyrus II attained political dominance, but somehow

⁴⁷³ Surveyed in Henkelman (2008) 44–45.

⁴⁷⁴ Tavernier (2011) collected all Iranian proper names and loanwords in Neo-Elamite texts.

⁴⁷⁵ Neo-Elamite kings called themselves “king of Anšan and Susa”, but the title may not have reflected actual territorial control. On this issue see Henkelman (2008) 13–14.

⁴⁷⁶ See the Cyrus Cylinder text: *ANET* 316; Schaudig (2001) 555. See also an inscribed brick from Ur: Schaudig (2001) 549. The Nabonidus Chronicle gives him two titles, “king of Anšan” and “king of Parsu” (*ABC* 7.ii §1; §15), but whether the original Chronicle was contemporary with Cyrus is unknown (the extant copy dates from the Seleucid period). Otherwise inscriptions of Cyrus and Nabonidus make no reference to Parsu(maš).

⁴⁷⁷ Kuraš (‘Cyrus’) has also been identified as an Old Iranian name, but its Elamite origin is more plausible: Henkelman (2008) 55 with references; Tavernier (2011) 211–212. Strabo (*Geog.* 15.III.6) suggests that the name ‘Kuraš’ was selected deliberately by Cyrus on his accession to the throne, lending significance to scholarly debate about its ethnic roots.

the Neo-Elamite polities were overwhelmed by invaders from the Iranian highlands. The assimilation may have been a pragmatic choice in view of the strength of the Neo-Babylonian dynasty to the west and the rising Median power to the north. The absence of evidence for military conflict or enforced acculturation between Persians and Elamites has even led to some speculation that a small, semi-independent Elamite kingdom continued into the period of Cyrus II and his successor Cambyses II.⁴⁷⁸ The manner in which Cyrus was able to assume control of the Neo-Elamite landscape without resorting to warfare is suggested by a few strands of evidence attesting to Persian assimilation of Elamite culture, and religious traditions in particular.

There is reason to suppose that Elamite traditions already formed part of Persian ideological and political life at the time of the emergent empire. Imperial Persia evidenced substantial acculturation of Elamite culture: the use of Elamite as the official administrative language provides the most palpable secular example, but their religious culture was also markedly influenced by that of Elam. On the evidence of the Persepolis Fortification (PF) texts, which do not distinguish them as foreign or treat them separately, cults of Elamite origin were thoroughly acculturated to those of Persia in the time of Darius (years 13-28: 509-493 BC). The PF texts comprise an archive of tablets mostly inscribed in Elamite cuneiform documenting the receipt and distribution of food and livestock throughout the Persian heartland via (the later capital) Persepolis. They provide valuable insight into the religious values of the upper reaches of Persian society, revealing such things as sacrificial and festival provisions, and royal connections to some cults. It is not surprising that Inšušinak, the principal deity of the Elamite royal house, does not feature in the PF texts, but the archive does document the official recognition and practice of Elamite religion in a landscape still sprinkled with Elamite temples, ziggurats, sacred groves and sanctuaries. In Elamite districts annual festivals for local gods were celebrated and rations were received for offerings. These were principally grain, beer, and wine, exchanged by the Elamites for sheep or goats for one of their most important traditional rituals, the *kušukum* sacrifice.⁴⁷⁹ So far the approximately 5,000 translated Persepolis Fortification texts attest to the allocation of 33 head of sheep (or goats) explicitly for *kušukum* offerings, disproving a long-held belief in Elamite studies that

⁴⁷⁸ Henkelman (2008) 446, on the basis of an inscription of a Neo-Elamite king whose rule he considered to have been contemporaneous with that of Cyrus. Stronach reached a similar conclusion, that an Elamite court continued in being (in the vicinity of Hidalu) early into Cyrus' reign, on the strength of the innovative audience scene on the Arjan tomb bowl: (2003) 255.

⁴⁷⁹ Koch (1995) 1969.

Achaemenid rulers refused to sanction animal sacrifice.⁴⁸⁰ Furthermore, such allocations, although comparatively rare, were connected to rituals closely connected with the king and royal patronage,⁴⁸¹ and had at least a partially Elamite background. The most prominent of these was *lan*.⁴⁸² Another royal sacrificial festival in the Persian heartland was *šip*, believed to have had Elamite antecedents.⁴⁸³ *Šip* sacrifices provided attendees at Persepolis with rare meat rations, as well as other commodities for consumption, the pious occasions emphasising the largesse of the king.

Persian religious ceremonies were conducted outdoors, rather than in the confines of a temple or other building, and without veneration of cult statues or objects. Herodotos' account of this peculiarity in the ancient world has been much scrutinised:

“The erection of statues, temples, and altars is not an accepted practice amongst them... presumably, the Persian religion is not anthropomorphic like the Greek. Zeus, in their system, is the whole circle of the heavens, and they sacrifice to him from the tops of mountains. They also worship the sun, moon, and earth, fire, water, and winds, which are their only original deities: it was later that they learned from the Assyrians and Arabians the cult of Uranian Aphrodite. The Assyrian name for Aphrodite is Mylitta, the Arabian Alilat, the Persian Mitra.

As for ceremonial, when they offer sacrifice to the deities I mentioned, they erect no altar and kindle no fire; the libation, the flute music, the garlands, the sprinkled meal – all these things they have no use for; but before a ceremony a man sticks a spray of leaves, usually myrtle leaves, into his headdress, takes his victim to some purified place and invokes the deity to whom he wishes to sacrifice.”⁴⁸⁴

The passage does presage what we know of Persian Zoroastrian religion in many respects, but also contains some oddities and omissions. Some errors are easily explained, such as

⁴⁸⁰ Henkelman (2008) 477, Appendix 4; see, e.g., the assertion of Koch (1995) 1969 that “the sacrifice of animals was not intended by the [Achaemenid] administration”. Henkelman (2011) 95, n. 17, suggested that the issuing of grain for the purchase of sacrificial animals served to reduce the grain surplus while preserving the administration's livestock capital. For abstracts of PF texts that relate to cultic activity, see Henkelman (2008) 511-565.

⁴⁸¹ Henkelman (2008) 416; 417-426.

⁴⁸² Henkelman (2008) 254-280, 304, 454. See further, below, on Henkelman's proposal that the sacred groves of the Elamites are the antecedents of the Persian ‘paradises’ where *lan* was performed.

⁴⁸³ See Henkelman (2011), esp. 105, 107.

⁴⁸⁴ *Hist.* I.131-132.

Herodotos' conclusions that the Persians did not conceive of their gods anthropomorphically possibly because they had no cult statues⁴⁸⁵ and his giving a Greek name to the principal Persian deity Auramazdā. Other points are more baffling, particularly the declaration that the Persians kindle no fire when they offer sacrifice: as the presence of fire was a central feature of Iranian worship in all periods, Albert de Jong suggested that Herodotos intended to contrast the Greek custom of burning parts of the sacrificial animal on an altar with the absence of such a practice among the Persians.⁴⁸⁶ That there may have been more than one kind of Persian (or Persianising) worship occurring is shown by inconsistencies within the *Histories*: in the section above, for example, it is stated categorically that Persians make no libations, yet elsewhere they explicitly do just that (VII.54). The author's source(s) were evidently Persian but not of the priestly caste, for he made no mention of such authoritative contacts, as he was keen to do for his information on Egyptian religion.⁴⁸⁷ If Herodotos witnessed Persian ceremonies himself while living in Halikarnassos in the mid-fifth century BC, they were evidently not purely Zoroastrian, or were an adaptation of Iranian practices particular to Caria. The discrepancies may be owing to the preservation of western, rather than eastern, Iranian traditions. Two examples suggest that his may be so: the garbled reference to the Persian goddess Anāhitā (incorrectly conflated with the male deity Mithras) – while new to the Zoroastrian pantheon and, evidently, Herodotos' informant, she had been long venerated in western Iran (see Chapter 5) – and the headgear adorned with a wreath worn by the dedicant, arguably a western practice.⁴⁸⁸

Archaeological remains at Pasargadae, the capital built by Cyrus, offer partial support of Herodotos' description. No remains of sacred statues or objects, conventional altars or temples exist. Instead, a sole sacred precinct consisted of a large open-air space marked out by a perimeter wall that contained only two stone plinths, the southern one 2.16m high and

⁴⁸⁵ The Avesta refers to the human form of deities, e.g. their ears or eyes, and in one Yašt (5.126-129) the goddess Anāhitā is described as a young girl: de Jong (1997) 95 with references.

⁴⁸⁶ de Jong (1997) 110-111.

⁴⁸⁷ For a thorough commentary on this passage and Persian religion, see de Jong (1997) 76-120. Boyce (1982) 180-182 suggested that Herodotos' information was drawn from members of the Persian 'warrior' estate, but why these should have communicated information on religious practices so wide of the mark, particularly in relation to fire, is not explained.

⁴⁸⁸ de Jong (1997) 114-115. The headdress and myrtle garland of Herodotos are identical to the *burzinqa* (turban, with one end of the cloth hanging down over the left shoulder so that it can be used by a priest to cover his nostrils and mouth to prevent pollution of sacred objects and elements: see illustration of the magi, Fig. 5.6) and the *klila* (consecrated wreath or garland) worn by Mandaean priests and laymen during certain rituals: Drower (1937) 30-31, 35-36, 145, n. 9.

2.43m square at the base on c. 90cm foundations with a flight of steps for the king or senior official, the northern one 2.10m high and 2.8m square at the base but without steps, presumably intended as a pedestal for a portable fire altar.⁴⁸⁹ About 120m west on a natural rock outcrop five symmetrical terraces of successively decreasing size were built, apparently as audience platforms for the activity occurring below in the sacred precinct⁴⁹⁰ (Figs 4.6a-b). Wouter F. M. Henkelman described the feast that took place here as “profoundly royal in character... the *šip* feast functioned as an ideological stage that gave expression to the king’s piety and reinforced his position as greatest gift-giver... by distributing the sacrificial meat”.⁴⁹¹ The ceremony was so central to Persian kingship and exemplified the king’s connection to the divine so clearly that it would be illustrated in the monumental rock façades of royal tombs at Naqš-e Rostam and Persepolis. That the ceremony may have been inspired by an Elamite custom can be surmised from similarities in depictions of sacrifice and ritual at the Neo-Elamite, open-air sanctuary of Kūl-e Farah (Īzeh).⁴⁹² Scenes carved into rock there contain parallel elements: an outdoor ceremony attended by processing crowds (and featuring music), the presence of the king who is raised above the assembly on a platform, animal sacrifices as a prelude to feasting, all occurring in the apparent absence of a cult statue (see Fig. 4.3a).⁴⁹³ Significant among the archaeological features of the sanctuary is a double fire-altar, more accurately described as two fire-bowls carved into a large, freestanding boulder (Fig. 4.8). Situated at the entrance of the ravine near the rock face featuring the ceremonial banquet relief, the altar and the carving above it of a group of priests are apparently positioned in relation to each other.⁴⁹⁴

⁴⁸⁹ Stronach (1978) 138-139.

⁴⁹⁰ Stronach (1978) 142-145.

⁴⁹¹ Henkelman (2011) 118.

⁴⁹² On the feast of Aiapir and parallels with Persian *šip*, see Henkelman (2011) 128-133.

⁴⁹³ The identification of the figure in relief III being carried on a raised dais has been the subject of disagreement. Calmeyer (1973) 151-152 refuted the contention of de Waele (1973) 36 that it is the statue of a divinity mainly through comparisons with depictions of an earlier king at another open-air sanctuary nearby, Šekaft-e Salmān; de Waele (1979) 97-100 responded with principally iconographic arguments again in favour of its being a deity. Calmeyer was followed by Henkelman (2011) 128 who stated that both the individual leading the procession and the figure on the dais are representations of the king, i.e. the king is depicted twice on the same relief: contra de Waele (1989).

⁴⁹⁴ de Waele (1973) 42; (1989) 33. He also mentioned a second, “rougher” fire altar, *ibid.* (1989) 35. See *ibid.* (1973) 43 for a photograph of the fire bowls and (1981) fig. 7 for a sketch showing the location of the altar in relation to the rock reliefs.

Fire bowls set into waist-height stands dating to the period of Cyrus II have also been discovered at Pasargadae.⁴⁹⁵ While their use might show some continuity of Elamite ritual, in design the Pasargadae fire-holders are very different. Made of stone, the base consists of three steps into which was set a rectangular shaft; on top an inverted version of the base features a comparatively deep fire bowl (Fig. 4.7b-c). The upper part of the stands bears resemblance to the altar at the Median settlement at Nush-i Jan (Fig. 4.9).⁴⁹⁶ The altar consists of projecting stepped layers, the widest at the top with a central fire bowl, on a plain rectangular shaft. Its design differs from the Pasargadae finds in size, in having four rather than three steps at the top and none at the bottom of the shaft, and in being made of mud brick rather than stone. It has been suggested that the fire-holders from the period of Cyrus were an innovation to elevate fire from its traditional Indo-Iranian location, the hearth, for the devotional purposes of the king.⁴⁹⁷ More meaningful differences in Median worship prior to the Persian period are indicated by the archaeological context of the fire altar. Most notable of these is the housing of the altar within a temple of possibly Urartian inspiration⁴⁹⁸ and, although it seems to have been a revered object, as a plaster and mud-brick screen restricted access to the sanctuary and shielded the altar from direct view from the antechamber, it was apparently not the only focus of attention. To judge by the layout of the room – a stepped shape in which the altar was not positioned at the apex or in the centre but in a bay beside the doorway – and by niches and decorative patterns carved into the walls, other (moveable) features were located within the sanctuary and it can be surmised that these may not have been connected with the fire altar.⁴⁹⁹ Similarly, but further afield in the province of Malatya, Anatolia, about 130km north of Carchemish (230km upstream on the Euphrates), the early sixth-century BC monumental buildings of Tille Höyük displayed some comparable elements. Built anew after the total destruction of the preceding (Neo-Assyrian) level, Tille comprised fortified construction covering at least the northern half of the 120x160m diameter mound (Level IX, from about 600-550 BC until some time in the first

⁴⁹⁵ For the c. 33cm deep fire bowl of the stone, stepped ‘altar’ at Pasargadae see Stronach (1978) 141, fig. 72 and plate 107; de Waele (1973) 42 gave the approximate measurements of the fire bowls at Kūl-e Farah as 0.20m in diameter and 0.10m in depth; Stronach and Roaf (2007) 83 measured the average diameter of the fire bowl of the Nush-i Jan altar at 0.23m and 0.075m at its maximum depth. This fire bowl also had a slightly raised rim 0.02m in height.

⁴⁹⁶ The following details come from the publication of the excavators, Stronach and Roaf (2007).

⁴⁹⁷ Boyce (1988) 28.

⁴⁹⁸ See Stronach and Roaf (2007) 91, 211-212.

⁴⁹⁹ See Stronach and Roaf (2007) 82 and fig. 2.11 on the screen; 81-88 on the sanctuary (designated Room 1) and altar.

half of the sixth century BC).⁵⁰⁰ The distinctive plan that restricted access to a central, detached building standing alone in an open courtyard suggests organised planning and an official character to the site. The position of the central building and its massive walls bear hallmarks of Urartian and Iranian inspiration, like at Nush-i Jan, indicating it was a temple and open forecourt within a combined official and domestic enclave.⁵⁰¹ The Achaemenid-period level that followed contained three rooms with thickly plastered white floors and walls, three-stepped niches in the walls, and freestanding mud-brick hearths that could have done double duty as fire-altars on the long axes of the buildings, again all under a roof, this time of monumental ceiling heights.⁵⁰² The Iranian religious architectural tradition of the time is clear.

Like at Pasargadae, at Susa we have evidence of an Elamite religious ceremony that was conducted outdoors and in which the sun figured prominently. A remarkable artefact known as the *sit shamshi* provides a visual record of the ritual; fortunately, it is inscribed with the name of the commissioning king, Šilhak-Inšušinak I (c. 1155-1125 BC), along with the declaration “I have made a bronze sunrise”⁵⁰³ (Fig. 4.10). The object is a bronze model of an outdoor sanctuary, with two ziggurat-style stepped altars or podia (one of which has a step on one side), a stela, and basins, among other intriguing elements, featuring two nude crouching

⁵⁰⁰ For excavations of Iron Age Tille Höyük, see Blaylock (2009). On the dating of the late Iron Age levels, see *ibid.* 169-170 and 204-206. Note his caution that Level IX could be Median, Neo-Babylonian or even early Achaemenid.

⁵⁰¹ Blaylock (2009) 169. On the first millennium BC tradition of tower temples in Urartu and parallels with similar structures in Iran and Armenia, see Stronach (1967) and Forbes (1983) 69-95.

⁵⁰² Blaylock (2009) 187, 198, 200. Ceiling heights support the idea that the rooms served some non-domestic purpose. The walls were preserved to heights of about two metres; the collapsed brickwork that once stood atop the walls suggests additional heights of three to five metres in the larger rooms. No indication of second storeys was found: *ibid.* 196-197. The fireplaces were semi-circular, with walls and a dome, so that cooking could not have taken place directly over the fire, hence the conclusion that they served some other primary function: *ibid.* 200. Compare these hearths to the freestanding brick hearth on the central axis of Burned Building II at Hansalu Tepe, at the southwest corner of Lake Urmia, Azarbaijan, Iran, identified as a temple: Dyson (1989) 118 and fig. 15. This, too, was situated on a mound (about 200 metres in diameter) with a mixture of domestic and public buildings arranged to restrict access to it; its portico contained a metre-high platform and 1.5-metre stela facing out to an open-air courtyard: *ibid.* 116. The destruction dates to the end of the ninth century BC. According to Blaylock, the Achaemenid-period level (level X) at Tille could date between 550-350 BC, but a construction date in the time of Kings Darius and Xerxes is most likely, i.e. from 522-465 BC: *ibid.* 204-205.

⁵⁰³ König (1965) 136, EKI 56.

figures. The men are apparently engaged in a purification rite, judging by analogy with an open-air religious installation at Čōgā Zambīl displaying a number of the same features as the *sit shamshi*. The Čōgā Zambīl forecourt was dedicated to purification and offering rites.⁵⁰⁴ It is tempting to view the twin altars of the model as precursors of those at Pasargadae and extrapolate that ritual cleansing took place there too. Alternatively, because the *sit shamshi* was found near a temple on the Susa acropolis in a tomb wall, it has been suggested that it may be a representation of funerary rites undertaken at dawn for the deceased king.⁵⁰⁵ Regrettably, it is unclear whether the model was found in its original place of deposition or reused in a later context. The three trees on the model, however, suggest a sacred grove setting that was linked in Elamite religion with funerary cult (see further, below).

On the surface the PF texts deciphered thus far show an Elamite bias in the allocation of sacrificial goods. Most resources were allotted to the Elamite deity Humban, whose worship extended beyond enclaves of Elamite tradition to major towns along the royal road.⁵⁰⁶ However, the names of the recipients of these goods show that Humban's cult was not confined to Elamites; rather, the majority are Iranian names.⁵⁰⁷ The favour accorded this non-Persian deity may stem from the Elamite concept of *kitin*, "divine protection, god-given royal power", which had been closely connected to Humban since the Neo-Elamite period⁵⁰⁸ and which we know to have endured into Achaemenid times.⁵⁰⁹ In Neo-Elamite inscriptions Humban bestows *kitin* upon kings, giving them authority.⁵¹⁰ In his turn, the king could place

⁵⁰⁴ Ghirshman (1966) 80-82.

⁵⁰⁵ Mécquenem (1944) 141.

⁵⁰⁶ Henkelman (2011) 96, Table 1; 97.

⁵⁰⁷ Henkelman (2008) 372.

⁵⁰⁸ Henkelman (2011) 97.

⁵⁰⁹ Another Elamite theological concept, namely judgment by a triad of gods after death, was probably transmitted to Persian religion in the Neo-Elamite or early Persian period and later appeared in Zoroastrian writings: Henkelman (2008) 61. For funerary inscriptions from Susa describing judgment and the afterlife, see Bottéro (1982) 393-402. Despite the Elamite elements of the texts, such as the god Inšušinak, and their unique content describing how to conduct oneself after death, Bottéro concluded that the ideology expressed is Babylonian (*ibid.* 401-402). Steve and Gasche (1996) agreed in part but pointed out that the Elamite concepts of Weighing and Judgment have no parallel in Mesopotamian literature. Neither did they believe the Iranian traditions of a high date described by Kreyenbroek (1985) could have had an impact on the ideology of the texts in question. The concepts, then, are more likely to have originated in Elamite religion.

⁵¹⁰ Henkelman (2008) 364-371. Other gods and kings, too, may place *kitin* (in the sense of bestowing protection or right order), but the king stands only under the *kitin* of Humban.

a protective *kitin* over someone or something, or institute *kitin*, i.e. order, based on divine authority.⁵¹¹ It is evident from the Elamite version of the so-called ‘*daivā* [demon] inscription’ of King Xerxes that an early Persian king had not only appropriated the principal deity of this land over which he had begun to rule but absorbed, too, the religious ideology connected with Elamite kingship. Now Xerxes claimed the concept for his own protector god, Auramazdā:

“Then, by the effort of Auramazdā (Uramasda), I devastated that place of *daivā* worship and I placed *kiten* upon them, lest the *daivā* their sacrificial feast be celebrated.”⁵¹²

The *daivā* inscription and the PF texts illustrate the Elamite influence that had become entrenched in the years since Persian hegemony. Humban and Auramazdā’s names in the archive appear occasionally side-by-side and cult personnel were not confined to either Elamite or Persian activities: for example, the same priest could be issued with wine to be offered to Elamite and Iranian deities.⁵¹³ Nor were Elamite and Persian gods worshipped at different locations. The archive does not distinguish between Elamite and Persian gods, which were so acculturated as to be regarded as equally native. The almost total absence of Persians, Elamites and Medes from a recent analysis of ethnonyms in the PF archive demonstrates that in the period preceding the fifth century BC these Iranian peoples had merged indistinguishably into a “home” group.⁵¹⁴ Other ethnicities were distinguished from these heartland peoples by name; among them were Anatolians, such as Carians, Lykians, and Sardians. While firmly entrenched into the economy and administration, workers from different ethnicities rarely mixed, suggesting some continuity of their autonomous identity and, by extension, their religious culture. A graffito reading *ΘΕΟΙΣ* (“for the gods”) carved into rock near Persepolis points to the performance of votive offerings by Greek quarry-workers.⁵¹⁵ Greeks and other ethnic groups may not have been prevented from public worship of their traditional deities, but the PF texts indicate no rations for religious purposes for any foreign ethnicity, which would be indicative of state-sponsorship of foreign religious

⁵¹¹ Henkelman (2008) 366-367.

⁵¹² XPh_e 31-32: translation in Henkelman (2008) 367.

⁵¹³ Henkelman (2008) 372-373. An example is PF0339, *ibid.* 540: as well as allocations for/at rivers, the *šatin* (cultic expert) received seven quarts of wine for Auramazdā and twenty quarts for Humban.

⁵¹⁴ Henkelman and Stolper (2009). Where the terms are employed, they are geographical rather than ethnic labels: *ibid.* 278.

⁵¹⁵ Henkelman and Stolper (2009) 276.

practices: all of the gods named in the PF texts are of either Elamite or (Indo-)Iranian origin.⁵¹⁶

While Persian religion was undoubtedly affected by Elamite theology and customs, changes were wrought in Elamite tradition too. During the early period of Persian rule, new deities appeared in the Elamite pantheon and existing ones began to acquire traits drawn from their worshippers' new, multi-cultural environment. The existence of a mixed, acculturated population is attested in the glyptic art of Susa in the sixth century BC: its style and symbolism was an agglomeration of Elamite, Assyrian, Babylonian, Iranian and other regional influences.⁵¹⁷ Many examples from the corpus are engraved with imagery that provides a glimpse into the acculturation of religious traditions and the iconography of authority in Elam at this time. Familiar Near Eastern hybrid creatures, winged genii flanking trees, chariot hunting scenes, marchant lions and other animals appear. Pierre de Miroschedji's view that the variety of Neo-Elamite glyptic art was a result of turbulent times politically⁵¹⁸ was countered by Mark Garrison's observation that "stylistic diversity is not a sign of troubled times, but a barometer of a vibrant, wealthy and thriving imperial centre supporting an array of elites and administrative personnel who actively patronize a variety of glyptic workshops".⁵¹⁹ He put the locus of this activity at Persepolis, given the (as he thought) obliteration of authority at Susa by the Assyrians,⁵²⁰ but it is not necessary to remove the glyptic art from Susa; we have seen from the Acropole archive (Chapter 4) that Susa proved to be economically and socially resilient, and could certainly have had the means to create and a use for cylinder seals.

Artefacts found in an undisturbed Neo-Elamite⁵²¹ period tomb in the region of Arġān/Arjan (near modern Behbahān), a location linking the Iranian highlands with Mesopotamia and the Persian Gulf in ancient times, also attest to the mixture of cultural influences prevalent in the

⁵¹⁶ Henkelman and Stolper (2009) 276. A technical exception may be the god Adad, who hailed from Babylonia but who had been worshipped in Iran since the early second millennium. Adad became part of the Elamite pantheon and was given Elamite antecedents.

⁵¹⁷ Amiet (1973); Garrison (2002) 70, 92; Henkelman (2008) 53-55.

⁵¹⁸ de Miroschedji (1982) 63.

⁵¹⁹ Garrison (2002) 77-78.

⁵²⁰ Garrison (2002) 79, 92.

⁵²¹ Or early Achaemenid. Arguments based on the palaeography of the four inscribed objects found in the tomb suggest a time between the Assyrian destruction of Susa about 646 BC and the latest date that a script not featuring Achaemenid Elamite characteristics might have been used, i.e. about 535 BC: Stronach (2003) 252.

sixth century BC. Within a stone underground chamber was the skeleton of an adult male inside a bronze “bathtub”-shaped coffin with an engraved lid, a type previously unknown for Elamite burials but occurring in Assyria since the second half of the eighth century BC.⁵²² The presence of valuable grave goods was another departure from customary Elamite practice. These included an iron dagger with a hilt ornamented in gold and red inlaid glaze, crowned with a ‘tiger-eye’ agate stone, and a dozen bronze vessels comparable to a group from a tomb at Susa,⁵²³ a number of these decorated in a mixture of Assyro-Babylonian, Syrian, Iranian and Elamite styles.⁵²⁴ Two precious objects buried with the deceased are particularly notable. The first is an elaborately crafted gold “ring”, better described as a horseshoe-shaped grip or (perhaps) arm bracelet, bearing an Elamite inscription, found resting on the chest of the deceased (Fig. 4.11). Each end of the curved shaft flares to finish with an inward-facing, lobed finial; the distinctive shape is rare but two less spectacular metal examples are known from Susa and a further (silver) example is said to be from Čoġā Zambīl, i.e. Elamite contexts.⁵²⁵ Javier Álvarez-Mon speculated that the Arjan tomb “ring” is akin to the Mesopotamian/Assyrian “Tablet of Destinies”, an emblem of divine and royal power, or that it functioned as a royal seal like the “Seal of Destinies” applied by the Assyrian king Esarhaddon to the vassal treaty of the Medes.⁵²⁶ The disc-shaped finials are engraved with a design that seems to herald the conventions of late sixth-century BC Achaemenid art, especially the mirror-images of rampant, winged lions, possibly inspired by north or northwestern Iran.⁵²⁷ Seals of the late Elamite period depicting a deity in the form of a griffin with a lion’s head show the creature alone or with the symbols of the Mesopotamian gods Marduk (a spade) and Nabû (a stylus), deities absorbed into the Elamite pantheon in the late second millennium BC. The association indicates that the lion-headed griffin engraved

⁵²² Curtis (1983); (1995) 21-22. I note here the alleged “bathtub” shape of the stone walls of four burial pits at the Iron Age cemetery of Tepe Guran, inner Lorestān. These may reflect the shape of disintegrated wooden sarcophagi: Álvarez-Mon (2010) 209. The burials were accompanied by a variety of grave goods; notably, the “warrior” grave of about 750-650 BC contained an iron sword.

⁵²³ Carter (1994) 73; Stronach (2003) 252-253; Stronach (2005) 181.

⁵²⁴ Carter (2007) 152.

⁵²⁵ Álvarez-Mon (2011) 304-306.

⁵²⁶ Álvarez-Mon (2011) 308-309. On the treaty, see below.

⁵²⁷ Stronach (2003) 253, citing Alizadeh (1985) 63ff. Stronach (2003) 258 was convinced that the artist was Persian and drew on Iranian and Neo-Elamite tradition. For a detailed analysis of the elements of the composition and possible antecedents, see Álvarez-Mon (2011) 311ff. He discussed the blending of “Elamo-Assyrian royal artistic tradition(s) with Zagros artistic traditions”: *ibid.*, especially 359.

on the Arjan ring represented a deity.⁵²⁸ The connection between the triad of gods is interesting, too, as the patronage of Cyrus the Great and his heir Cambyses of the Marduk and Nabû cults after the Persian conquest of Babylon in 539 BC may be regarded as an extension of their Elamite heritage, rather than as opportunistic support of foreign religion for political reasons.

This possibility is reinforced by another remarkable object in the tomb. The bronze ‘Arjan bowl’ is described as “representative of a Phoenician workshop steeped in Assyrian artistic traditions” but containing some distinctive Elamite features (Fig. 4.12).⁵²⁹ According to the study of Glenn Markoe, the multicultural milieu in which Phoenician craftsmen and artists lived accounts for the manner in which stylistic elements and iconography were taken from their traditional cultural settings and inserted into new contexts.⁵³⁰ Although the creators of the Arjan bowl are unknown to us, evidently they too were familiar with a multicultural, acculturated environment, and so customised Near Eastern motifs with Elamite references. Like the ‘ring’, the bowl is a striking example of elite acculturation in the sixth century BC. Its interior is incised with five registers of intricate decoration surrounding a central rosette, in the manner of Phoenician bowls and bronze shields from Urartu.⁵³¹ The scenes depicted reflect strongly those of Assyrian royal art – banqueting, hunting, the aftermath of a successful battle, and presenting tribute to the king, among others – but the style has been adjusted to portray Elamite court life. The most unusual image, perhaps, is the ‘yurt’-style tent in the first register, with its door-flap propped open by poles with lion (or wolf?)-headed finials to form a porch.⁵³² Distinctively Elamite images include chariot types, quivers, and helmets, notably the helmet of the king in the first register.⁵³³ Interesting, too, is the depiction of the fortified city in register 2: the stepped-in lintel of the upper part of the doorway is otherwise only seen in Neo-Assyrian representations of Elamite architecture, namely reliefs

⁵²⁸ Álvarez-Mon (2010) 109-113. Interestingly, the lion-headed griffin in Achaemenid arts is pictured as the object of worship and also as the adversary of the king, the latter referencing Assyrian depictions of royal heroes stabbing the creature: *ibid.* 114-118.

⁵²⁹ Majidzadeh (1992) 142; see 136-138 for discussion of Elamite features.

⁵³⁰ Markoe (1985) 7.

⁵³¹ Markoe (1985) 13; Stronach (2005) 185. See Majidzadeh (1992) 138-141 for a discussion of other Phoenician features on the Arjan bowl.

⁵³² Stronach (2005) 190-192. Another variation is that the procession is headed by a dignitary (fourth figure in front of the king) other than the crown prince: Stronach (2003) 254.

⁵³³ Majidzadeh (1992) 136-138.

depicting the sieges of Hamanu and Susa,⁵³⁴ and the unusual crenelations of its towers are similar to those of the Urartian city of Gilzanu depicted in the bronze decorations of the gates of a palace of the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III (858-824 BC) and closely resemble the crenelated turret of a bronze model of an Urartian building from Toprakkale (dated to the late eighth century BC).⁵³⁵ Gilzanu was located in today's northwest Iran on Lake Urmia, and Toprakkale not much farther north near Lake Van, and so both Urartian cities were near enough to have contributed to the influences on the Elamites attested by the Arjan bowl.

The *raison d'être* of the bowl is no less mysterious than that of the 'ring'. Álvarez-Mon has argued that the bowl was not created for ornamental purposes or for drinking ceremonies – its dimensions are much larger than any of the bowl's Phoenician-style counterparts – but was designed to reflect the specific religious and cosmological ideology of its owner.⁵³⁶ The episodes depicted take place in the mountains, at the periphery of the city, inside the city, and ultimately symbolically in a cosmological sphere. Extraordinary heroic deeds of the king, such as hunting wild animals in dangerous terrain and success in battle, give way to rituals returning the king to ordinary life, such as the ceremonial drinking of wine from a small bowl and the desacralising 'foot-clutch' dance before the city gates,⁵³⁷ and then to portrayal of the rewards of correct kingship, including harvest, a tribute procession, and feasting. The events all tend to indicate the blessings of god(s) on the legitimate king and are shown in the accepted (mostly Assyrian) visual language of the period. The innermost register is filled with lions and bulls, familiar symbols of divinely-assured power; the central rosette, too, has a long association with the divine.⁵³⁸ The significance of the object in its tomb context was

⁵³⁴ Stronach (2005) 187. For the reliefs of the sieges of Hamanu and Susa, see the drawings of W. Boutcher reproduced in Barnett (1976), now in the British Museum. For Susa, see Fig. 4.16.

⁵³⁵ For the gate decorations, see King (1915) plate XXXVII. Similar crenelations appear on the towers of the city of Bît-Iakhiri, depicted in Band II of the bronze reliefs of Ashurnasirpal: King (1915) plate LXXIX. Parts of the bronze model are in the British Museum, BM 91177 and 91250.

⁵³⁶ Álvarez-Mon (2010) 123, 142-143. Its dimensions of 43.5cm diameter and depth of 8.5cm exceed any catalogued by Markoe (1985) and are at least two and a half times greater in diameter than other known Elamite or Mesopotamian drinking bowls.

⁵³⁷ Álvarez-Mon (2010) 132-133.

⁵³⁸ Álvarez-Mon (2010) 138-139. The rosette is connected with both the goddess Inanna (Ištar) and the planet Venus but in this context may represent some other deity. For example, a rosette appeared on the shoulder of the lion carrying a male deity (Nergal?) on the bronze plaque that adorned an entrance gate in the 14th century BC Haft Tepe terrace complex: Negahban (1991) 114-115, no. 481 and Ill. 48. This kind of ornament on the shoulder or rump of an animal has a long history: see references in

that its images could have served “as a visual mnemonic device for the ‘soul’ of the king so as to insure his rightful place among his ancestors”.⁵³⁹ This religious interpretation of the bowl is reaffirmed by one especially notable image: in the third register, the official before the enthroned king bows low with a hand raised in front of his mouth, a gesture known from Mesopotamian depictions of persons in the presence of a god.⁵⁴⁰

The Medes

Assyrian texts from the ninth century BC show Median and Persian peoples coexisting in the Zagros mountains. They were encountered by Tiglath-Pileser III and later more profoundly by Sargon II, who campaigned in the central Zagros and along the Great Khorasan Road, pushing back Urartu and securing trade routes to the east. Having brought to heel the rebellious client city of Karalla (Mannean territory in the Zagros mountains), the king restored the temple and installed his protector god Aššur there.⁵⁴¹ Then, having defeated the Median city of Kišesim, Sargon replaced its king with his own “royal image” and a governor. He installed “the gods who go before me” in the city temple: no doubt Sîn, Šamaš, Adad, Ištar, and perhaps others.⁵⁴² Similarly, when the Medes at Ḫarḫār expelled their leaders and refused to pay Assyrian tribute, instead seeking to transfer their loyalties to Ellipi, Sargon retaliated with military action.⁵⁴³ A governor was set over the defeated city and its surrounding districts. The king set up his image in the city and famously: “The weapon of Assur, my lord, I appointed as their deity”.⁵⁴⁴ But, according to a stela the king erected within weeks of the defeat, there followed an immediate reconciliation with the local gods:

Negahban, *ibid.*, 115. See further below on the rosette decorating the tomb of Cyrus at Pasargadae and Chapter 5 on possible links with the goddess Anāhitā.

⁵³⁹ Álvarez-Mon (2010) 143.

⁵⁴⁰ Stronach (2005) 190, giving the example of the stela of Hammurabi.

⁵⁴¹ Holloway (2002) 156-157, n. 250.

⁵⁴² *ARAB II* 5 §10. See Holloway (2002) 157-158, n. 151, on the royal inscriptions describing these events.

⁵⁴³ *ARAB II* 6 §11. For the depiction of the attacks at the palace of Sargon at Khorsabad, see the drawings of the reliefs from room 2, slab 22 (Kišesim) and from room 2, slabs 5-7 (Ḫarḫār) by Eugène Flandin (1849) plates 68-68bis and 55, reproduced in Albenda (1986) plates 125-126 and 112, respectively.

⁵⁴⁴ *ARAB II* 6 §11.

“His temples I built and I returned his gods to their places.”⁵⁴⁵

Unfortunately, a break in the text precludes identification of the recipient of the king's largesse, but it may be surmised that Sargon wished to reward a submitting noble or an Assyrian loyalist and his supporters. The return of the gods may have been deemed necessary, too, to add weight to the loyalty oath to Assyria that the Ḫarḫārites would now be required to swear.⁵⁴⁶ Alternatively, it may have been that other, perhaps Assyrian, gods had been worshipped here and were expelled along with the ousted chiefs by the rebellious Ḫarḫārites. Once he had regained the upper hand in the area, Sargon may have wished to emphasise his victory and the deities' support by re-establishing them in a temple setting. Another possibility is that he may have engaged in temple building here in order to house his own gods appropriately. Indeed, the inscription quoted above is followed immediately by a list of the chief Assyrian gods: “Of Ashur, Sin, Shamash, Adad, Ishtar...”.

The campaign resulted in twenty-eight Median groups becoming tributaries, according to the king's annals.⁵⁴⁷ But subsequent discord in Assyria released the Zagros temporarily to its own politics and again the records attest to a number of rulers across the region. In 672 BC nine client kingdoms on the frontiers of Iran swore the *adē* (loyalty oath) to the Assyrian king Esarhaddon and his designated successor, Aššurbanipal, at the military capital of Kalḫu (Nimrud).⁵⁴⁸ One of these was a Median chieftain whose men became the bodyguards of the crown prince.⁵⁴⁹ The nine rulers vowed to serve Aššur as though he was their own god (line 409) and, before named planets (lines 13-15), Assyrian gods and gods of the conquered lands (lines 16-24), swore by an exhaustive list of Assyrian deities (lines 25-40) to accept the treaty provisions. As was customary in Near Eastern agreements, divinities were named as witnesses to the ratification and as enforcers of curses against violators of treaty provisions (lines 25-40; 414-493; 518ff). The sacred nature of the oath required the archiving of the official text in the temple of Nabu; copies were no doubt taken back to temples of the sworn too. But the hostility generated by this oath can be surmised by the removal of these particular treaty tablets from the temple to the throne room of the king during the destruction of Nimrud in 614 BC, where they were smashed into hundreds of small pieces and burned.⁵⁵⁰

⁵⁴⁵ Levine (1972) 41, col. II, rev. §44.

⁵⁴⁶ Discussed in Holloway (2002) 159, n. 252.

⁵⁴⁷ *ARAB II* 6 §11.

⁵⁴⁸ The so-called “Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon”: for the text and commentary, see Wiseman (1958).

⁵⁴⁹ Liverani (1995) 60.

⁵⁵⁰ Mallowan (1958) i-ii.

The excavator of the city, Max Mallowan, interpreted the discovery to mean the Medes sought out the evidence of their enforced submission and mutilated it in revenge, while Mario Liverani suggested the episode reflects the Medes' superstitious fear of having transgressed a religious oath⁵⁵¹ by turning against the Assyrian king.

Apart from a brief reference to the Manneans as Assyrian allies,⁵⁵² no other people of the Zagros appears at the end of the seventh century BC. Evidently, the Medes had come to form a single polity – at least, their separate ethnicities were no longer distinguishable to the hawkeyed Babylonian annalists. By this time Babylonian records speak of a single king of Media, Cyaxares (Umakishtar). In the year of Nimrud's destruction Cyaxares also conquered the city of Assur. Two years later he joined forces with the Babylonian king Nabopolassar against Nineveh, and two years later again did so to capture Harran.⁵⁵³ The end of Assyria was accompanied by such thorough violence and sacking of temples that a subsequent Babylonian king had to disown his predecessor's role in the events, laying the blame solely at the door of the Medes:

“The king of the Umman-manda [a derogatory term for the Medes], unafraid, destroyed the temples, (the temples) of all the gods of Subartu [Assyria], and the towns with sanctuaries in the territory of Akkad [Babylonia], which had been the enemies of the king of Akkad and had not come to his aid (i.e. against Assyria) – he destroyed every one of their cults, devastating their cult-centres like a flood. The king of Babylon (sc. Nabopolassar), to whom sacrilege is an abomination, did not raise his hand against the cults of any of the gods...”⁵⁵⁴

Babylonian texts record only bare bones concerning the reversal of Median fortunes.⁵⁵⁵ An attempt of King Astyages to subdue Anšan in 550 BC ended in his own troops staging a coup and turning him over to King Cyrus II; regrettably, the Chronicle does not explain what prompted this defection. Astyages retreated to Ecbatana (modern Hamadan) but Cyrus pursued him, captured the royal city and denuded it of everything of material value. The Dream text of Nabonidus, then king of Babylonia, explains the overthrow of the Median king in religious terms: he dreams that the gods Marduk and Sîn wish him to rebuild the temple of

⁵⁵¹ Mallowan (1956) 14-15; Liverani (1995) 62.

⁵⁵² *ABC* 3.5.

⁵⁵³ *ABC* 3.26-27; 38-45; 59-65. For the treaty specifically: *ABC* 3.29.

⁵⁵⁴ Kuhrt (2007) 33, 2.11; Istanbul stela, *ANET* 309, col. ii.

⁵⁵⁵ *ABC* 7. ii §1-4; see Arnold (2006) 419.

Sîn at Harran, a city currently in the grip of Media, and that the Medes will cease to be. Nabonidus adds that it soon happens that Marduk has raised up Cyrus of Persia to deal with the Medes; the dating of the text implies that war broke out in Nabonidus' third year and lasted into his sixth year, i.e. 553-550.⁵⁵⁶ Nabonidus was able to re-take Harran, conclude a treaty with Cyrus, the new king of Media, and rebuild the temple of Sîn.⁵⁵⁷ Interestingly, the very same themes recur only a few years later but against the Babylonian king, in the Cyrus Cylinder: displeased with Nabonidus' religious policies, the god Marduk raises up Cyrus to topple Nabonidus; Cyrus is then able to rebuild Babylonian sanctuaries and restore proper worship.

The status of the Persians in the mid-seventh century BC and how Cyrus became master of the Median people is a hotly debated subject. The answer to the question of his swift rise to power must lie in either Cyrus' ancestry or the success of a predecessor; unfortunately, the only accounts that describe Cyrus' relationship with the Medes are contained in the "founder legends" of Herodotos, Ktesias, and Xenophon. The former describe the Persians as having been client kings of Media; in the latter they appear to be neighbouring kingdoms related by marriage. In Ktesias, Cyrus is a "Mardian" who has risen in the ranks of the Median court to a point where he can appoint his natural father to the position of satrap of Persia. He then plots a coup against the Median king Astyages with Persian military support.⁵⁵⁸ Ktesias claimed that his sources were royal parchments;⁵⁵⁹ if so, then it is possible to understand Cyrus in Media as a hostage to a treaty between Media and Persia, becoming acculturated to Median ways (and elite religious practices) while serving at the king's court, in much the same way as the princes of client-kings lived in the court of the Assyrian king. According to Herodotos and Xenophon, the Medes and Persians were in a treaty relationship sealed by a dynastic marriage: the Median king Astyages gave his daughter in marriage to the Persian Cambyses (*Hist.* I.107; *Cyr.* I.2.1). This may have been a factor contributing to the ready defection of the Median army to Cyrus, i.e. Astyages' grandson (an occurrence noted in the Nabonidus Chronicle⁵⁶⁰) and the lack of Median rebellion once Cyrus had taken the throne: his heritage would have strengthened his claim.

⁵⁵⁶ *CAH IV*² 32.

⁵⁵⁷ Gadd (1958) 76-77.

⁵⁵⁸ *Persika*, Frag. 8d (Nicolas of Damascus, FGrH 90 F66) §§10, 32.

⁵⁵⁹ *Persika*, Frag. 5 (Diodorus, 2.32.4).

⁵⁶⁰ *ABC* 7.ii §2.

Another unique explanation offered by Herodotos is that the events were orchestrated by the general Harpagos in revenge against Astyages, who had served up Harpagos' son to him in a stew (I.119; 124; 129). Such palpably folkloric tales contained in *The Histories* are troubling for anyone attempting to reconstruct Median history and customs and it is difficult to know how to treat the author's information, particularly when he claims that his sources for the history of Cyrus II are Persian (I.95). David Asheri observed that Herodotos' informants were probably aware that their oral traditions were being recorded in writing and that their decision "to entrust their oral heritage to the written page was sometimes an act of acculturation, which in itself may have influenced the form and content of their testimonies".⁵⁶¹ Herodotos' material might have been already embedded in solid tradition before he received it. Bearing this in mind, perhaps the thesis advocated by Peyton R. Helm in relation to understanding Herodotos' *Mêdikos Logos* (I.96-106) provides the best method of approach: he argued that it was based on an Achaemenid saga that brought together various unrelated, heroic and historical figures of the Zagros, and that over the course of the transmission of this oral epic the individual tales were conflated into a history of the line of early Median kings.⁵⁶² This thesis would certainly help to explain the total absence of evidence for a Median state prior to the mid-seventh century BC: if Helm is correct, the Medes were simply one among a number of tribal groups in the Zagros, but who attained prominence in history because of their role in the denouement of Assyria and their military exploits in the aftermath. The positive portrayal of Cyrus and the emphasis on his fitness for the Median kingship in Herodotos, Ktesias and Xenophon, then, originated in oral epic in Persian-controlled Media and grew into the panegyrics of the Greek writers.⁵⁶³ This hypothesis has implications for what we read concerning Cyrus' strategy and use of religion and religious traditions at the outset of his career: Herodotos (and perhaps Ktesias too) would

⁵⁶¹ Asheri (2007) 16.

⁵⁶² Helm (1981). Brown (1988) 79ff. agreed that the *Mêdikos Logos* must have originated in oral epic, but noted that some aspects of the story are supported by cuneiform sources. He also argued that Herodotos must have woven a separate (probably Iranian) tradition into his chronicle: *ibid.* 83. He pointed out (*ibid.* 84) that the effort "to reconcile the Neo-Assyrian and Herodotean historical data has been based on the implicit assumption that both sources are concerned with the same Medes... The political developments in Ecbatana amongst 'the mighty Medes of the east' took place in an area, protected by a formidable mountain barrier [the Alvand chain, a sub-range of the Zagros], just to the east of Assyrian provincial and tributary territories and consequently do not figure in Neo-Assyrian sources of the late 8th and 7th centuries B.C. The search for synchronisms can be seen as an exercise in futility and neither of the two contrasting bodies of historical data reflect adversely on the other." For an assessment of the 'orality' of the *Logos*, see Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1994).

⁵⁶³ Waters (2010) 65.

be communicating the deliberate, propagandistic message of Cyrus' reign. According to these sources, Cyrus took care to present himself as the successor to the Median crown from the first. He participated in a coronation ritual in which he took Astyages' place on his throne and held his sceptre while being crowned, presumably by a magus, with the Persian upright tiara, the *kidaris*.⁵⁶⁴ Ktesias and Xenophon claim that Cyrus connected himself with the royal dynasty by marrying Astyages' daughter Amytis, which secured the transfer to him of the fealty of several clients loyal to Astyages' house.⁵⁶⁵ The Median rulers had formed a cultural, if not political, unity with the north-east that Cyrus must have been determined to retain.⁵⁶⁶ A sanctified union with the ruling house of Media, endowing Cyrus with the authority of a son-in-law and legitimate heir, may indeed provide an explanation for the apparent preservation of control of the eastern extent of Median possessions upon his succession, so evident in the peaceful entry of Cyrus into Anatolia. But, perhaps most telling in an appraisal of Cyrus' determination to ingratiate himself with the culture of his new subjects, he embraced the religious institution at the core of Median ideological life: the Median priesthood, the *magi*.

Fārs and Zoroastrianism

Mary Boyce argued that the religion of the early Persians and the Medes was the same as that of the ancient Avestan peoples in essentials, and that the western Iranians embraced the

⁵⁶⁴ *Hist.* I.129; *Persika*, Frag. 8d §45 (Nicolas of Damascus, FGrH 90 F66). Ktesias has the Persian general Oebaras carry out the crowning.

⁵⁶⁵ *Persika*, Frag. F9 §1-2 (Photius, p. 36a9-37a25); *Cyr.* VIII.5.19-20, 28. Herodotos claims Cyrus was married to Cassandane of the Achaemenid clan (II.1; III.2) but connected to the Median royal house through his mother, who was the daughter of the Median king Astyages (I.91). The reported response of the Delphic oracle to Croesus' second enquiry, in which Cyrus is referred to by the euphemism that he is a "mule" (i.e. of mixed ethnicity), could also reflect a tradition among the Greeks that Cyrus was of mixed parentage (I.55; I.91; Diod. Sic. IX.31.2).

⁵⁶⁶ Possible relationships between the north-east and Media prior to Persian rule were explored in detail by Vogelsang (1992). He suggested matrimonial links as the basis for the network which bore allegiance to the "Great King" residing at Ecbatana: *ibid.* 214-215. The right of local leaders to continue to govern their own principalities may have issued from the ruler here. It may be of significance in this regard that Cyrus maintained court for several months of the year at the Median royal residence in Ecbatana. But the importance of the connections and cultural assimilations between the north-east and Media were not simply territorial or economic. As Vogelsang, *ibid.* 306-307, pointed out, the impact of the Scythians/Sakas was evident already in the development of warfare (i.e. in the use of mass cavalry, trousers, weaponry) in Media and, through it, in Persia.

teachings of Zoroaster in the late seventh century BC.⁵⁶⁷ She based the latter interpretation on the theophoric names attested in Persian royal inscriptions and Greek authors:⁵⁶⁸ unfortunately, the original source of these names is King Darius, who is today widely believed to have revised the royal lineage to create a shared ancestry with Cyrus with the intention of bolstering the legitimacy of his kingship.⁵⁶⁹ A better support for the advent of Zoroastrianism may be the abandonment of indoor fire altars/temples in favour of outdoor worship. The ritual closure of the temple at the Median settlement at Nush-i Jan (located some seventy kilometres south of the capital, Ecbatana) may be connected with the abandonment of earlier Indo-Iranian religion and the coming of Zoroastrianism to eastern Iran. The filling-in of the temple and neighbouring buildings created a mud-brick terrace of over 1,250 square metres, which could have provided a platform for the open-air worship characteristic of Zoroastrianism. Unfortunately, no indication of the reason for this extraordinary immuring was left behind and the excavators of the site make it clear that it did not occur before the end of the seventh century BC.⁵⁷⁰ Furthermore, the presence of squatters

⁵⁶⁷ Boyce (1982) 14-40. She also hypothesised the existence of a priesthood called ‘magu’ among the Persians prior to Persian hegemony over Media and suggested their traditions were a barrier to the spread of Zoroastrianism in western Iran: *ibid.* 19-21.

⁵⁶⁸ Boyce (1982) 41.

⁵⁶⁹ Stronach (1997b) related the course of the debate. The suggestion of Waters (2004) that Cyrus was an Achaemenid by marriage rests upon the veracity of Cyrus’ marriage to Cassandane of the Achaemenid clan, attested only in Herodotos (*Hist.* II.1; III.2): see above, n. 565, for other traditions about Cyrus’ wife. There continues to be some support for the veracity of at least part of Darius’ inscription, e.g., Vallat (2011) 279: “Il veut par là démontrer, sinon prouver, qu’il est bien l’héritier légitime de la couronne car il est le petit-fils d’Arsamès, le roi de Perse détrôné par Cyrus. Et comme le fils de Cyrus, Cambyse II, est mort sans héritier, la couronne peut retourner à la branche aînée.”

⁵⁷⁰ Changes in layout occurred in the second half of the seventh century BC, so the fill must have begun afterwards, perhaps extending into early sixth century BC: Stronach and Roaf (2007) 217. The temple was constructed of mud-brick and mortar, mud-plastered and vaulted. It was shaped like a “stepped lozenge... the combination of a large cross with a superimposed smaller square” (*ibid.* 68) and measured 16m x 16m north-south and east-west. A wall was built around the fire altar, located in a bay northwest of the doorway into the sanctuary, in order to protect it before the temple was filled purely with pieces of shale up to a depth of six metres. The fill was crowned with a metre of mud and shale layers before being encased finally with courses of mud-brick (*ibid.* 88-89). The Central Temple received special treatment, as the rest of the buildings at Nush-i Jan were filled by courses of mud-brick only. Stronach and Roaf (2007) 171, n. 2, posited the possibility of a connection between the use of shale fill and the special character accorded to stone in the Zoroastrian religion as an insulator against impurity. However, the very fact that the other buildings were also immured almost completely indicates that these, too, had some religious function requiring ritual immobilisation –

indicates discontinuity of religious practices there.⁵⁷¹ Whatever the reason for the closure of the buildings, the archaeology contradicts Boyce's arguments for the early conversion of the eastern Medes to Zoroastrianism and acceptance of the faith in western Iran quickly afterward. The evidence at Nush-i Jan attests to Median usage of temporary fires within a temple context in the late seventh century BC, by which time Boyce believed the old religion and its practices to have been completely superseded by Zoroastrianism.⁵⁷² Zoroastrianism, then, may be thought highly unlikely to have been proselytised by eastern Medes in Persia in time to have secured the conversion of Cyrus II before the mid-sixth century BC. On the other hand, no indoor fire altars or fire temples have been uncovered in Anšan dating to this period, and the fact that the Persians built only outdoor fire altars following their conquest of Anatolia may be significant; there, of course, modest building of religious architecture could simply have been a choice in accordance with Cyrus' desire to ingratiate the new Persian administration into the local environment with as little provocation to native religion as possible. What can be said with certainty is that fire played an important part in Median religious ritual, and its use later at Pasargadae may indicate a shared religious heritage and probably the influence of the Median priesthood on the religious practices of Cyrus.

No site at Anšan (modern Tall-e-Malyān, Fārs: see map, page 94) securely dated to the first part of the first millennium has been uncovered and consequently we have no archaeological evidence of the religious traditions here when Cyrus came to power. However, Mark Garrison has identified an "Anzanite" glyptic among the seals impressed on the tablets of the PF archive. A small group of "heirloom seals" were retained and passed on to later

indeed, the so-called Old Western Building was contemporary with the Central Temple and probably a complementary religious building, judging by architectural similarities (when rotated 90 degrees and with the positions of the ramp and anteroom exchanged, the floor plan is remarkably alike to that of the Central Temple, including the position of an altar to the left of the doorway: *ibid.* 94, fig. 3.2) and the fact that it too was ritually closed (the altar was removed down to the lower part of the shaft, the doorway blocked, and the shaft, floor and lower doorway coated in white plaster. There may also have been another ritual to do with a thin deposit of ash containing animal bones and pottery sherds discovered in the room: *ibid.* 106). The ritual(s) here bore no hallmarks of Zoroastrianism. Alternatively, the settlement may have been abandoned for a different reason – perhaps a plan to build a more desirable or suitable settlement atop the terrace created by the buried buildings went awry (for the platform created by the fill, *ibid.* 176).

⁵⁷¹ Stronach and Roaf (2007) 177.

⁵⁷² Boyce (1982) 36-37 explained worship at Nush-i Jan as an "alien cult", perhaps for the foreign wife of a Median chieftain, but the theory does not account for the 'second temple' of the Old Western Building or the elaborate ritual closure of the whole site.

generations of royal and other elite persons for use in administrative contexts. One, PFS 1308, depicts a scene common in Assyro-Babylonian glyptic art of a figure worshipping with raised arms before a seated deity (probably female), but differing in religious content⁵⁷³ (Fig. 4.13). The deity (or possibly an idol) sits within a rectangular frame and holds a mace but the seal is otherwise devoid of symbolism. The pose of the worshipper, standing directly in front of the deity with both lower arms and hands raised, is highly unusual; in late Babylonian scenes the worshipper is usually shown raising only one arm and there is often a table or other object between the worshipper and the god. The two-handed gesture occurs in later PF seals and thus PFS 1308 constitutes a rare glimpse of ritual transmitted from Anšan and the period of worship prior to the reign of Cyrus.⁵⁷⁴

Cyrus abandoned the traditional highland capital of Anšan for a site about 40 km to the north-east, perhaps lands of his tribal ancestors, where he began to build an imposing new seat: the site at Pasargadae would have no historical Elamite connections, nor any pre-existing Median traditions. Here instead would be palpable the fusion of cultures, near and far, brought about by Cyrus, the beginning of which process was seen in the acculturation of the Persians and Elamites, and in the manner of the establishment of Cyrus' rule over the Medians. The religious precinct at Pasargadae is emblematic of this approach.⁵⁷⁵ The plinths were not made simply to elevate fire for devotional purposes but for sacrificial ceremonies now combining Indo-Iranian, Elamite and Median traits, respectively: outdoor worship before fire, the *šip* feast, and the form of the ceremonial structures. The only whole sculptural relief remaining from Pasargadae also attests to the mixture of Near Eastern influences embraced by this program. A life-size figure wearing an Elamite royal robe but crowned with the religious headdress of Egypt, with two pairs of outspread wings like those of Assyrian apotropaic genii, is depicted on the east jamb of the northern door entering the gatehouse complex (Fig. 4.14a and b). There is some debate about whether it was intended to be an apotropaic figure like those on the gate-complex orthostats examined already in these pages (Chapters 2 and 3): on the one hand, the figure is facing away from the entrance and anybody

⁵⁷³ Garrison (2011) 387-390 and figs 23-25. The seal was preserved and handed down to an elite individual in possession of a document from King Darius enabling him to claim rations for travel on the royal road on the king's orders (impressed on tablet PF 1385).

⁵⁷⁴ A large number of seal impressions from Elamite Haft Tepe depict a standing figure making a similar gesture with his hands upright from the elbows but often standing behind the seated deity. These date to the middle of the second millennium or early centuries of the second half of the second millennium BC: Negahban (1991) "Praying Scenes" 58-64, 100-101.

⁵⁷⁵ It is all the more striking, considering how strongly the rest of the design of Pasargadae was influenced by the Lydian and Ionian worlds: Stronach (1978) 20-23.

entering; on the other, its similarity to Neo-Assyrian reliefs of winged, guardian genii is undeniable. Above the image King Darius had carved the inscription: “I am Cyrus, an Achaemenian.”⁵⁷⁶ Rather than identifying it as a portrait of Cyrus, however, we should think of the figure as representing the concept of Persian kingship and, perhaps, a vision of Cyrus’ ecumenical ideology.⁵⁷⁷

The magi and Persian religion

In the same way as across the ancient Near East, Median kingship was bestowed by a supreme deity on to the incumbent; but, in this case, the earthly agents in charge of this process were a class of cult officials known as the magi. Herodotos uses the term ‘magi’ to describe a Median tribe (*Hist.* I.101) whose members interpreted dreams (I.107) and advised the king (I.120), and the term ‘magus’ for an official at sacrifices (I.132); to Persians the magus interpreted omens and advised the king accordingly.⁵⁷⁸ Cyrus’ success in tying the Medes and magi to himself and his heirs, and their importance in conferring legitimacy on the kingship through religion, is amply illustrated by the famous inscription of the later King Darius on the rock wall at Bisitun.⁵⁷⁹ Darius, supported by Persian noblemen, engaged in an uprising against Cyrus’ grandson Bardiya. After Bardiya’s death, Darius faced a major revolt in lands formerly loyal to Cyrus and in which Median factions figured prominently; he put about the story that the rebels were followers of a Median magus impersonating Bardiya.⁵⁸⁰ In addition to opposition from Media proper, Cyaxares’ heirs in Sagartia also participated in the uprising. That Darius nevertheless retained Median associates, singling them out from among his subjects for the responsibilities and rewards of satrapal governorship, and maintained the services of the magi at court bespeaks the irrevocable integration of their political and religious influence into Persian ideological life. The events suggest, too, that the Medes and magi had formed factions, one adhering to the western Iranian religious traditions and politics of Cyrus, and the other supporting Darius and the eastern religion he embraced: Zoroastrianism. Darius’ inscription is replete with references to his protector god Auramazdā

⁵⁷⁶ CMA: Schaudig (2001) 57-559; Stronach (1997b) 326-327.

⁵⁷⁷ Root (1979) 300-303.

⁵⁷⁸ *Persika*, Frag. 13 §14 (Photius, p. 37a26-40a5).

⁵⁷⁹ Kuhrt (2007) 141-157, 5.1 and notes on the evasions of Darius’ inscription.

⁵⁸⁰ Cf. the ingenious suggestion of Kreyenbroek (2010) 106 that the entire Bardiya/Gaumata episode was a fabrication making use of the western Iranian belief that a liar is *ipso facto* a follower of evil.

and there is a telling boast about his restoration of the *ayadana* (places of worship, perhaps Zoroastrian fire temples)⁵⁸¹ destroyed by Cyrus' grandson "the magus" (I §14).

The tomb of Cyrus at Pasargadae (also called the Gabr-i Madar-i Sulaiman, 'Tomb of the Mother of Solomon') and the funerary rites and sacrifices performed by the magi in the surrounding sanctuary there are the best surviving evidence of the religious practices of the king and deserve thorough treatment here⁵⁸² (Fig. 4.15a). The tomb was prepared in advance of Cyrus' death in the city he founded. It was built of stone, freestanding above ground,⁵⁸³ in the form of a six-tiered ziggurat topped by a small, gabled sepulchral chamber with a narrow door. While the substructure strongly reflected Elamite tradition, the tomb chamber may have been modelled on Lydian precursors.⁵⁸⁴ The employment of Lydian masons and their traditions emphasised Cyrus' power and far-reaching, imperial realm, and the composite character of the building was apparently an expression of his inclusive ideology. The tomb was embellished by only one carving on the pediment above the door: a raised disc some 49 cm in diameter with two dozen alternately large and small triangular 'rays' around its circumference. The surface of the disc sported two concentric rosettes of 12 and 24 'petals' around a small central circle⁵⁸⁵ (Fig. 4.15b). The symbol has been interpreted variously, most often as a flower or a sun, but its composition bears no resemblance to any earlier one that we know of, nor does it appear later in Zoroastrian iconography.⁵⁸⁶ However, the single, 12-petalled rosette is known from another context at Pasargadae contemporary with Cyrus,

⁵⁸¹ The Old Persian *ayadana* is a hapax, so its precise meaning here is uncertain. The equivalent word in the Babylonian version of this inscription text means 'sanctuaries' or 'temples'; in the Elamite version *ziyan* is used, which translates as 'temple': see Henkelman (2006) 469-473, Appendix 3.

⁵⁸² See Stronach (1978) 24-43 for the archaeological report on the tomb.

⁵⁸³ The tomb of Cambyses has not been located but was probably also above ground, judging by the allocation of commodities for sacrificial purposes (see below, n. 601). From the time of Darius Persian kings were buried in tombs cut into the cliff-face at Naqš-i-Rustam.

⁵⁸⁴ Stronach (1997a) 41-42; Stronach (1978) 40-42. The "cyma reversa" molding on the tomb of Cyrus shows that its masons were schooled in the same Lydian traditions as the builders of the monumental royal tumulus tomb known as the 'Tomb of Alyattes' at Bin Tepe, north of Sardis. The proportions of both burial chambers are very similar and both feature "protective lips" on the tops of the walls: Ratté (2011) 65-66.

⁵⁸⁵ Stronach (1971) reconstructed the moulding from the extant remains.

⁵⁸⁶ Soudavar (2010) 118-119 likened the emblem to a combined lotus and sunflower, symbols of the aquatic deity Apam Napāt and solar deity Mithra, respectively, of Median times. The combination appears on silver vessels found in the Kalmākareh grotto hoard, Lorestān, most of which bear a Neo-Elamite cuneiform inscription and are dated to the seventh-sixth centuries BC: Soudavar (2003) 85-86 and fig. 83.

namely the limestone ornamentation of the double door-leaves of the mysterious Zendan-i Sulaiman ('Prison of Solomon').⁵⁸⁷ A square, buttressed stone tower of nearly 14 metres in height, situated in the palace area, it stood on a triple-stepped plinth, from which a staircase led up to the double doors of the only room of the building. This was rectangular in shape and apparently undecorated, apart from a narrow convex cornice very like the one inside the tomb of Cyrus.⁵⁸⁸ Otherwise, the Zendan was solid; all twenty windows of the façade were blind. Its function is completely unknown. The building has only one parallel, the Ka'ba-ye Zardošt (Cube of Zoroaster) at the sanctuary of Naqš-e Rostam, dating to the period of Darius;⁵⁸⁹ this was the burial place of later Persian kings and so both towers may be presumed to have been connected with funerary practices. The possibility remains that the symbol on Cyrus' tomb had some western Iranian significance: one plausible suggestion is that the double rosette was symbolic of Mithra, a deity identified with the rays of the sun and worshipped independently of Zoroastrianism;⁵⁹⁰ another, given the long Near Eastern association of the rosette symbol with Innana/Ištar, is that they were connected to her Persian incarnation, the goddess Anāhitā (for Cyrus and the worship of a goddess, see Chapter 5). That the rosette had some particular connection with Cyrus can be seen by its appearance on the robe of the winged figure at the Pasargadae gatehouse, discussed above. For the contents of Cyrus' tomb chamber we must rely on the account of Arrian's source Aristobulus (*Arr. Anab.* VI.29.5-6). The king was laid in a gold casket. Beside this was a couch with feet of gold and a table with cups. Strabo (*Geog.* 15.3.7) adds that Aristobulus mentioned also garments and ornaments set with precious stones. Quintus Curtius states that the grave goods consisted solely of the king's weapons (X.i.31-32), notably his *akinakēs*, the Persian short sword.

To many scholars, the most striking thing about Cyrus' tomb is its very existence. Herodotos was aware that the magi practiced excarnation, i.e. exposure of the dead body before

⁵⁸⁷ Otherwise rosettes of similar form existed only in Ionia. Samian examples are particularly close: Nylander (1970) 140-141.

⁵⁸⁸ Stronach (1978) 134; Stronach (1964) 26 and fig. 1.

⁵⁸⁹ See Stronach (1978) 130-132 for a comparison of the two buildings.

⁵⁹⁰ Duchesne-Guillemin (1974) 17 and Planche III, Fig. 6, suggested the rosette should be compared with the partial lotus sculpted beneath the figure of Mithras in a Sassanian investiture scene at Taq-e Bostān in western Iran. The carving has a double ring of petals around a central, striped circle. See also above, n. 586, for the identification of a combined sunflower and lotus emblem as that of the Median deities Mithrā and Apam-Napāt. However, there are also dissimilarities (particularly in shape and number of petals) that cast doubt on the conclusion that the rosette on Cyrus' tomb is a symbol of Mithra.

internment of skeletal remains.⁵⁹¹ If Cyrus followed the Zoroastrian faith, as later Persian (Achaemenid) kings known to Herodotos did, then he would not have had the tomb built but instead instructed that his body be left exposed under the sun, which was thought to create a path of light for the soul's ascent to the afterlife.⁵⁹² It may be noted that in Arrian's account of the violation of Cyrus' tomb the body (σῶμα) of the king had been discarded, rather than the bones (ὀστέα); Alexander ordered that the body be returned to its sarcophagus (Arr. *Anab.* VI.29.9-10). The description implies that the king's remains were embalmed. It can be inferred, then, that Cyrus adhered to a different tradition. If the Zoroastrian custom of excarnation had penetrated west by this time, we have no evidence of it: on the contrary, cemeteries disclose the Median practice of inhumation of the deceased with grave goods (which for men included weapons) under a mound covered by stone slabs.⁵⁹³ Boyce characterised Cyrus' tomb as a compromise between Median and Zoroastrian conventions: Cyrus' body was embalmed and entombed to permit the traditional Median rituals accorded to deceased kings, but in such a way that the corpse could not "pollute the elements", a chief concern of Zoroastrian purity laws. The stone of which the tomb was built and the height of the sepulchre from the ground isolated the body.⁵⁹⁴ Even after death, the heroic or valorous spirit of the king, the protective *fravašis*, could be invoked, and his *farnah*, the divine power given by the gods to the legitimate ruling dynasty, could continue to bless the people.⁵⁹⁵ However, this rationalisation did not address the principal aim of Zoroastrian excarnation, namely exposure of the body to the sun. Moreover, it is by no means certain that the teachings of the eastern Iranian prophet Zarathuštra (or Zoroaster from the Greek) had yet reached western Iran and been accepted by Median magi there, much less that Cyrus was a devotee of Auramazdā before his death in 530 BC. It is interesting to recall here the evolution of Elamite practice for elite burial: in the Middle Elamite period at Čoḡā Zanbīl the deceased was laid on a raised platform of baked brick without burial goods of note but in a substantial underground tomb;⁵⁹⁶ by the time of the Arjan burial (discussed above) the body

⁵⁹¹ I.140. Strabo, too, contrasted the custom of the magi, who left their dead unburied, with those of the Persians, who smeared the dead with wax before interring them: *Geog.* XV.3.20.

⁵⁹² Boyce (1975) 113-114, 325.

⁵⁹³ Boyce (1975) 109; (1982) 25-26.

⁵⁹⁴ Boyce (1982) 56.

⁵⁹⁵ Boyce (1975) 42, 118; (1982) 55-56.

⁵⁹⁶ Ghirshman (1968) 67 and plate XLIII. But note that beside the elite individual on the funerary bed were found the cremated remains of a woman and a man (judging by the remnants of items sifted from the ashes: jewellery from the first and the handle of an inlaid dagger from the other). The skeleton does not appear to have been moved to make room for the other deceased on the funerary bed, but it is not absolutely clear that the cremated individuals were contemporaneous with the skeletal remains.

was placed in a (bronze) coffin within a stone chamber and the deceased had a ceremonial dagger beside him. We have also come across an example of the Elamite royal practice of venerating ancestral bones (see above, n. 416). In this light, Xenophon's story of Cyrus' death-bed request to be committed to the earth is also best rejected as unlikely, fitting none of the regional customs for the deaths of elite individuals (*Cyr.* VIII.7.25).⁵⁹⁷ It seems more likely that the Pasargadae funerary arrangements were manifestations of acculturated Elamo-Persian and Median practices, arising from a state of affairs that was initiated and began to mature under the guiding hand of Cyrus. In fact, the very multiculturalism and polytheism of the nascent Persian empire discussed above speaks against the early acceptance of Zoroaster's teachings, which exalted Auramazdā as the only eternal god, while relegating selected other deities (the *ahuras*) to the position of his evocations and rejecting all others (the *daēvas*) as demonic, renouncing their worship.⁵⁹⁸ The evidence, particularly of the Persepolis Fortification texts, certainly does not uphold the contention that Auramazdā had yet achieved a position in the Persian pantheon analogous to that of Aššur in Assyria, Marduk in Babylonia, or Haldi in Urartu, or that veneration of non-*ahuras* had ceased to be supported.

Evidence of ritual connected with the tomb of Cyrus sheds further light on the matter. The park surrounding the tomb reportedly contained a small structure for the magi who were tasked with its guardianship. These priests were allocated daily rations of sheep, meal and wine, and each month a horse to sacrifice to Cyrus (*Arr. Anab.* VI.29.4-7; *Geog.* 15.III.7). Presumably these were offered in a funerary ritual for the king before being consumed by the magi; tradition would not have permitted their burning on a fire altar.⁵⁹⁹ Although these specific allocations are not attested in the Persepolis Fortification archive texts, we do have evidence of provisions allocated to the religious personnel referred to as "keepers of the *šumar* [funerary structure]", i.e. the magi or their servants, and goods dedicated to the *bašur*

Ghirshman noted that these are the only examples of cremation discovered in the course of the excavations at Susa and suggested the possibility that the individuals were foreigners married into the royal family and allowed the rites of their own culture: *ibid.* 73-74.

⁵⁹⁷ Xenophon does not explain why the request was ignored and makes no reference to excarnation.

⁵⁹⁸ Boyce (1975) 251; Boyce (1988) 24, citing *Yasna* 12. Cf. de Jong's (so far undeveloped) proposal that *daēva* worship was not equated with the worship of non-Zoroastrian gods: (2010) 87.

⁵⁹⁹ On Zoroastrian sacrifice, during which nothing of the animal is put into the sacrificial flame (excepting the omentum), see de Jong (1997) 357-362. On Indo-Iranian rituals for the recently departed soul, which included animal sacrifice, see Boyce (1975) 121-122. According to the Vedas, the sacred texts of the Indians (of the same descent as the Iranians), sacrifice of a horse ensured a spirit a place near the sun.

[offering table] of royal or noble Persians.⁶⁰⁰ Specifically, records exist of the allocation of sheep/goats for the *šumar* keepers of Cyrus' son and successor, Cambyses II, and a woman (probably his wife), and wine for the king's *bašur*.⁶⁰¹ Whether from a desire to honour the founder of the empire or to maintain the conventions of the ancestor cult, Cyrus' successors were committed to maintaining non-Zoroastrian traditions mediated by the magi. The continuity of early Persian religious customs is clear and the evidence shows the flexibility of early worshippers of Auramazdā, like King Darius.

The location of the sacrifices in the plantation or *partetaš* (whence comes our concept of 'paradise' gardens) in which the tomb of Cyrus was situated provide yet another insight into the acculturation of religious traditions in his time. The connection between the *partetaš* and funerary cult activity may have originated in the groves and grove-temples of Elam. A stela found in the temple of Inšušinak on the Susa acropolis describes the abundance of Elamite temples-of-the-grove at the close of the second millennium BC. It records the restoration of these by one king in twenty places in and around Susa.⁶⁰² Such a building programme may be understood as investment by the king to irrigate and improve the fertility of the land, but the activity was also significant ideologically, in that most of the temples were dedicated to the protector god of the king and symbolised divinely-sponsored royal might. It will be remembered that the Assyrian king Aššurbanipal made a point of recording that his soldiers entered the sacred groves of the Elamites before burning them, and then went on to mention his destruction of the royal tombs.⁶⁰³ Judging by a (lost) relief from Nineveh depicting it surrounded by trees, the ziggurat at Susa was apparently set in a grove too, supporting the contention of scholars that it was associated with the royal funerary cult⁶⁰⁴ (Fig. 4.16). In the post-Assyrian period an inscription attests to the continuity of religious activity in grove settings.⁶⁰⁵ It records that Elamite cult personnel were allocated cattle, sheep and goats

⁶⁰⁰ *Šumar* may refer to the funerary construction or locale, rather than the ceremony, while *bašur* may be a table for funerary offerings: Henkelman (2008) 287-288; 546-547.

⁶⁰¹ It had long been thought that Cambyses' body had been buried ignominiously and that he had been left without the tomb and royal cult accorded to Cyrus, but this is disproved by recently published epigraphic evidence. See the Elamite tablets from the Persepolis Fortification archive NN 2174 and PF 0302, translations in Henkelman (2008) 547.

⁶⁰² König (1965) 110-115, EKI 48; Grillot (1983) 4-6; 11; Henkelman (2008) 444.

⁶⁰³ For the inscription see André-Salvini (1992) 270-271.

⁶⁰⁴ For more on the drawing see Reade (1976) 101 and Taf. 24.2 and 25. On the association of groves with funerary cult see Grillot (1983) 11-12, n. 50; Vallat (1997) 111; Grillot-Susini (2001) 141, 143, 145.

⁶⁰⁵ Henkelman (2008) 448; for discussion and references see *ibid.* 445-449.

specifically for slaughter in the grove; obviously, the ceremony had august connections since it was sufficiently important to have been commemorated with an inscribed royal stela. The similarities to the sacrifices that seem to have taken place in the *partetaš* at Pasargadae for Cyrus are striking. The activities in paradises which became so intimately associated with Persian culture, then, began as a perpetuation of Elamite royal funerary practices in a setting which exemplified royal ideology. In the Achaemenid period the tradition was elaborated and the sacred garden could not only contain a sacred place, but even a shrine in order to conduct rituals.⁶⁰⁶

In tracing these possible formative influences on Cyrus' ideological views and on reviewing the physical evidence that remains at Pasargadae, a striking picture of the hybrid religious culture of the nascent Persian empire emerges. The agglomeration of religious traditions was evidently not merely a means of reconciling Elamite and Median peoples to Persian rule, but demonstrably also the way of life of the king. In the most personal of matters, namely the arrangements made in contemplation of his own death, he chose to weave together Persian, Elamite and Median traditions. How this inclusive ideology affected his conduct beyond Iranian borders is the subject of the next chapter.

⁶⁰⁶ Razmjou (2004) 109.

5.

RELIGION AND THE PERSIAN CONQUEST OF ANATOLIA

“What happened to the Aeolic and Ionian cities is perhaps more a matter of history, albeit our only source is again Herodotus.”

(CAH IV² 35)

The remark above by T. Cuyler Young, Jr, is representative of the longstanding dilemma of scholars concerning the Persian invasion of Anatolia. The important but flawed account given by Herodotos has provided the principal narrative for these events and is frequently accepted as authoritative, in view of its provenance and in lieu of much other evidence. However, Anatolian archaeology is beginning to catch up with the historian from Halikarnassos; the time is ripe for recent findings to be collected together with literary sources to look anew at the years of the Persian conquest. In the process, we will deepen our understanding of the place of religion in the campaign and early imperial strategy of Cyrus the Great.

Urartu (Cappadocia)

For many years the damaged ‘Nabonidus Chronicle’ of Babylonia was restored to provide a secure date for the Persian conflict with Lydia, i.e. 547/546 BC. The relevant passages read:

“[15] In the month Nisan Cyrus (II), king of Parsu, mustered his army and

- [16] crossed the Tigris below Arbail. In the month Iyyar [he marched] to *Ly[dia]*.
- [17] He defeated its king, took its possessions, (and) stationed his own garrison (there) [...]
- [18] Afterwards the king and his garrison was in it ([...])”⁶⁰⁷

However, a recent collation has determined that the missing name should be reinstated “U[rartu]”, rather than “Ly[dia]”.⁶⁰⁸ According to the old reading, Cyrus crossed the Tigris below Arbela (modern Erbil, Iraqi Kurdistan), apparently without having to attack Median possessions between central western Iran and western Anatolia. This supported the idea that these territories were indeed allied to a Median master: put simply, once King Astyages fell to Cyrus, so did all his dominions. Herodotos, too, contributed to this belief by stating that Cyrus was able to levy troops along the route of his march to Pteria (I.76), where he engaged promptly with Croesus’ forces. The new reading of the Chronicle alters this picture somewhat. Far from simply making a proactive tour of former Median possessions to confirm their fealty, or because somehow the expansionist plans of the Lydian king had become known to him, or the less likely case that Cyrus desired to conquer Lydia before Babylonia, we must consider another motivation for Cyrus’ Anatolian campaign. It seems possible that the Median client kingdoms in Anatolia revolted and Cyrus was forced north to subdue them. Such a case would indeed put a dent in the popular view (based primarily on the close integration of Median and Persian peoples in later times) that Cyrus’ accession to the Median kingdom was relatively smooth. A late source, Justinus (I.7 §2), claimed that this was the case but archaeologically such a campaign is difficult to prove. It has been suggested that an Urartian site in Iran, Agrab Tepe, may have been destroyed in the mid-sixth century BC, along with some other Iron Age Iranian sites, in the turmoil surrounding the accession of the Persians to Median territories.⁶⁰⁹ If true, the events would have provided the stimulus for Cyrus to employ whatever unifying resource was available to him to help consolidate his rule. Like other emergent imperial leaders before him, religion would seem to have been the answer.

Evidence relating to Cyrus’ approach to religious matters at this time is equally scarce but there may be a mark of Cyrus’ policy during this early part of his campaign in Asia Minor, one providing important clues to his personal religion. According to a tradition recorded by

⁶⁰⁷ ABC 107-108, Nabonidus Chronicle 7.ii.15-18. Grayson discussed the problem of the restoration of ‘Lydia’ in *ibid.* 282, Addenda et Corrigenda.

⁶⁰⁸ By J. Oelsner, reported by Peter W. Haider in Eder and Renger (2007) 89.

⁶⁰⁹ Muscarella (1973) 75.

Strabo (*Geog.* 11.8.4-5), a sanctuary of Anaïtis and other Persian deities was established at Zela (modern Zile) in the Black Sea region, the antecedent of the later Persian temple there. It is described as an artificial mound encircled by a wall. An open-air, elevated site would certainly fit with the Persian custom of worship of the elements. In one account of the festival inaugurated at the time, it is said to have been consecrated by Cyrus “to the goddess of his fathers” (11.8.5).

Earlier, in Chapter 4, we noted an “heirloom” seal depicting goddess-worship in Anšan; a rock carving at Sar-e Pol-e Zohāb illustrating the tradition of Ištar-worship in Elam; and the longstanding cult of the (looted) goddess Nana(ya) at Susa. Ištar and Nana were both Babylonian goddesses associated with the planet Venus and were fixtures of the Elamite pantheon a thousand years before the time of Cyrus. Worship of Nana continued to occur in her temple at Susa after Aššurbanipal retrieved the long-lost cult statue, and her cult there became syncretised with that of Persian Anāhitā, although it is not certain precisely how early this occurred.⁶¹⁰ Boyce suggested that the ancient Iranian goddess of Venus, Anāhiti, was identified with her popular Near Eastern counterpart, Innana/Ištar. Anāhiti, “the Pure One”, was easily conflated with the ancient Indo-Iranian goddess of the mythical river, source of waters and thus goddess of fertility and procreation, traditionally invoked with the epithet *anāhita* (“pure”).⁶¹¹ Assimilation of this foreign cult resulted from the respect the magi accorded to the ancient learning of Babylonian and Assyrian priests; Herodotos alludes to the acculturation of an Assyrian/Arabian goddess into the Persian pantheon (I.131).⁶¹² But the Persian goddess retained the martial aspects of the Ištar cult, which must have been useful to Cyrus and subsequent kings: in Mesopotamia Ištar was goddess of love and war.⁶¹³ It will be remembered that the rosette was the symbol of Ištar and that this design was the only decoration on the tomb of Cyrus (Chapter 4). The antique investiture ceremony of the Achaemenid kings described by Plutarch provides further support to the hypothesis that the

⁶¹⁰ Aelian mentions tame lions at a shrine of Anaïtis in Elam: *NA* XII.23. In later times the connection between Nana and Anāhitā extended to the latter’s identification with Artemis: the temple of Nanai in which Antiochus IV Epiphanes was mortally wounded/died was also known as a temple of Artemis (*I Macc.* 6:1-4; *2 Macc.* 1:13-16; Polyb. XXXI.9). The syncretised goddess Artemis Nanaia appeared at Susa and elsewhere in the Hellenistic and Parthian periods: see Azarpay (1981) 135-139.

⁶¹¹ Boyce (1982) 202.

⁶¹² Boyce (1982) 29, 33. Clearly, Herodotos’ source was Zoroastrian, for whom Anāhitā was a recent addition to the pantheon, rather than an adherent of the Old Iranian religion. Interestingly, he does not equate the goddess with Artemis, but with Aphrodite.

⁶¹³ *BNP* “Ishtar”.

first monarch, Cyrus, worshipped the goddess.⁶¹⁴ For the sake of legitimacy, Artaxerxes had to travel to Pasargadae, home of the founder of the empire, where he donned a robe that belonged to Cyrus before he became king, ate a cake of figs and some terebinth fruit/nuts,⁶¹⁵ and drank a cup of sour milk. This rite of investiture was performed under the direction of Persian priests within the temple of “a warlike goddess whom one might conjecture to be Athena”, whom we may presume was Anāhitā.

The Zela sanctuary and festival, then, were in all likelihood devoted to Anāhitā, a Western Iranian goddess of whom Cyrus was a devotee. The temple was located some 118km north of Kerkenes Dağ, site of Cyrus’ battle with King Croesus (see further, below), and might conceivably have been a monument to victory over Median rebels or Lydian aggressors.⁶¹⁶ Tacitus records that Cyrus dedicated a shrine to “Persian Diana” at Hierocaesarea in Lydia, probably another offering to Anāhitā in gratitude for victory.⁶¹⁷ Pausanias observed that inside was an altar with ashes on it (of an unusual colour). A “magician” wearing a tiara recited an invocation in a foreign language and the flames ignited.⁶¹⁸ It is not difficult to recognise in this description the ancient Iranian ritual of tending the hearth and making offerings to the god of fire, Ātar.⁶¹⁹ At Sardis, which became the Persian regional capital, the cult of Anāhitā flourished into the Roman period.⁶²⁰ The establishment of sanctuaries for the god of the victor in a conquered territory was not an unusual practice in the ancient Near East or Anatolia, as we have seen, but is certainly indicative of a more aggressive religious stance than is ordinarily attributed to Cyrus.

⁶¹⁴ *Vit. Artax.* III.

⁶¹⁵ Not the wood of the tree, as many translations (including the Loeb Library version) have it. On the Persian association of terebinth-eating with the sober days of the early kings, see Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1995) 287-288, 292, 300 nn. 1-4.

⁶¹⁶ On other traditions concerning the sanctuary and its possible antiquity, see Saprykin (1989) 125-127.

⁶¹⁷ *Ann.* III.62. Boyce (1982) 201-202 suggested that this shrine was in fact established by Cyrus the Younger, when he was made satrap of Lydia.

⁶¹⁸ V.27.5-6. The language of the Median prayer was probably Avestan.

⁶¹⁹ Boyce (1982) 51.

⁶²⁰ Pausanias, in Roman times, witnessed the ritual as it had developed in Zoroastrian practice: the fire became a symbol of righteousness and was prayed over five times a day.

When Media lost its sovereignty to Persia, the treaty that kept Media and Lydia on opposite sides of the Halys River no longer subsisted. King Croesus of Lydia, now sovereign of all Anatolia except for Tabal, Lykia and Cilicia, determined to extend his empire and may even have had ambitions to expand his hegemony southeast towards the Tigris. Before proceeding, as discussed above in Chapter 3, he secured the support of the Greeks at his back through lavish gifts to temples of Apollo. The prophesy of the oracles of Amphiaraus and Delphi that “if Croesus attacked the Persians, he would destroy a great empire” (*Hist.* I.53) was evidently interpreted as supernatural encouragement, rather than a warning for the safety of his own realm.

It is not certain that Cyrus of Persia had decided to campaign beyond the Median client territories before Croesus’ aggressive advance across the Halys. There are, however, some indications that Cyrus had made overtures to win support among Croesus’ Ionian subjects through novel means: the infiltration of Persian religious ideas. The evidence for agents preparing the ground on the west side of the Halys is slight, but telling. The teachings of the Milesian philosophers Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes were influenced by Iranian cosmological beliefs. Thales shared an emphasis on the role of water in creation:⁶²¹ the divine force does not inhabit the element, but is the element itself. His principle that “all things are full of gods”⁶²² recalls the reverence of old Iranian religion for the natural world and we can recognize, too, its influence in Thales’ elimination of the “possibility of arbitrary intervention that is presupposed in the personalization of divinity”.⁶²³ A specifically old Iranian conception is found in Anaximander’s sequence of the heavenly bodies above earth as, firstly, the stars; second, the moon; and then the sun.⁶²⁴ This order was based on religious (not scientific) considerations of “gradations of fiery purity as one ascends from earth to heaven”.⁶²⁵ The stages of the soul’s journey to heaven – from earth to the ‘Beginningless

⁶²¹ Arist., *Metaph.* I.3.5; *Cael.* II.13.28-30. The belief was not current in Greek thought but was not unknown in the Near East, e.g. in the Babylonian story of creation from the primeval waters and in the Old Testament (Psalms 24:2 and 136:6): Kirk, Raven, and Schofield (1983) 92. It was Iranian religion, however, which developed veneration of water itself as a divinity.

⁶²² Arist., *De an.* A5, 411a7, translation and commentary in Kirk, Raven, and Schofield (1983) 95-98 §91.

⁶²³ West (1971) 213.

⁶²⁴ Burkert (1963) 104. The usual order in the ancient world was moon, sun, then stars: West (1971) 89, n. 1.

⁶²⁵ West (1971) 90.

Lights' where the deity resides – are the same in the Avesta; and its ultimate destination corresponds to Anaximander's indefinite divine entity.⁶²⁶ Rather than attributing divinity to an element as Thales did, Anaximander instead posited an indefinite, divine entity of boundless power (from which flame and air-mist emerged to create the heavens, while condensation from this process created the sea, whence the first living beings were born).⁶²⁷ Anaximander's philosophy, then, bore the hallmarks of Iranian cosmological and eschatological concepts, though perhaps not its cosmogony.⁶²⁸ His younger contemporary Anaximenes, however, propounded that everything came from a single element, including the divine,⁶²⁹ and named air as the creative force. Like his fellow Milesians, Anaximenes reflected the distinctively non-Greek religious views emerging in Ionia just prior to Cyrus' arrival.⁶³⁰ These pronounced changes to philosophical thought can only have been brought

⁶²⁶ Burkert (1963) 106-110; West (1971) 67-68, 89-90; Boyce (1975) 141 (on the derivation of the Pahlavi work *Bundahišn* ("Creation") from now-lost parts of the Avesta, see *ibid.* 130-131). On the correspondence to Anaximander's 'Boundless', see Burkert (1963) 110-112; West (1971) 91.

⁶²⁷ Arist., *Ph.* III.4.203b, Ps.-Plutarch, *Strom.* 2, and Aët. V.19.4, translations and commentaries in Kirk, Raven, and Schofield (1983) 115-117 §108; 131-133 §121; and 140-142 §133, respectively. Boyce (1982) 157 credited the influence of Zoroastrian monotheism for the philosophical development of a single divine entity, but this position is difficult to sustain in light of the different cosmogonies of Anaximander and Zoroaster. Moreover, Zoroaster's cosmogony was derived from ancient Iranian, polytheistic theories: Boyce (1975) 131-132.

⁶²⁸ Similarities between cosmogonies are too vague to prove any connection: see Burkert (1963) 123-127.

⁶²⁹ Arist., *Metaph.* I.3.8; Hippol., *Haer.* I 7.1, translations and commentaries in Kirk, Raven, and Schofield (1983) 144-151. But note West (1971) 99, according to whom Anaximenes' air was *imbued* with boundless divinity.

⁶³⁰ For details of the correspondences between the teachings of the Ionian philosophers and Iranian beliefs, see West (1971). Persian thought did take root in other places in Anatolia about this time, although evidently with less dramatic results than at Miletos. West cited Pherecydes of Syros, whose Cilician father may account for the Iranian elements of his philosophy (*ibid.* 213. According to Xenophon, *Cyr.* VII.4.1-2 and VIII.6.8, Cilicia retained its independence because of its willingness to send tribute and troops to Cyrus as required; perhaps this is why Herodotos [I.28] reports that the Cilicians [and Lykians] were never conquered); Pythagoras of Samos, in whose teachings traditional Greek religion was blended with Persian cosmology (West [1971] 217-218); and Parmenides, who espouses governing principles of light and dark which correspond closely to the dualism of Iranian beliefs, and whose father and teachers may have been among the Phokaian founders of Elea (*ibid.* 223-226). The Kolophonian philosopher Xenophanes wrote that all things had their genesis in earth and water: Xenophanes, Frs 27, 29, 30, 33. His theology displays an important parallel with Persian religion, namely belief in a single, non-anthropomorphic deity: Fr. 23. However, a backlash against

about by close exchanges with learned Near Eastern contemporaries who must have been Iranian philosophers, i.e. members of the Median priesthood, the magi. M. L. West identified the period of active Iranian influence in Greek thought beginning about 550 BC and its instigators as Median magi fleeing their homeland after the Persian annexation; Boyce, too, considered them to have been Median magi but, in accordance with her dating, Zoroastrian propagandists of Cyrus who were unwelcome in King Astyages' Media.⁶³¹ The ready submission of powerful Miletos to Cyrus' rule certainly suggests an influential pro-Persian presence there: it is possible that the magi had been proselytising at the instigation of the future Median king as part of a proactive, religion-based strategy to win allies beyond the Halys.

Nevertheless, Cyrus' direct approaches to Ionian cities prior to the conflict were rejected by all except Miletos, according to Herodotos (I.76), confirming the continued affinities of most of the Panionic League with Lydia. Diodoros tells the story that on arriving in Cappadocia Cyrus offered Croesus the satrapy of Lydia in exchange for acknowledgment of Persian dominion, but was rejected.⁶³² Herodotos relates that Croesus advanced eastward, devastated the region about Pteria, captured the city, and drove out the population.

The conquest of Anatolia

The remainder of this chapter traces the progress of Cyrus the Great across Anatolia, and the role of religion in that conquest and the establishment of his rule. We will follow the sequence of events described in Book I of Herodotos' *Histories*, which constitutes the earliest surviving written history of Persian military and political expansionism, and features informative "geo-ethnographic" digressions on the peoples encountered in the process,⁶³³ and compare empirical evidence of the conflict. First, however, a close look is warranted at a site whose end was contemporary with the Perso-Lydian conflict. As a consequence of its destruction and abandonment, it preserves a snapshot of the place of religion in mid-sixth

Persian teachings can be detected already about the end of the sixth century BC in a fragment of Heraclitus, who classes the magoi with practitioners of unsavoury mysteries: West (1971) 163, n. 3.

⁶³¹ West (1971) 239-241; Boyce (1982) 48. Boyce drew a parallel between the events in Ionia with the "Persian propagandists" who "succeeded in inspiring both Second Isaiah and the Babylonian priests with confidence in Cyrus": *ibid.* 47.

⁶³² Diod. Sic. IX.31.3.

⁶³³ Asheri (2007) 12.

century BC city life in Anatolia, and where the archaeology appears to confirm Herodotos' version of events: Kerkenes Dağ.

Phrygia

Kerkenes Dağ

At one time thought to have been a Median foundation, at another Phrygian, Kerkenes Dağ is increasingly identified with Pteria, where Herodotos records Persian and Lydian forces first clashed (I.76), chiefly on the strength of the city's destruction date in the mid-sixth century BC. The fortified city (located in the province of modern-day Yozgat) was evidently a capital of some regional importance; founded about 600 BC, its populace was probably Phrygian. The settlement was surrounded by a seven-kilometre, massive stone circuit with a steeply sloped defensive glacis, preserved today to a height of about five metres. Access was via one of seven towered gateways. As was noted above in Chapter 2, visitors (and, incidentally, Croesus' soldiers) entering the city through the Cappadocia Gate encountered at least two cultic installations: an aniconic stela, its top rubbed smooth by many passing hands, and a more imposing semi-iconic stela set atop a three-stepped monument (Fig. 5.1a-b). At the rear of the gate complex was a massive wooden façade housing double doors which the excavator hypothesised were akin to the false façades carved into the cliffs of the Phrygian highlands for ceremonial purposes.⁶³⁴ The doors opened into a court; in the north rear corner but turned 45 degrees to face the doorway, was a plinth with relief carvings that supported a statue.⁶³⁵ The fragments of the relief that remain resemble antithetical, couchant sphinxes, perhaps winged lions with scaled forelegs, and may have had apotropaic symbolism (Fig. 4.4c-d). The statue was probably also a beast, judging by the scales and feathers (?) on the extant shards; unfortunately, insufficient pieces have been preserved to be able to determine what was depicted or whether this installation was of a religious nature. The excellent preservation of the extant carvings, however, indicates that the monument was well cared for, most likely covered to protect it from the elements; by the time of the destruction of the Cappadocia

⁶³⁴ Summers and Summers (2012) in press. The possibility of façades was suggested to the excavator, Geoffrey Summers, by the discovery of architectural decoration in the form of bolsters carved with circles in relief in the walling of the entrance to the Palatial Complex. For the bolsters, see *Kerkenes News* 11 (2008) 5-7 and fig. 8.

⁶³⁵ See Summers and Summers (2012) in press, plates 3-6 and figs 9-11 (drawings by Ben Claasz Coockson).

Gate, this plinth and its statue were hidden from view by the construction of walls to create a new room.⁶³⁶

Through the Cappadocia Gate and further to the southwest was the Palatial Complex, also ringed by a substantial, stone wall with glacis. Inside, on either side of the passageway through the monumental entrance to the Audience Hall, were spacious platforms comprised of bands of silver granite, yellow sandstone and white limestone: these supported large, semi-iconic sandstone idols (see Fig. 5.2).⁶³⁷ The number may suggest worship of a pantheon, but could as easily represent a single deity repeatedly for emphatic purposes. Between the platforms great, double-leaved wooden doors were set into another timber façade; behind them were discovered sandstone statue fragments of a person in draped clothing holding a rod-shaped object over the shoulder, and of a lion.⁶³⁸ Over a metre in height, the figure is probably intended to represent a deity or ruler, but the gender of the individual is uncertain: while beardless, there are no feminine features on the torso. Statues of kings, it will be remembered from earlier discussion (Chapter 2), were not unusual in Neo-Hittite gate complexes, where apotropaic religious ceremonies occurred for the good of both the city and its ruler. However, a royal statue would be unique in the Phrygian corpus. Based on Anatolian parallels, the lion sculpture that was also located here, perhaps a portal lion or a statue base, could have been associated with either a male ruler or a female deity. The depiction of the figure's plain shirt and long, ribbed skirt is of little help, as such garments were worn in various permutations by both sexes, but Draycott observed a correspondence between the deliberate flare at the back of the figure's skirt with those worn by Hittite kings and goddesses, such as the deities carved into the rock at Yazılıkaya whose feet protrude from beneath their hems as they walk.⁶³⁹ The closest comparisons to the rod-handled object held by the Kerkenes figure, no doubt a symbol of authority, are also to be found in Hittite contexts.⁶⁴⁰ A relief carving on an orthostat from the Lion Gate complex at Arslantepe, Malatya, displays particular similarities to the Kerkenes statue, including hairstyle, androgynous torso, flared and ribbed skirt, and rod-handled object (an axe) held over the

⁶³⁶ Summers and Summers (2012) in press.

⁶³⁷ Summers in Draycott and Summers (2008) 5; Summers and Summers (2012) in press, plates 7 and 8.

⁶³⁸ Draycott in Draycott and Summers (2008) 10-21 and plates 12-26, 83b and 85-90; 21-23 and plates 27 and 91.

⁶³⁹ Draycott in Draycott and Summers (2008) 13.

⁶⁴⁰ Draycott in Draycott and Summers (2008) 15.

shoulder. In that case, the figure depicted is a goddess in a line of deities.⁶⁴¹ Whether male ruler or female goddess, the statue's violent end reveals something of the ideology of the invaders of Pteria. As the passageway paving was sloped, it appears that the statue was standing on one of the platforms to the side, and was thrown down with such force that it broke into many small pieces that scattered about the area. The entranceway was then set alight and parts of the broken statue were burned.

This is likely to have been the fate, too, of a plinth-shaped sculpted monument that bore a paleo-Phrygian inscription, as well as some architectural elements retrieved from this location.⁶⁴² The intense heat of the fire caused sections of the relief carvings and the moulding on which the inscription was carved to break off the monument and other parts to vitrify.⁶⁴³ Another item recovered from the destruction layer probably functioned as the capital of this decorated block: a slab of the same top measurements, whose corners were embellished with small cylindrical bolsters, and which had a recess cut into the centre to facilitate the insertion of the (lost) upper part of the monument, possibly a statue.⁶⁴⁴ The plinth was decorated with relief carvings that included a winged disc with an eight-petalled rosette in the centre and two figures opposing one another, of whom only one bare foot of each survives; around the edges of the block were inscriptions of the dedicator and a (broken) account of the deeds of two other men.⁶⁴⁵ Other extant fragments of the relief depict parts of griffins and lions, stylistically close to those of the Neo-Hittite kingdoms, and elaborated vegetal motifs, likely parts of a 'sacred tree' or 'tree of life', another popular Near Eastern sculptural motif.⁶⁴⁶ This monument, then, may be described as emulating the

⁶⁴¹ Orthostat from Arslantepe, Malatya, in the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations, Ankara, no. 12253, dated to the Neo-Hittite period. See also Hawkins (2000) V.12. MALATYA 11, 312 and pl. 151, noting his re-dating of the Lion Gate sculptures as early as the 11th or 10th centuries, based on the probable genealogy of the king whose name is inscribed here: *ibid.* V.6. MALATYA 5, 306.

⁶⁴² Summers in Draycott and Summers (2008) 5-6. Most pieces of the statue and fragments of the inscribed monument were discovered in the fill of pits made by robbers, perhaps in the Byzantine period. However, pieces found in the destruction layer of the entrance confirm that their ends were contemporary: Draycott in Draycott and Summers (2008) 8.

⁶⁴³ Draycott in Draycott and Summers (2008) 24.

⁶⁴⁴ Summers in Draycott and Summers (2008) 63-64. The bolsters appear to be imitations of the architectural bolsters found at the Monumental Entrance to the Palatial Complex, perhaps fallen from the capitals of wooden columns.

⁶⁴⁵ For the monument: Draycott in Draycott and Summers (2008) 24ff.; for the inscription: Brixhe in Draycott and Summers (2008) 71-75.

⁶⁴⁶ Draycott in Draycott and Summers (2008) 32-40; 43-46.

iconography and probably the ideological functionality of the Neo-Hittite/Luwian kingdoms, themselves a blend of Anatolian and Assyrian predecessors.

In both the Cappadocia Gate and the monumental entranceway to the Palatial Complex the cultic monuments faced outwards, recalling the deity/deities to those approaching and emphasising his/her/their apotropaic function. An exceptional aniconic stela associated with a hole (possibly for libations) lay behind a second wooden façade enclosing the rear section and was encountered by persons on the return journey from the Audience Hall into the gate complex; it was probably one of a pair, as the rest of the architectural elements of the gateway were symmetrically arranged.⁶⁴⁷ Set in a monumental context with a sculptural program doubtlessly approved by the reigning king, the religious aspects of the gate complex reflect the very same Anatolian ideology as has been expressed elsewhere in these pages. Stylistically and functionally, the semi-iconic stela of the Cappadocia Gate fits the tradition of stone representations of a deity/deities in neighbouring Phrygian territories, with one exception: it was erected on a built stepped monument, rather than one carved from natural rock.⁶⁴⁸ For a religious monument the stela seems to have been oddly positioned within the gate complex, at the rear and non-axially, against a face of the inner tower, so that someone approaching from outside the city would have had to turn a corner to see it and turn again in order to view it frontally. Yet, the stela or others like it in the Phrygian tradition was evidently well known by ordinary folk. Outside the city gate, in a corner of the glacis, graffiti depictions of several types of idol and stela have been discovered along with, possibly, scratchings of the first letter of the name of the Phrygian goddess, Matar.⁶⁴⁹ Given that the Cappadocia Gate was constructed approximately at the time the city was founded in the late seventh century BC, when Kerkenes Dağ could not have been part of a Phrygian state, the excavator has postulated that the presence of the stepped monument, stela and graffiti show either the Phrygian culture of the city or a “level of Phrygianisation... of some other perhaps more local deity”.⁶⁵⁰ On the other hand, the fragments of sculpture from the monumental entrance to the Palatial Complex show quite strong affinities with Neo-Hittite counterparts in southeastern Anatolia. Claude Brixhe pointed out that Tyana, about 225 kilometres south, also had paleo-Phrygian inscriptions but was Luwian, not Phrygian, territory.⁶⁵¹ If Kerkenes

⁶⁴⁷ Summers in Draycott and Summers (2008) 5.

⁶⁴⁸ Summers (2006) 650.

⁶⁴⁹ Summers (2006) 652; but dismissed by Berndt-Ersoz in her forthcoming study of the block. The graffiti here are quite different to those incised into the walls of Megaron 2 at Gordion in the Early Phrygian period, discussed in Chapter 3.

⁶⁵⁰ Summers (2006) 653.

⁶⁵¹ Brixhe in Draycott and Summers (2008) 71. The main population was Luwian-speaking.

Dağ was ever a Median stronghold, it is perfectly possible that the Medes were already practising a form of religious inclusiveness prior to the arrival of the Persians and that at least some of the row of idols in the approach to the Palatial Complex were non-Phrygian deities represented in the local idiom. It is to be hoped that the continuing work at Kerkenes Dağ will shed further light on its origins and the identity of its inhabitants.

The end of Kerkenes Dağ is shrouded in mystery. If the city's identification with Pteria can be regarded as secure, then by Herodotos' account (I.76) it was Croesus and the Lydian armies who attacked the countryside about this "Median" town, captured it, and brought about its fall. If the speculation above (*Urartu*) in relation to a Median revolt is accurate, then perhaps the Persian forces under Cyrus are responsible. There is little indication at the Cappadocia Gate that the city was taken by storm, apart from the fact of a fire. Burning timbers caused the collapse of the passage walls and at least two people were killed by falling stones. A woman was found in the drain on the left of the entrance passage, while another victim was discovered in the court.⁶⁵² Neither had any possessions and there was no sign of weaponry. It is possible that Lydian forces entered the city at another location not yet excavated. Within the city walls, however, geomagnetic imagery indicates that buildings were deliberately put to the torch, rather than destroyed by a fire spreading across the city.⁶⁵³ One recently excavated building bears this out: a large, two-roomed building, within the walls but not in an urban block and tentatively identified as a temple (it contained unusual star-shaped objects of possible cultic significance), was deliberately set alight during the final destruction of Kerkenes.⁶⁵⁴ Following the burning, the entire seven-kilometre circuit of city walls was toppled – an enterprise that must have involved a great deal of manpower – and Kerkenes Dağ was abandoned by both victims and victors.

The fate of Kerkenes Dağ is fortunate from our point of view, as it provides a snapshot of the use of religion in the public spaces of a Phrygian city at precisely the time of the Lydo-Persian conflict. The evidence at the Cappadocia Gate and Palatial Complex shows the persistence of the Anatolian traditions of divine protection of the city at its gates and the particular connection between the guardian deity and the ruler. It also allows us to glimpse the prevailing eastern influences in artistic (possibly religious) art (the Gate monument with winged disc and griffin relief work) while noting that native traditions continued to be observed prominently (the semi-iconic idols), and thus permits the inference of a degree of

⁶⁵² Summers and Summers (2009) 7; Summers, Summers, and Yöney (2010) 11.

⁶⁵³ Summers in Draycott and Summers (2008) 4, n. 14.

⁶⁵⁴ Branting, Tırpan, and Lehner (2010) 5.

acculturation among the Phrygian population. The example of Kerkenes Dağ may be taken as evidence that the usage of religion in a socio-political setting in the mid-sixth century BC was not greatly different to that of earlier times and Anatolian cities. Some signs remain, too, that religious objects and architecture may have been targets of particular attention during conquest (the smashed draped statue in the Palatial Complex gateway; the burned isolated cult building). However, again assuming the identification of Kerkenes Dağ with Pteria is accurate, the torching of the city may have come about for tactical rather than ideological reasons.

We can gather that Croesus' progress eastward was halted by the presence of the Persian armies in Cappadocia. In light of their imminent advance, the king acted to render the city indefensible and incapable of providing sufficient support to Cyrus' armies for any length of time, hoping to force the enemy to wait out the approaching winter at a location further eastward. In the event, the clash of the armies resulted in the retreat of Croesus and his outnumbered troops to Sardis. Herodotos attributes this partly also to Croesus' strategy to await reinforcements from his foreign allies (I.77). However, the Lydian king was not given time to regroup. Cyrus could not now stop at consolidating control of lands formerly loyal to Media; he pressed onward immediately, intending to force Lydia to submit before her friends could come to her aid.

Gordion

Herodotos' account would have us believe that Croesus fell back from Pteria immediately to Sardis, with Cyrus in hot pursuit. However, there was a major Lydian stronghold in between, the former Phrygian capital of Gordion, whose forces Cyrus would have been unlikely to leave unchecked at his back. The recent re-dating of destruction levels (see Chapter 3, n. 241) opens up the possibility that the Lydian and Persian armies clashed here before the siege of Sardis.

Beyond the walled citadel mound was an outer fortification system encompassing the lower town and mounds known as Kuştepe to the north-west and Küçük Höyük to the south-east. Excavations of the second of these mounds shows that it was given a fortress and bastion in the late seventh or early sixth centuries BC, which suffered a siege and was destroyed by fire in the 540s BC: the assault ramp built by Persian attackers on the southeast side, skeletons of soldiers within the building, and hundreds of bronze, mostly double-pronged arrows testify to

the siege that occurred here.⁶⁵⁵ At this time, the occupants of the fortress were using Lydian, rather than Phrygian, pottery, indicating Küçük Höyük housed a Lydian garrison.⁶⁵⁶ After the siege, the defensive installations were destroyed.⁶⁵⁷ Gordion appears to have capitulated once its outer fortifications were taken. The citadel shows no sign of destruction.

After the conquest

Archaeology shows that Gordion not only retained its economic functions in the aftermath of the Persian conquest but continued to grow and supported a number of elite individuals. While there are few signs of immediate change in the character of the site, styles of pottery, metalwork, and seal iconography show the presence of Persians and/or Persian-influenced local elites.⁶⁵⁸ One of the first groups of cremation burials at Gordion, beneath a tumulus dated between 540-530 BC (designated 'Tumulus A'), shows the adoption here of a custom also occurring elsewhere in the new Persian satrapy (administrative area) of Hellespontine Phrygia (e.g. at Üçpınar) of which Gordion was now a designated part. A wealthy female was cremated and conveyed by wagon to the burial site on the north-west cemetery ridge, where the hearse and horse harness fittings of iron and bronze were interred with her.⁶⁵⁹ The appearance of this kind of burial accompaniment shows that, very soon after Phrygia was conquered, acculturation of the old Indo-Iranian religious custom of horse and chariot burials (see further below, n. 699) had begun.

⁶⁵⁵ The excavators linked the events with the Persian conquest. Muscarella (2007) 87 pointed out that socketed trilobate arrowheads referred to by Dusinberre (2005) 13 are not particularly Persian, but of a type common in the Near East from the seventh century BC.

⁶⁵⁶ Sams (2005) 19.

⁶⁵⁷ For details on the excavations at Küçük Höyük, see <http://sites.museum.upenn.edu/gordion/history>.

⁶⁵⁸ Dusinberre (2005) 24-27. Towards the end of the century architectural changes show the Persianisation of Gordion more clearly. Of particular interest are two buildings of probable cultic function dated to about 500 BC, the so-called 'Painted House', featuring female processing figures on its walls, and the 'Mosaic Building', which may have been a fire temple. For more on the Painted House and comparisons with the painted tombs of Achaemenid-period northern Lykia, see Mellink (1980); (1998).

⁶⁵⁹ <http://sites.museum.upenn.edu/gordion/history/achaemenid>. In addition, many objects worked out of precious metals, including a silver mirror and gold jewellery, were offered. See further Kohler (1980) 68-69 and 84-88, figs 22-31.

About forty kilometres northwest of Gordion was the ‘high place’ sanctuary of Dümrek.⁶⁶⁰ Large quantities of ceramics found among the crudely-carved stepped altars attest to the use of the site for Phrygian open-air religious rituals from the Early Phrygian period. Classification of the pottery has shown that worshippers once came from as far away as Uludere, 150 kilometres to the west, and Boğazköy, double that distance to the east, but the site was used principally by the inhabitants of Gordion and its environs. The ceramics and the comparatively underdeveloped site, when viewed alongside Gordion’s monumental tombs and megarons, demonstrate no connection to public, elite religion, yet Dümrek appears to have been abandoned anyway after the change from Lydian to Persian rule.

In the period of Persian rule of Phrygia, local dynasts were rewarded for their co-operation with their new overlords. In much the same way as the Assyrians gifted prestigious items or objects of value to their clients in exchange for their services or as signifiers of their supposed strong relationship,⁶⁶¹ Persian kings also presented symbolic objects to their favoured subjects. The example of a silver amphora from a burial in Duvanlij, Sofia, whose handles are decorated intricately with the winged lion-headed griffin of the Persian homeland, was almost certainly a gift from the Persian king or his satrap to a Thracian nobleman⁶⁶² (Fig. 5.3). A similar gift, von Gall has posited, could have been given to the Phrygian nobleman buried in the so-called “Broken Lion Grave” at Yilan Taş, a rock-cut tomb decorated with massive flanking lions (Fig. 5.4). The individual interred here may have been honoured by the Persian king and chosen to have the lions represented on his gift reproduced on the façade of his burial monument. They are without wings or horns, but otherwise the Yilan Taş reliefs bear the major hallmarks of lions in Persian art as represented by the Duvanlij amphora, namely the style of muzzle ridges, facial hair depicted by a herringbone pattern, shoulder loops, and the feather-like depiction of fur on the breast. Diagnostic, too, is the turn of the heads to face outward.⁶⁶³

The parallels between Persian lion-griffins and the lions of Yilan Taş display the development of relationships between the new overlords and the Phrygian/Lydian elite. Clearly the choice of artistic motifs so strongly connected to the Persian court style and their

⁶⁶⁰ The following details are taken from Grave, Kealhofer, and Marsh (2005) 149-160.

⁶⁶¹ Such as the lion-headed cups mentioned in Chapter 3, n. 278, and below, *Samos*. See also the Assyrian antiquities gifted to the temple at Hansalu, northern Iran, linked to former rulers and deities: Dyson (1989) 120, 123.

⁶⁶² von Gall (1999).

⁶⁶³ An observation first made by Haspels (1971) 131-132.

incorporation into a traditional funerary context signifies voluntary amendment of religious norms in the wake of the foreign invasion. Yet the modifications to the depiction of the lion also point to some deference to the Phrygian style of lion sculpture. In Phrygian rock monuments only three or four representations remain for comparison⁶⁶⁴ but Yılan Taş is usually likened to the example on the nearby rock-cut tomb of Arslan Taş, dated to the mid-sixth century BC.⁶⁶⁵ Lions stand on their hind legs with a front paw resting on the entrance to the tomb chamber; there is a cub beneath each lion. The positioning of the lions is very similar to those flanking the goddess Matar in a niche in a façade at Arslankaya, providing the sole existing connection of lion imagery to the deity in the Iron Age.⁶⁶⁶ The presence of lions at Arslan Taş, then, may be connected to power and rulership over and above their link with the goddess in this period.

Lydia

Sardis

King Croesus was forced to take refuge in the citadel at Sardis. Cyrus required less than two weeks to break the siege, insufficient time for reinforcements to arrive from Croesus' allies (*Hist.* I.81, 86). Excavation of a section of massive stone and mudbrick defensive fortifications, built on the Hermus River plain well beyond the Acropolis and its suburbs, demonstrates the effectiveness of Persian siege tactics. In spite of the embankments of earth reinforcing the seventh-century walls on both east and west sides, its superstructure was destroyed and burnt, the mudbricks collapsing to bury the fortification.⁶⁶⁷ A city gate here, consisting of a trapezoidal court and narrow passage, was peppered with weapons and pottery of the mid-sixth century BC, confirming the date of the events.⁶⁶⁸ Houses built up against the fortification walls were burnt, with some people still inside, and the mudbrick uppers of the wall deliberately toppled to collapse on top of the debris, so that it could then

⁶⁶⁴ On the façade at Arslankaya (one large lion on the façade and two lions flanking the goddess Matar inside the niche); above two niches at Fındık (antithetical lions); on step monuments at Kalehisar/Karahisar (four eroded sculptures, possibly lions) and Dümrek (two eroded sculptures, possibly lions, flanking a 'throne').

⁶⁶⁵ Berndt-Ersöz (2006) 115. She put the date of the Yılan Taş tomb in the fifth century BC.

⁶⁶⁶ Berndt-Ersöz (2006) 153-154.

⁶⁶⁷ Ratté (2011) 11.

⁶⁶⁸ Ratté (2011) 11-12. Afterwards the gate was blocked by a casemate wall and destruction debris was piled up against them both.

be smoothed off to provide a base for rebuilding of the wall of what was to become a fortified Persian satrapal capital city.⁶⁶⁹ A number of literary accounts preserve the tradition that Sardis and/or its acropolis fell quickly. Herodotos (I.84) claimed that a Lydian soldier was seen clambering down an apparently inaccessible slope of the acropolis to retrieve a lost helmet; this was apparently the only part of the fortifications where King Meles had neglected to carry out the protective ritual of carrying around the sacred lion and thus the protective deity of the city could not be blamed for the resulting Persian victory. Other romanticised explanations also omit the effects of siege warfare but blame a betrayal – the way into the city and through the acropolis walls was revealed by a slave or Croesus' daughter⁶⁷⁰ – or trickery – threats to captives of the lower city or wooden images of Persians above the walls to panic the populace⁶⁷¹ – but archaeology shows that there was no obviously surreptitious approach or quick surrender. The Persians faced opposition all the way from the plains up to the acropolis. Excavation of an Archaic-period house on the north slopes destroyed by fire in the mid-sixth century BC turned up two arrowheads, a spearhead and a dagger in the debris.⁶⁷² The lack of evidence for the destruction of religious sites specifically is no doubt owing to the singular practices at Sardis in this period. The cultural tradition prevalent in Ionia in which the temple was the focus of civic identity was understood and manipulated by Lydian kings for the purposes of conquest but not yet practiced in the capital. Here, state formation was focused on the institution of kingship and the signifier of power and divine right was the monumental tumulus tomb.⁶⁷³ The tomb type and the technology was apparently restricted to the royal court until after the fall of Croesus.⁶⁷⁴ When the Persians invaded the city, religious buildings were not immediately identifiable and could not

⁶⁶⁹ Greenewalt and Rautman (1998) 471-474; Dusinberre (2003) 53 and n. 19; Ratté (2011) 11, n. 34 for publications of diagnostic materials dating the destruction to about 547 BC.

⁶⁷⁰ *Cyr.* VII.2.2-3; Parthenius, *Love Stories* 22, translation in Pedley (1972) 39, no. 118.

⁶⁷¹ *Persika*, Frag. 9 §4 (Photius); Zonaras, *Epitome historiarum* 3.23B, translation in Pedley (1972) 40, no. 123; *Persika*, Frag. 9c (Polyaenus, *Strat.*, 7.6.10).

⁶⁷² Greenewalt (2007) 375. Note his caution that instead of evidence of battle, these may have been hunting implements stored in the kitchen and the fire accidental.

⁶⁷³ Other manifestations of religion in combination with political institutions were inherited from the Anatolian tradition, such as ceremonial city gates and kingship rituals at this and other civic structures: see Chapter 2 and examples such as the apotropaic parade of a lion, symbol of Lydian kingship, around the city walls (*Hist.* I.84). On the massive, twenty-metre thick fortification wall and monumental gateway at Sardis, constructed sometime between 590 and its destruction in the Persian attack in 547 BC, and both partially reconstructed in the second half of the sixth century BC, see Ratté (2011) 108-112 and figs 199-212.

⁶⁷⁴ Ratté (2011) 64.

be singled out for particular treatment because, if they existed, they were small and made of mudbrick, with little ornamental stone.⁶⁷⁵ Ktesias' claim that Croesus fled to the temple of Apollo after Sardis was captured and was sealed inside it (whence he made three miraculous escapes, etc.) cannot have been the case, and was probably intended to explain Cyrus' merciful and unconventional treatment of this defeated ruler.⁶⁷⁶

After the conquest

Herodotos' claim that the Lydians were forced to carry out orders from Cyrus that "altered from that moment their whole way of life" (I.157) was no doubt an exaggeration but, however relieved the local population may have been that they were not to be forced into a choice between the old gods and those of the new earthly regime, actually the status quo no longer existed. The arrival of foreign garrisons and settlers and the concurrent introduction of Persian religion for the ruling echelon of society created ambiguities. The Lydian elite were invited to participate in the preferred religion of the king and court, made visible architecturally in a way not experienced under the Lydian kings (see discussion of tombs above and monuments below). Those who resisted the Persian drive for acculturation are unlikely to have experienced parity of treatment with Persian newcomers. Literary sources are conspicuously quiet on this, perhaps because of their own agenda when writing about Cyrus, but local elites apparently collaborated in order to maintain or improve their socioeconomic status and privileges. Some 200 pyramidal seals attest to the hybrid culture prevalent at Sardis, with many uses of the Lydian language but overwhelmingly Persian iconography, notably the horned griffin.⁶⁷⁷ The settings of the seals show that they were worn on the body, in rings or on chains, in a public display of the individual's choice. Dusinberre describes the so-called 'Graeco-Persian' seal style as:

"a newly composed and socially symbolic art of empire... a syncretic style, incorporating elements of iconography from the Persian tradition and from the Greek

⁶⁷⁵ Very few ornamental pieces of Archaic stone carving are known from Sardis. One marble fragment, possibly supporting an altar or table, is carved like a small Ionic pilaster capital: Ratté (2011) 15 and App. 1, no. A12 and figs 254 and 261. Some fragments of faceted wall base moldings may have marked divisions between lower and upper stone walls or between a stone socle and a mudbrick superstructure: Ratté (2011) 13-14 and App. 1, no. A1a-g, figs 217-231; no. A2, fig. 232; no. A3, fig. 233.

⁶⁷⁶ *Persika*, Frag. 9 §5 (Photius).

⁶⁷⁷ Mierse (1983) 105.

and Anatolian traditions to create a new stylistic mode of expression. It was a style in which one might choose to have artifacts made, thereby claiming adherence to... an ascribed identity.”⁶⁷⁸

As for the non-elite population, changes in pottery shapes show the emulation of the Persian use of expensive metal or glass vessels in new shapes for wine-drinking,⁶⁷⁹ but perhaps the strongest indicator of how comfortably acculturated the Lydian populace became is the fact that they never rose up against the Persian king, as the occasional satrap attempted to do.

After Persian rule had been established, a stepped altar of limestone masonry was erected in the Pactolus Valley, between the ridge of Mt Tmolus and the Sardian acropolis (Fig. 5.5); in late Classical or early Hellenistic times another altar was built over it and the spectacular Hellenistic temple of Artemis was constructed behind it.⁶⁸⁰ The recent discovery of Achaemenid bowls underneath the original altar allows a date of construction in the later sixth century BC.⁶⁸¹ It was a large, solid stepped platform, i.e. four steps above a foundation course, preserved today at 1.18 metres high, over eight metres wide north to south, and slightly longer running east to west (8.82 m).⁶⁸² The building technique and even the building material (calcareous tufa) are unlike earlier monuments at Sardis; the altar does not belong to the Lydian building tradition.⁶⁸³ No evidence survives of the kinds of ceremonies conducted here, but there is no indication that the deity worshipped was already Artemis. Indeed, Herodotos identified the Persian goddess with Aphrodite in his time (I.131). The altar was set west, facing the necropolis; once again, a Persian stepped structure associated with funerary practices. The role of fire at the altar cannot be ascertained. No marks indicating a fire holder or remains of a burnt surface survive because the top course of the structure was removed

⁶⁷⁸ Dusinberre (2003) 171. See her catalogue of seals apparently produced in Sardis: *ibid.* Appendix 4, 264-283. For a critique of the term ‘Graeco-Persian’, see Gates (2002).

⁶⁷⁹ Dusinberre (2003) 192.

⁶⁸⁰ On the recent archaeological investigations proving there were no antecedents at the Hellenistic temple of Artemis at Sardis, see Cahill (2011) 211.

⁶⁸¹ Greenewalt (2007) 372; Ratté (2011) 125.

⁶⁸² Only three steps survived the remodelling of the altar, but Frazer and Hanfmann (1975) 91 point out that setting marks on the third step show that a further course existed.

⁶⁸³ Ratté (2011) 124; *contra* Dusinberre (2003) 61-62, whose statement that the form of the altar is a traditional, local one seems to be based on the later, remodeled, altar. For a technical description, including differences to Sardian constructions such as the setting marks and clamps used, see Ratté, *ibid.*, App. 3.

when it was incorporated into the expanded altar, to facilitate the laying of a 145m² flat surface.⁶⁸⁴

The gradual assimilation of Persian religious practices with those of the local populace may help explain the renovation of the altar that took place in the fourth century or early Hellenistic period.⁶⁸⁵ The Archaic altar was not torn down, but was enclosed within a larger, rectangular construction with a set of steps on the west side. This occurrence may have been a precursor to the fusion of the identities of the goddesses Anāhitā and Artemis, soon reflected on the coins of Hierocaesarea showing the goddess wearing Greek costume but labelled ΠΕΡΣΙΚΗ.⁶⁸⁶ In form it resembled the impressive new altar before the temple of Samos' protective deity Hera, which was a colossal oblong with at least fourteen steps, and came to be emulated by Ionians aspiring to similar levels of civic success.⁶⁸⁷ The development of Greek cult and the sanctuary of Artemis around the altar displays a willingness to engage in syncretism, and comprise a striking example of the flexibility in religious matters for which Cyrus the Great, other Persian rulers, and governors would become renowned. Both freedom and finance existed for a syncretistic kind of public worship in the satrapal capital,⁶⁸⁸ and as language and other ethnic barriers fell during peacetime, the cultural climate presented only incentives for integration. The idea that animal sacrifice in the Greek manner took place here should not be rejected out of hand. Although holocaust offerings were considered a profanation of fire and had no part in Median or

⁶⁸⁴ Frazer and Hanfmann (1975) 97. NB. Mierse (1983) 52 pointed out that no signs of burning were discovered on the altar, but was examining the question of burning in the context of determining whether the altar itself was burnt in the Ionian revolt of 499 BC.

⁶⁸⁵ According to Brosius (1998) 227, it was the Greek cult of Artemis that became "persianised". In this location, at least, either the reverse was true or the merger reflected a joint endeavour: see above, n. 680.

⁶⁸⁶ See Imhoof-Blumer (1897) 5-22 and plate I; and Robert (1948) on the numismatics of the region. Note the objections of Brosius (1998) 230 to the idea that the goddesses were equated. According to her, the legend on the abovementioned coins was simply a Greek epithet to identify the place where the goddess was worshipped: *ibid.* 234-235.

⁶⁸⁷ Hoffmann (1953) 193. He suggested that the "Lydian building" at Sardis, now known to be the Altar of Artemis, may have been directly influenced by one of the architects of the Samian altar, Theodoros, who famously went to work for King Croesus of Lydia: *ibid.* 195. The oblong altar with seven steps to which Hoffmann referred is the second incarnation of the structure, too late for Theodoros – although perhaps not so late that he could not have influenced the next generation of Ionian architects. See Hoffmann (1953) on the possible Egyptian inspiration of the Samian and east Greek stepped altar form.

⁶⁸⁸ As Dusinberre (2003) 64 observed.

Persian religious practices, elsewhere in Anatolia there is some evidence that the religions did merge to involve somehow both animal sacrifice and fire – perhaps offerings made before fire, rather than consumed by it. A stela from the area of tumuli burials near Ergili, Daskyleion, depicts two priests standing before a (false?) tomb door holding bunches of sacred twigs (*barsom*)⁶⁸⁹ in their left hands, while their right hands are open in a gesture of adoration. Beside them in some sort of a container or peeping out of a vehicle are the heads of a bull and a ram, apparently sacrificial animals (Fig. 5.6).⁶⁹⁰ There is no fire altar visible in the surviving part of the relief but we may draw a comparison between the scene and the Taş Kule tomb discussed below (*Phokaia*): a similar Persian-Greek ritual may have taken place before the false door of the Taş Kule monument, which had a fire bowl incorporated into the stone above the door.

In size and appearance, the altar of Artemis is very similar to the so-called Pyramid Tomb, which consisted of a 7.5 metre square foundation with six stepped-in levels above – although it was not solid but of limestone ashlar blocks around a rubble core (Fig. 5.7a-b).⁶⁹¹ This structure was located on a ridge between the sanctuary of Artemis and the metal-refining sector Pactolus North and built in the second half of the sixth century BC. At the centre of the tomb at the fifth level is a pavement incised with setting lines indicating where a tomb chamber was positioned and two wall blocks, all that remain of the superstructure. It has been conjectured that the chamber resembled that of the tomb of Cyrus at Pasargadae and other Persian tombs.⁶⁹² The Pyramid Tomb is one of the earliest of a new, non-indigenous tomb type – freestanding mausolea – that would be quickly promulgated in western Anatolia. Another noteworthy example of this new style, perhaps the earliest, incorporating stepped platforms and an upper section, is that at Taş Kule (see *Phokaia*, below).

There is some physical evidence for the acceptance of Persian religious practices in Lydia. Prominent among these is the introduction of couches or benches in elite Lydian tombs of the Persian period (Fig. 5.8).⁶⁹³ As noted above (Chapter 4), it was a fundamental principle of the

⁶⁸⁹ Avestan *baresman*, touched to the meat by magi during ritual sacrifice and held as invocations are sung: de Jong (1997) 117, 139-140, 142-143.

⁶⁹⁰ For rites at false doors of tombs, see Cahill (1988) 495-498.

⁶⁹¹ See Ratté (2011) 94-99 for a detailed technical description.

⁶⁹² See Ratté (2011) 63-66 on Persian-period building in Sardis.

⁶⁹³ A number of examples of funerary couches in Lydian tombs survive. For example, at Bin Tepe, the Sardian necropolis, Tomb BT 62.4, dated to the late sixth or early fifth century BC: see catalogue entry in Ratté (2011) 77-80, no. 3. At Sardis: Tomb BK 71.1 and Tomb 77.1, both second half of the sixth century BC; and Tomb 82.1, third quarter of the sixth century BC: *ibid.* 86-88, no. 10 (here, Fig.

Iranian tradition to keep the body of the deceased from polluting the earth. The Lydian benches may have served to separate the two. Prior to Persian rule, such couches are not attested in Lydia. Alternatively, the provision of couches may have been, in the Lydian mind, a symposiastic extension of the objects already being provided.⁶⁹⁴ The Persian period also saw the introduction of the reclining banquet in association with mortuary practice. Cyrus' tomb contained a couch (for the coffin of the deceased), as well as a table and drinking cups.⁶⁹⁵ The evidence of tomb inclusions at Sardis (mostly drinking vessels and unguentaria)⁶⁹⁶ and preponderance of the scene on funerary stelai across Anatolia in this period show the popularity of the practice.⁶⁹⁷ At Kızılbel, near Elmalı, northern Lykia, a funerary banquet scene appears in the wall paintings of a tomb (equipped with a stone *kline* and table for drinking vessels) dated to around 525 BC.⁶⁹⁸ Another, particularly interesting, example of an acculturated burial at the Lydian cemetery at Bin Tepe featured a chariot and horses in the dromos of a tumulus; the practice is distinctly Indo-Iranian in origin.⁶⁹⁹ However, the evidence in this category is too thin to suggest that such distinctive Persian burial practices were prevalent in Lydia at this time.

In fact, many traditional-style tumulus tombs in Lydia were built after the fall of the kingdom. Dusinberre suggested that the preponderance of Lydian-style tumuli at Bin Tepe may indicate *Persian* co-opting of local traditions; equally, they might have represented an

5.8); 89-90, no. 11; 90-92, no. 12. Tomb 89.11, sixth to third centuries BC, has three limestone benches built into the walls without lower supports, but which must have served the same function as couches: *ibid.* 92-93, no. 13.

⁶⁹⁴ Dusinberre (2003) 135.

⁶⁹⁵ Arr. *Anab.* VI.29.4-11, and Strabo, *Geog.* XV.3.7, both citing accounts of Aristobulus.

⁶⁹⁶ Dusinberre (2003) 134.

⁶⁹⁷ Dusinberre (2003) 95. In fact, the advent of the Achaemenids had a palpable effect on all social strata, as changes in ceramics and diet attest. Achaemenid drinking bowls outnumber Lydian vessels in the earliest excavated ceramic assemblage, dating about fifty years after the conquest of Lydia. See further Dusinberre (2003) 29 and chapter 8.

⁶⁹⁸ Mellink (1998) 24-25, 59-60. The Assyrian painting technique employed as well as some of the subject matter (*ibid.* 63) may have been transferred through Uartian or Persian contacts. But note the caution of Briant (2002) 84 that the scenes could belong "to the local repertoire and do not presuppose Persian influence".

⁶⁹⁹ Dusinberre (2003) 141, citing Kökten, H., "Two Wheeled Vehicles from Lydia and Mysia", Papers read at the First International Symposium on Anatolia in the Achaemenid Period (Bandırma) (1997). On the horse as a sacrificial animal and chariot burials in funeral rituals of the Sintashta (east of the Ural mountains in the northern steppes) about 2100-1800 BC, and transmission of the practice to Indo-Iranian culture, see Anthony (2007) 371-375, 405-411, 455-457.

assertion of Lydian ethnicity.⁷⁰⁰ Observance of this burial and commemorative tradition was now permitted for those outside of royal circles and such was the liberty in terms of religious custom that there were rapid developments in formerly highly standardised chamber tomb ornamentation and incorporation of Persian elements. Examples include the aforementioned funerary couches, painted walls, and ornamentation of doorways.⁷⁰¹ Tumulus burials of the early Persian-period (late sixth and fifth centuries BC) from east Lydia near modern Güre also testify to the continuity of another tradition, the making of offerings in precious metals: over 300 such pieces of jewellery and vessels have come from only nine tombs there.⁷⁰² Clearly, the Persians were “generous conquerors, who allowed their Lydian subjects to continue to possess and display great wealth”.⁷⁰³ I would add that the continuity and development of the physical aspects of burial customs strongly implies that the Lydians were permitted to retain other religious traditions too.

Literary sources describe a Metroon built in the Classical period, illustrating the perpetuation and elaboration of the worship of the Sardian goddess Kybele.⁷⁰⁴ A marble slab carved with stylised rosettes in squares, apparently to resemble a carpet, has been identified as a possible threshold stone of the Metroon (Fig. 5.9). It has been pointed out that the motif is Assyrian in style and might well have transferred to Sardis via Persian intermediaries.⁷⁰⁵ The design is indeed very close to that carved on stone door sills from Neo-Assyrian royal buildings at Nineveh, but also appears on a seventh-century BC glazed brick from Bukān, Kordestān, Iran (compare Figs 5.10 and 5.11). If correctly identified as part of the threshold of the Metroon, the block would connote a Persian influence on the construction of a Lydian religious building. Like the enlargement and modification of the altar within the later Artemis precinct

⁷⁰⁰ Dusinberre (2003) 142.

⁷⁰¹ Ratté (2011) 64. He also noted the gradual disappearance of Lydian ashlar masonry craftsmanship. This may be partly to do with the existing absence of ashlar masonry in the building tradition of non-royal burials, but also perhaps because experienced masons were taken to Pasargadae, where their work can be detected in numerous places, but most interestingly on the molding inside the tomb of Cyrus: see Chapter 4.

⁷⁰² Kerschner (2008) 224.

⁷⁰³ Ratté (2011) 6.

⁷⁰⁴ Herodotos (*Hist.* V.102) mentions the burning of the Kybele sanctuary (ἱπὸν); Themistocles visited the replacement sanctuary “of the Mother”: *Vit. Them.* XXXI.1.

⁷⁰⁵ Ratté (2011) 14 and n. 48, App. 1 no. A4 and figs 234-238, citing an identification made by Crawford H. Greenewalt, Jr. The slab was found in a re-used context in the Roman synagogue at Sardis, along with other late sixth or fifth century BC ornamental architectural fragments and blocks, one with an inscription identifying it as coming from the sanctuary of the Mother: *ibid.* 13, n. 42.

in the manner of the Samian altar for the Greek goddess Hera (see above), the development would point to Persian and Greek acculturation in a sacred setting. Moreover, it can be demonstrated that the interpolation of this Near Eastern motif into Anatolian religious contexts took root and spread elsewhere in Persian Anatolia: the floor painting in the Archaic-period tomb chamber at Kızılbél, Lykia, shows traces on two slabs of a row of rosettes enclosed in squares and, nearby, quatrefoils arranged in a series.⁷⁰⁶ The intention was, apparently, to create the effect of a rug in front of the funeral *kline*, where the body of the deceased lay.

A rare example of Lydian religious sculpture dated to about the time of the Persian conquest may depict an actual religious building that was either left untouched in the fall of Sardis or built in the Persian period shortly afterwards (Fig. 5.12).⁷⁰⁷ The so-called “Cybele shrine” is a roughly 0.50m square block from a marble sculpture, perhaps intended as a votive offering to be placed in the building which it portrays.⁷⁰⁸ On the front side the goddess Kybele, flanked by vertical snakes, is shown standing in a columned building. The other faces of the sculpture are between the columns divided into panels. The sides show korai, komasts, and dancers processing toward the goddess and two lions looking toward her; the back illustrates mythological scenes. If the scenes on the rear of the shrine have been correctly identified, as a group they allude to the mythology of the Lydian royal dynasty and illustrate the close association of the deity with Mermnad rule. The placement of the goddess standing within a shrine-type frame occurs also at Miletos and is intriguing given the rivalry between King Croesus and the tyrant of that city (see discussion below).⁷⁰⁹ However, the eastern inspiration of the vertical registers covering the ‘temple walls’ should be noted. Stylistic similarities can

⁷⁰⁶ Mellink (1998) 39-40 and Fig. 3.1.

⁷⁰⁷ Found in a re-used context, Hanfmann in Hanfmann and Ramage (1978) 43 dated it to 540-530 BC based on its sculpture. He suggested that the sculptor was emulating an Alyattan or Croesan architectural example: *ibid.* 45. A second sculpture of a goddess with snakes in a columned shrine is simpler and may represent an earlier version of the Kybele temple, judging by the pre-Ionic columns: Hanfmann, *ibid.* 42-43, no. 6, and figs 16-19. Hanfmann dated it to about 560 BC. On the snake imagery that suggests proximity to the earth and chthonic functions of the goddess, see the discussion of another Ionian example, the goddess Hera at Perachora: Baumbach (2004) 43-44.

⁷⁰⁸ The following description of the sculpture is taken from Hanfmann’s catalogue of sculptural finds at Sardis in Hanfmann and Ramage (1978) 43-51, no. 7, and figs 20-50.

⁷⁰⁹ Naumann (1983) Kat. Nrs 37-39; but note that these are stelai, rather than sculptures in the round. Examples of stelai depicting the goddess standing in a shrine-shaped frame also come from Izmir, Konya, and Kastamonu.

be observed in Persian reliefs, such as the architectural setting and registers of figures in the doorway of the Hundred-Column Hall at Persepolis.

The observations above on post-conquest religious building works are all the more interesting because during the Persian period other kinds of building activities in Lydia were “modest”.⁷¹⁰ Religious building must have been not only permitted but encouraged by the administration; in this way, Cyrus directed his prosperous subjects away from other projects that could have stimulated nationalistic ambitions (such as fortifications, civic structures, and palatial architecture), simultaneously defusing potential revolts based on claims of religious wrongdoing.

The conversion of the altar of Kybele in the metal-refining precinct at Sardis into a fire altar structure is a rare example of the extinguishment of local cultic practice in favour of the Persian religion. As noted earlier (Chapter 3), the altar was hollow in the centre, with sandstone lion sculptures that identified the altar with the goddess Kybele placed at the corners of the cavity (Fig. 5.13). In Achaemenid times ash in the corners of the hollow was cut away for the placement of the lions inside. These were packed in with small schist chips, and one lion was apparently intentionally sliced into two, before the altar was filled in. The reason for the careful burying of the lion sculptures within the renovated altar escapes us today, but may have had some ritual significance related to the change of deity worshipped. It was then built upon, so that the rectangle was solid and raised in height by over half a metre. The level surface showed signs of burning commensurate with a fire altar and Persian practice. The treatment of this altar and its associated goddess contrasts strongly with the syncretistic use made of the Artemis altar described above. Regrettably, no related buildings have been discovered to provide further clues about the change in practice here. In all probability, the motivation was political, the Persians choosing to emphasise their control of the mint where the altar was located and extinguish associations with the Lydian ruling house. However, the action would not necessarily have been considered an exception to any policy of religious acculturation or integration, as this was essentially a non-religious facility.

⁷¹⁰ Ratté (2011) 11. For architectural and ornamental fragments of the sixth and early fifth centuries, from small structures, grave markers, votives, and small altars, see the survey and analysis in Ratté (2011) 13-16.

Aiolis and Ionia

On the fall of Sardis, the Greek cities sought the same terms under Cyrus as they had received from Croesus⁷¹¹ – but their offer of fealty was of too little sincerity, too late in the conflict. Cyrus demanded their unconditional surrender; the cities preferred to resist militarily, perhaps relying on their Panionic agreement, expecting support from Greek allies, or buoyed by the fact that the conqueror would soon return with a good part of his army to Ecbatana. Herodotos reports that the Ionians immediately began erecting defences and meeting together at the Panionion (I.141). In fact, the Archaic Panionic temple, located in the Mycale mountain ranges on modern Çatallar Tepe, had been destroyed in a fire only a few years previously; apparently in its stead, a place in the northeastern citadel of the hill was consecrated as a temporary measure.⁷¹²

No sooner had Cyrus set off than he was forced to send the Median general Mazares back to suppress a Lydian rebellion supported by the Greek cities. The leader of this rebellion, Pactyes, learning of the approach of Mazares, sought refuge in the Aiolian city of Kyme. His application under the Greek religious laws for sanctuary there caused consternation and division when Mazares arrived and demanded the rebel be delivered (*Hist.* I.157).⁷¹³ As the property of the god, the sanctuary and its contents were inviolable; suppliants within also came under the god's protection so that the priests were obliged to intercede for them, and any rejection of them was classed sacrilegious.⁷¹⁴ Kyme applied to the Apollan oracle at Branchidai-Didyma for advice. This was the same sanctuary patronised so liberally by Croesus, yet the oracle recommended against tradition that Pactyes be handed over. This is perhaps unsurprising given the sanctuary's proximity to Miletos with its pro-Persian

⁷¹¹ Herodotos I.141 says the request was made of Cyrus at Sardis, in the aftermath of the fall of Lydia. He rejected their belated allegiance with a metaphor about fish unwilling to dance to his music until caught. Diodorus IX.35 says the offer was put to General Harpagos, who responded with a story from his own experience about a tardy application for an alliance.

⁷¹² Lohmann, Kalaitzoglou, and Lüdorf (2010) 341.

⁷¹³ Herodotos does not say that Pactyes went to a sanctuary, but describes him with the term for a suppliant, *ικέρτης* (I.159), i.e. someone who has performed the rite of *hiketeia* "according to which the person in need of help sat down on the altar or at the image of the god holding a certain symbol identifying him as a suppliant... and thus had a claim to special treatment": Sinn (1993) 91.

⁷¹⁴ On the custom of refuge at Greek sanctuaries, see Sinn (1993), esp. 90-93. He was inclined to view the application to the oracle at Branchidai-Didyma as disingenuous, since there were really no two ways about the issue: Pactyes was entitled to be protected. Herodotos may have been of this view too, viz. his story of a divine voice admonishing the Kymaians for their impious enquiry: I.159.

leadership, and it may be surmised that the favourable terms accorded to that city by Cyrus extended to the sanctuary with which it was linked by a processional way. It is highly probable that the Apollan oracle was consulted by the Milesian leadership at the time of their surrender to Cyrus and that the Persian king had rewarded it, too, for its support by exempting it from damage during the Ionian conquest.

The question of the independence of Branchidai from the time of Croesus through to the Ionian revolt in the fifth century BC (when Miletos was destroyed) should be considered here. Ehrhardt refuted the possibility of a priestly family or association in charge of the affairs of the sanctuary in the Archaic epoch, demonstrating that the term 'Branchidai' in Herodotos referred to a town name rather than a group of persons.⁷¹⁵ The name may derive from the legendary Karian founder of the Didyma oracle, Branchos.⁷¹⁶ The sanctuary was connected to the city of Miletos by a 16-kilometre Sacred Way that was built or expanded about this time. A *lex sacra* of Branchidai-Didyma dating to the second half of the sixth century BC found on the Way is about which part of the sacrifice belonged to the priest, probably only one of many strictures issuing from Miletos regulating cultic activity at the sanctuary.⁷¹⁷ Processions such as that detailed in the Molpoi inscription (see Chapter 3, n. 355), which began at the city and involved its officials in the rites, notably leaving a sacred stone at the city gate and then another on arrival at the holy district at Branchidai-Didyma, testify to the close cultic connection between Miletos and the rural oracle.⁷¹⁸ In this manner the territory outside of the city was ritually incorporated into an area under the protection of the gods (not coincidentally) shared by both groups – Apollo and Artemis – and, from a political standpoint, marked out as Milesian. Ehrhardt cited the presence of Miletos elsewhere in the peninsula as one of the principal signs of the cultic reach of the city in the second half of the sixth century BC.⁷¹⁹ The construction of a monumental altar of Poseidon in the southwest at Tekağaç Burun (Cap Monodendri) is tangible evidence of Milesian control here; the architectural decoration of the altar shows strong parallels with Milesian buildings.⁷²⁰ Another parallel might be drawn with the extra-mural temple of Athena at Assesos, acknowledged by Herodotos as being so intimately connected with Miletos that its fate could influence political events (I.19-22). Even the Lydian king Croesus could not make

⁷¹⁵ Ehrhardt (1998) 13-16.

⁷¹⁶ Greaves (2002) 110.

⁷¹⁷ *SEG* XXX (1980) 1283 for the inscription; Ehrhardt (1998) 18 for its being Milesian.

⁷¹⁸ *Milet I.3* 277-284, no. 133. English translation in Gorman (2001) 176-186.

⁷¹⁹ Ehrhardt (1998) 17.

⁷²⁰ *Milet I.4* 455; Hoffmann (1953) 189 and pl. 55, fig. 1.

any inroads into the relationship with the sanctuary at Branchidai and developed Ephesos as a rival authority (see below); its oracle, Herodotos reports, the king did not trust (I.46-48). In sum, no evidence exists for any independent political institution on the peninsula in the Archaic period other than that of Miletos; the Branchidai oracle may have kept up the appearance of impartiality but it could not avoid forging ever-closer connections with its powerful neighbour.

The response of the oracle of Apollo to the Kymaians' predicament was so unlikely and its reputation was such that they applied a second time for advice, only to have the first pronouncement reaffirmed. Still the Kymaians could not bring themselves to invite disaster by breaching sacred custom, so they sent the rebel to Mytilene on the island of Lesbos. As the Persians had no navy, Pactyes ought to have been safe there. However, the Mytilenians were not bound by holy oath to protect Pactyes and were soon discovered to be negotiating his release to the Persians; the Kymaians, alarmed at being a party to this state of affairs, spirited the hostage away to another island, this time to Chios, whose confederates in the Panionic League were engaged in the rebellion. But the Chians betrayed their sworn allies. Pactyes was allegedly dragged from the sanctuary of Athena (*Hist.* I.160) and Mazares obtained the fugitive in exchange for rights over a tract on the mainland, Atarneus (on modern Kale Tepe). Another result of the resistance was that Cyrus ordered the replacement of the Kymaian constitution with a tyranny.⁷²¹ But General Mazares' reprisals against the cities that had collaborated with Pactyes' rebellion were cut short by his sudden illness and death. The Median general Harpagos replaced him.

The reluctance of the Kymaians to hand over the rebel betrays the religious concerns of the time, particularly their mistrust of the oracular sanctuaries. In the first instance, the city did not apply to Klaros when faced with their dilemma. Not only was the oracle of Apollo there half the distance away when compared with Didyma (surely a consideration in such pressing circumstances), it was the oracle of another Aiolian town, Notion (or Notium). The implication is that the oracle at Klaros had been corrupted. Secondly, even after the respected oracle at Didyma had pronounced twice in favour of the Persians, the Kymaians still chose a different path. Clearly, it was felt that the integrity of the major religious institutions had been compromised by pro-Persian influences even before the war was concluded. Their suspicion of the oracle there was justified, as Cyrus' good relations with another Apollan sanctuary go to prove.

⁷²¹ Heraclid. Pont., fr. 11.

The oracle of Apollo of Aulai, near Magnesia-on-the-Meander, is said to have spoken the “truth” to the Persians; evidently, the sanctuary sided with the Persians during the Ionian conquest. Its sacred gardeners were rewarded with exemption from tax and corvée. This information comes from a copy of a letter from the Persian king Darius (522-486 BC) reprimanding a senior official (perhaps the satrap of Sardis, who is known to have had a residence at Magnesia in later periods, or the steward of the *partetaš* there) for overriding the past and present Persian kings’ beneficence:

“... because my will on behalf of the gods you lose sight of, I will give to you, if you do not change, a proof of my offended anger. Indeed, from the gardener priests of Apollo, tribute you have exacted, and profane land to dig you assigned [them], not recognizing my ancestors’ purpose on behalf of the god who spoke to the Persians only truth...”⁷²²

The inscription must be used with caution, as it may be a forgery in the vein of the spurious claims to antique special privileges recounted by Tacitus.⁷²³ However, it is difficult to imagine that a fabrication for the purposes of convincing a Roman official on such a serious matter would be in the form of a critical letter setting out the temple’s privileges in such indirect terms. In addition, it contains a concern that is particularly Persian: the king notes the progress made on planting in the *partetaš*. Moreover, scholars of Greek inscriptions have stated that the original was clearly not in Greek.⁷²⁴ In all likelihood, it was first issued in Aramaic, the language of the Persian administration. Fried drew on Aramaic correspondence

⁷²² ML 12 in Meiggs and Lewis (1988) 20-22; this translation is taken from Fried (2004) 109.

⁷²³ *Annals* III.60-63. That the Persian king closely controlled matters relating to taxation should not be disputed, however: Thucydides (1.138.5) notes another instance, when the king granted rights to levy taxes at Magnesia to Themistokles during his exile. The authenticity of the Gadatas letter, as it has come to be known, or aspects of it, began to be questioned within a few years of its discovery at the end of the nineteenth century AD, although generally it was hailed as evidence of the Persian use of religion in management of its provinces or even confirmation of the Persian kings’ reputation for religious tolerance: for a survey of its reception, see Briant (2003). Since Briant’s article repudiated the letter as a Hellenistic-period invention and therefore invalid as a source for Persian history, some scholars have accepted that it should be discarded, e.g. Grabbe (2004) 116-117; Kuhrt (2007) 85, 3.27, n. 1; 423, 10.introduction, n. 11. However, see the recent reappraisal of the arguments by Tuplin (2009), who concluded that none of them condemns the letter to worthlessness (*ibid.* 172).

⁷²⁴ Meiggs and Lewis (1988) 21.

and epigraphy in support of the letter's authenticity and concluded that the inscription is a non-literal version of the edict, rather than a direct translation.⁷²⁵

The benefices granted to the sanctuary by Darius' 'ancestor' (who, in this Anatolian matter, can only have been Cyrus) demonstrate the continuity of the Anatolian tradition that reconciliation was sought with local gods following the submission of the conquered people. Magnesia and the Apollan sanctuary escaped destruction during the period of Cyrus' conquest. However, for its part in supporting the rebellion of Pactyes, the city was plundered by General Mazares (*Hist.* I.161-162); as the sanctuary did not suffer any retaliation, we may infer that it did not participate in the rebellion. Herodotos' account of the events is interesting when compared with his description of the Lydian kings' conquests in Ionia. The Persian generals' violence contrasts with the almost circuitous route to power of the Lydians, via patronage – like Alyattes at Assesos (I. 22; see Chapter 3) and donations – such as given by Gyges and Croesus (I.14; Chapter 3, n. 370; and below, *Ephesos*) to Greek religious institutions. The Persian strategy is military and not ideological, and the targets are general: no specific mention is made of consequences to religious institutions, although the fears of the inhabitants of cities in this regard are expressed and are given prominence in the story of their reactions (I.164; see below, *Phokaia*). It would seem that there were no religious offences for Herodotos to report.

Phokaia

Herodotos tells the story of the fate of the Phokaians (I.162-165). An Andalusian king, a trading partner of Phokaia, had financed the building of a great wall to protect his allies against the expected onslaught of the Medians. Harpagos, however, built a siege mound to overcome the obstacle. Preferring exile to slavery, the Phokaians sailed away in galleys loaded with the statues and sacred objects of their temples, leaving an empty city for the Persians to occupy. Before settling in Corsica, where they built temples to house their gods, some Phokaians returned to slaughter the Persian garrison left there. A ritual was conducted cursing anyone who remained behind: a lump of iron was dropped into the sea as they swore not to return until it had floated back up again. Nonetheless, half of the refugees returned, homesick.

⁷²⁵ Fried (2004) 111-116.

Evidence from an excavated section of the city gate and walls is somewhat at variance with Herodotos' tale. Phokaia's substantial, five-kilometre wall with glacis was indeed built about 590-580 BC, before the Medo-Lyidian treaty put an end to the threat of invasion.⁷²⁶ The temple of Athena on the peninsula was roughly contemporary with the city walls,⁷²⁷ indicative of confidence in the peace agreement. However, investigations of the city gate show it to have been burned; carbonised wooden posts, catapult balls and Persian arrowheads were discovered within the enclosure (see Fig. 5.14).⁷²⁸ A broken Lesbos-type amphora and an east-Greek olpe found on the floor confirm the dating of the events to the mid-sixth century BC. The temple appears to have been destroyed.⁷²⁹ The city was certainly not abandoned and then occupied by the Persian invaders without incident, as Herodotos has it. The tradition that Hyele/Elea (modern Velia), on the Italian coast, was founded by Phokaiaians fleeing at this time is somewhat early: the city was founded only about 538 BC. Perhaps the story in Herodotos (I.166-167) of an earlier, aborted settlement on Corsica may have some truth to it and explain the time discrepancy. Phokaiaians are also said to have escaped to Marseilles.⁷³⁰ The gap left by the destroyed gateway was filled immediately with stones, earth, large quantities of pottery, and pieces of old buildings. Among the latter were fragments of toichobate very like that of the temple of Athena in Old Smyrna (modern Bayraklı) dated to the second half of the seventh century BC, and an architectural element decorated with leaf patterns probably belonging to a column of the old Athena temple in Phokaia.⁷³¹ It appears that in the emergency, the townspeople made use of redundant tufa from the recent temple construction.

Whenever the Phokaiaians evacuated, the part of Herodotos' story about taking along the valuables from their temple can hardly be doubted. Evidently, they did not foresee any short-term circumstances in which they would be able to return home and the presence of the gods would have been regarded as fundamental to the success of any new settlement. But the events also bespeak the Phokaian conviction that the temples, not to mention Phokaian civic identity, would not be respected by the Persian conquerors, and that the gods and sacred objects would be despoiled or destroyed. This expectation may have arisen from their experience of being forced to submit to Lydia, or perhaps from Anatolian or Greek history,

⁷²⁶ Özyiğit (2003) 116.

⁷²⁷ Özyiğit (2003) 117.

⁷²⁸ Özyiğit (1994) 88, 90-91 and 103, photographs 25-28.

⁷²⁹ Akurgal (2002) 117. It was rebuilt at the end of the century.

⁷³⁰ Aristox., *Life of Pythagoras*, fr. 12.

⁷³¹ Özyiğit (1994) 91-92 and 105, photographs 33-34.

although we have no record of it. The ritual mentioned by Herodotos (I.165) of dropping a lump of iron into the sea as the oath was taken was evidently a traditional one. It recurred in 478 BC: when the Ionians swore their allegiance to the Delian League the oaths were ratified by sinking lumps of iron into the sea.⁷³² The full meaning of the ceremony can only be guessed at, but must have had something to do with recognising the imprimatur of the gods to quit their vow at the unmistakeable sign of the iron rising to the surface of the sea.

A monumental tomb at Taş Kule, seven kilometres east of the city, provides an intriguing glimpse of the ideology of the incoming rulers (Fig. 5.15). Apparently built between the conquest of Sardis and the fall of Phokaia,⁷³³ and thus probably too early to have been built for a Persianising local, the tomb has no direct parallels in either Anatolian or Persian tradition, but seems to be a product of both. Sculpted from an outcrop of limestone bedrock, the lower, rectangular storey (8.8 x 6.2m and 2.7m in height) was entered by a door on the west side and contains an antechamber and burial room with a cist grave cut into the floor; over it are four tiered steps; on these stands a second storey comprised of a solid cube (2.9m² and 1.9m in height). The pyramid-style steps are only on three sides, so that the front of the tomb rises directly up to the top step and the cube. A single step preserved on the top of the cube suggests that there was once a third tier, perhaps more steps completing the stepped pyramid shape. A false door is set in a recess on the north – presumably the front – of the tomb, carved with plain, framed panels and bordered by a raised fascia 0.25m in width. The ‘kyma reversa’ moulding above the fascia and another, flat fascia above it with upturned finials are almost identical to those later used above the door of Cyrus’ tomb.⁷³⁴ Another

⁷³² Aristotle, *Ath. Pol.* XXIII.5.

⁷³³ On the date, see now Özyiğit (2003) 119. It had for many years been regarded as a post-conquest, Persian or Persianising monument: Cahill (1988) 498-501.

⁷³⁴ Cahill (1988) 483-484, 491-492, figs 14-15. Cahill gave the measurements of the Taş Kule ‘kyma reversa’ molding: 0.19m high, 0.03m in profile but extending 0.10m to either side of the fascia; and that of the fascia with finials: 0.22m high, with finials 0.33m high and 0.23m wide. For the molding above the door on the Tomb of Cyrus, see Stronach (1978) 32-34 and fig. 18a. This and the other resemblances between the tombs have led to speculation that Taş Kule was the model for Cyrus’ tomb, in spite of the *kline* purported to have been in the latter and lack of a cist. We have no evidence of how Anshanite kings were buried but Median elites were buried in cut cists, as at Taş Kule: see von Gall (1966) on Median rock-cut tombs. But note the funerary character of the ziggurat at Čoğā Zānbīl, discussed in Chapter 4, and the strong possibility of Elamite antecedents for the tomb of Cyrus.

distinctive feature of the tomb is the fire bowl carved into the stone of the ledge just above the false door.⁷³⁵

The inhabitant and commissioner of the tomb are unknown, but we can draw some inferences from the distinctive architecture of the structure. Given the date, it seems likely that the tomb was built because of the death of an Iranian nobleman on campaign. General Mazares springs to mind, but there are other candidates: for example, Xenophon mentions the death of a King Abradatas of Susa, who died in the battle of Sardis and was buried by the River Pactolus. His wife Panthea committed suicide over his body and, Xenophon comments, “the monument reared over them was, as they say, exceeding great”.⁷³⁶ The commissioner of the tomb took the opportunity of erecting a funerary monument of a hybrid nature, introducing Persian elements such as the stepped platform and the fire holder, and adapting the appearance of Anatolian elite funerary architecture, particularly two-tiered Lykian mausolea (so-called ‘pillar’ tombs) and Phrygian rock-cut ‘false door’ façades, while keeping to the tradition of monumental elite burials.⁷³⁷ The Taş Kule tomb was the forerunner of Persian and Persianising tombs in western Anatolia, which would feature ever more creative combinations of Persian and Ionian Greek construction and decorative traditions, and in which context would occur hybrid practices not seen before, such as magi making offerings to the deceased before false doors of a tomb.⁷³⁸ The unique components of

⁷³⁵ Cahill (1988) 484 noted its fire-blackened interior and gave its measurements: 0.50m wide and 0.45m deep. See Chapter 4, n. 495, for measurements of Elamite, Median, and Persian fire bowls.

⁷³⁶ *Cyr.* VII.3.3-5, 16.

⁷³⁷ See discussion in Cahill (1988) 486-489. The pillar tombs at the Lykian city of Xanthos date from after the Persian conquest, replacing local wooden constructions: Metzger (1963) 60-61. The assumption is made based on the evolution of “house tombs” from wood into rock (freestanding and cut into slopes), which contained rock-cut version of house furniture, such as benches for the body of the deceased: Metzger (1963) 60-61; Mellink (1969b); Keen (1998) 184. However, Keen cautioned against the assumption that all pre-Persian pillars were wooden, as one stone pillar (now missing) is known from the time. The story of the taking of Xanthos by the Persian general Harpagos is recounted by Herodotos (*Hist.* I.176). Destruction of the citadel by fire is corroborated by archaeology showing the burning of the first phase of building: Evers (2004) 28.

⁷³⁸ For the stela from Daskyleion, capital of the Persian satrapy of Hellespontine Phrygia, in which magi perform a ritual and perhaps animal sacrifice before tomb or temple doors, see Fig. 5.6. For the Mausoleion at Halikarnassos (about 350 BC), which like Taş Kule contained a single burial in a chamber in the lower part of the two-storey freestanding tomb but which was lavishly decorated in Greek style with references to its occupant’s Anatolian past, see Cook (2005) and the British Museum collections online: <http://www.britishmuseum.org>. For the development of mausolea in Caria and southern Ionia, see Waywell (1980). For analysis of the term ‘Graeco-Persian’, see Gates (2002).

the Taş Kule tomb mark it out as a transitional form, with a special function: to convey the integration of the new Persian elite with the local environment in a palpable way, through the creation of a non-threatening example of religious acculturation. The monumentality of the tomb was simultaneously a reflection of authority and the new source of power in the region in the same way as, say, the massive tumuli of the Lydian kings had been.⁷³⁹ Divine right and blessing were necessarily bound up with the ideology of political control. The tomb was conspicuous in the valley that was likely to have been the road from the harbour of Phokaia to the Hermus River and the main routes to Sardis and inland Anatolia.⁷⁴⁰ Phokaia was chosen to be a Persian administrative centre very soon after the city fell.⁷⁴¹ The Taş Kule monument, then, represents the first post-conquest indication of Cyrus the Great's policy of integration of religious traditions as a means of consolidating political power.

Chios

Although an island and largely out of reach of Persian invaders, who as yet had no naval forces, Chios sought to pacify the new mainland power, handing over the rebel leader Pactyes (as discussed above). Possession of the territory received by Chios as *peraia* in exchange for the hostage, at Atarnaeus (on modern Kale Tepe), was highly desirable, although the transaction was apparently not regarded without misgiving. The Chians would consider the produce of the land they had received to be unfit for offerings to the gods (*Hist.* I.160). The Chians also refused permission to the Phokaiaians resisting Persian rule to buy or settle on the Oinoussai islands (I.165). If these were merely signs of deference to the Persians, the Chians formally capitulated along with the other islanders when General Harpagos had completed the subjection of the Ionian mainland.

As a result of their co-operation and, no doubt, the fortunate circumstance of being offshore, the island was left largely in peace to prosper. Exploration of Archaic Chios has been hindered by the modern city built over it, but a secondary settlement on the island, at Emporio, has been examined, as well as the coastal sanctuary at Phanai (modern Kato Phana, about nine kilometres east of Emporio). At the sanctuary of Apollo at Kato Phana an earlier

⁷³⁹ Cahill (1988) 499.

⁷⁴⁰ Cahill (1988) 481.

⁷⁴¹ Coins of electrum, silver and bronze were minted here from the sixth century BC: Rubinstein and Greaves (2004) 1091.

temple was built over in the Persian period.⁷⁴² A stone temple at the harbour and a great temple of Athena at Emporio were also erected during this time.⁷⁴³ The statue of the goddess there wore nine small griffin protomes made of lead; the acculturation of this custom as far away as the Persian-occupied city of Gordion in Phrygia is shown by the discovery of wall paintings there of ceremonial figures wearing diadems rimmed with such griffins.⁷⁴⁴ This is another indication that Chios and its mainland neighbours were not so far removed from each other in the sixth century BC, as Herodotos might have led us to believe.

Erythrai

The eighth-century BC temple of Athena at Erythrai (modern İldir) was spectacularly located atop the acropolis on a peninsula jutting out into the bay. It had just been partially rebuilt owing to the collapse of its podium wall before the Persian invasion occurred.⁷⁴⁵ Excavations on the acropolis turned up pottery, and bronze and ivory offerings dating from 670 to 545 BC: a graffito on an early sixth century BC bowl indicates that these were votive offerings belonging to the temple of Athena Polias. The temple, then, was probably destroyed by Persian assault in the mid sixth century BC.⁷⁴⁶ The head of a new monumental statue of a woman here, perhaps the goddess, was cut off. The folds of her chiton resemble those of Samian religious sculptures of Cheramyas (570-560 BC) and Geneleos (560-550 BC) of female attendants of the goddess; moreover, the headless statue was found in the same trench on the acropolis as a bronze lion figurine, symbol of the goddess Kybele.⁷⁴⁷ Unfortunately, without the head of the statue to confirm the identity of the subject, we can only speculate whether the act was simply a part of the violence of the time or whether it may have had some religious significance.

⁷⁴² Beaumont, Archontidou-Argyri, and Whitbread (1999) 280; Beaumont and Archontidou-Argyri (2004) 254.

⁷⁴³ Boardman (1967) 251.

⁷⁴⁴ On the protomes from the cella of the Temple of Athena at Chios and artistic representations of one or more griffin protomes on helmets from the mid-sixth-century BC, see Boardman (1967) 26-28, 203-204, and plates 84-85, no. 166; Mellink (1980) 93 and fig. 6.

⁷⁴⁵ Mitchell (1984-1985) 83.

⁷⁴⁶ Akurgal (2002 [1983]) 233.

⁷⁴⁷ On the Cheramyas statues, see www.louvre.fr. For the analogy and on the lion figurine, see Akurgal (2002 [1983]) 233. The statue is on display in the İzmir Museum of Archaeology.

The temple was quickly restored. By about 530 BC it had been extended to the west and a fine temenos created.⁷⁴⁸ Pausanias mentions a temple of Athena Polias with a huge wooden image of the seated goddess, which he credits to the Athenian sculptor Endoeus (*fl.* 540 BC).⁷⁴⁹ That the sculpture was wooden rather than marble (like the other sculptures Pausanias appears to attribute to Endoeus, of the Graces and Seasons at the temple entrance) could suggest that it was older than the post-invasion period and that it had been salvaged or spared during the Persian conquest to be rehoused in the new temple.

Klazomenai and Teos

The archaeological record for the period between the 540s and 520/10 BC in Klazomenai is silent, supporting the Pausanian report that the city was evacuated “for fear of the Persians” (VII.3.8). Excavated sites show a twenty to thirty-year break in occupation and industrial activity; nor is there any evidence at the Akpınar cemetery attributable to the third quarter of the sixth century BC.⁷⁵⁰ Dwellings abandoned in the middle of the sixth century BC display no signs of natural disaster or destruction caused by human agency.⁷⁵¹

The nearby island of Karantina was known as Klazomenai in the Classical period but, because evidence of occupation there in the preceding period is slim, it is likely that the refugees travelled farther.⁷⁵² The introduction of Ionian cults in the Black Sea region and western Mediterranean from about the time of the Persian invasion indicate large-scale immigration.⁷⁵³ It requires no stretch of credulity to imagine that the Klazomenians and their Teian neighbours were frightened by the collapse of Lydia and collaboration of Miletos with the Persians; no doubt they were expecting the annihilation of their community and identity through the decimation of their core population in war, destruction of their temples, dispersion as deportees and loss of freedom in slavery. Herodotos’ accounts alone make plain that flight was considered the difficult and courageous response to the Persian threat, while capitulation was considered a form of slavery.

⁷⁴⁸ Mitchell (1984-1985) 83.

⁷⁴⁹ VII.5.9.

⁷⁵⁰ Ersoy (2004) 60-62; Hürmüzlü (2004) 87.

⁷⁵¹ Ersoy (2004) 52-55.

⁷⁵² Ersoy (2004) 63 and n. 72.

⁷⁵³ Apollo, Ephesian Artemis and cults of the western Mediterranean: Ersoy (2004) 63 and references.

The Klazomenians may have followed the example of the Teians, who chose a colonial path: some Teians founded Phanagoria on the northern Black Sea, others established Abdera (north of modern Cape Bouloustra) in Thrace (*Hist.* I.168, the location of a failed earlier colony of the Klazomenians a century earlier).⁷⁵⁴ Strabo (*Geog.* 14.I.30) relates that the emigration took place in the time of Anacreon, the Teian-born poet. Anacreon's writings about this period may indicate that he took part in unsuccessful fighting at Teos against the Persians, during which the "crown" of the city, i.e. its walls, were felled.⁷⁵⁵ An epigraph for a friend killed "keeping slavery from your country" reveals his view of what a Persian victory would mean; his anger at the Milesians, presumably for not fighting alongside the other Ionian cities, is palpable even years later in his disparaging of them as cowards.⁷⁵⁶ Anacreon fled to Thrace and was among those who founded Abdera. He also lived in Athens before returning to Teos about 514 BC, after the death of his patron, Hipparchus. The city may have been experiencing a revival – Strabo records the repatriation of some Teians (14.I.30) and silver coins were struck here between the mid sixth and mid fifth centuries BC⁷⁵⁷ – and the timing coincides with the renaissance of Klazomenai. At the end of the sixth century BC the Klazomenians returned to their former settlement and undertook substantial building projects.⁷⁵⁸ Evidently there was sufficient calm to re-settle the region with confidence, an acknowledgment that the Persian conquerors had not proved to be in the mold of imperial despots.

Lebedos

Lebedos (near modern Ürkmez, on today's Kısık Peninsula) has not been excavated. Apart from the acknowledgment in Herodotos (I.142) of its membership of the Ionian *dodekapolis* and some linguistic similarities to some other cities of the League, no information prior to the fifth century BC is available.

⁷⁵⁴ Herodotos' information on the *metoikesis* of Teos may have come from Protagoras, the philosopher born in Abdera about 490 BC. They were both in Athens in the first half of the 440s: Demand (1990) 42 and 186, n. 40; Arr. *Byth.*, fr. 56. On attestations of Artemis of Ephesos in the Bosphorus beginning in the late sixth century BC, see Ustinova (1999) 60-63.

⁷⁵⁵ *Anacr.*, text 391.

⁷⁵⁶ *Anacr.*, text 419; *Anacr.*, text 426: "Once long ago the Milesians were brave."

⁷⁵⁷ Rubinstein and Greaves (2004) 1102.

⁷⁵⁸ Ersoy (2004) 64.

Archaic Kolophon was located on the slope of an inland acropolis, Değirmendere. Excavations to determine the sequence of building showed occupation in the Lydian period and then abandonment until the fourth century BC, perhaps indicating an attempt to fortify the city about the time of the fall of Lydia that was quickly given up.⁷⁵⁹ A Sacred Way through the Ahmetbeyli Valley connected Kolophon to the sanctuary of Apollo at Klaros and presumably continued southward to the sea or the harbour town of Notion.⁷⁶⁰ At Klaros, between a fill of objects of the first half of the sixth century BC and statuettes of the third quarter and last third of the century, the remains of a monumental altar have been discovered.⁷⁶¹ About this same time the first temple of Apollo at Klaros was also constructed, as well as a two-room building facing west apparently for Artemis.⁷⁶² The dimensions of the altar of Apollo demonstrate that Klaros participated in the boom of grandiose Ionian religious building that occurred in the mid-sixth century BC. Notably, the altar of Apollo and probably that of Artemis were not abandoned until the Hellenistic altar and temple of Apollo were begun.⁷⁶³ The continuity of religious activity here lends some support to the report of the good relationship between Klaros and the Persian kings from the earliest times.

Just as Kolophonians had done when conquered by Gyges a century before,⁷⁶⁴ the poet and moralist Xenophanes emigrated rather than remain in a community that had bowed to a foreign master. Following the Persian sack, he relocated to Sicily. Xenophanes' philosophy rejected established ideas of the gods that had them thinking and behaving as mortals do (immorally)⁷⁶⁵ and so it may be no surprise that he did not follow conventional Greek wisdom in attributing Kolophon's loss of liberty to divine punishment for the city's hubris. A surviving fragment of Xenophanes' work indicates that he blamed the Kolophonians themselves for the "hateful tyranny" that befell the city: their pursuit of luxuries led to

⁷⁵⁹ Holland (1944) 142-143.

⁷⁶⁰ Greaves (2010) 181. The precise route of the Sacred Way is today inaccessible, masked by metres of alluvium from the Ales River. On the rivalry between Kolophon and Notion for control of Klaros, see Fox (2008) 234-235.

⁷⁶¹ de La Genière (1992) 198.

⁷⁶² de La Genière (1996) 265-266.

⁷⁶³ de La Genière (1992) 201; de La Genière (1996) 266.

⁷⁶⁴ The sixth-century BC poet Theognis infers that Kolophon was destroyed in a way similar to Smyrna and Magnesia: *IE*² 226, *Theognidea* 1103. But note Polyaeus, *Strat.* 262-263: VII.2, in which the reduction of Kolophon occurs later, under King Alyattes.

⁷⁶⁵ DK 21 B11, English translation in Warren (2007) 46.

involvement with the Lydians.⁷⁶⁶ Attracting the enmity of the Persians was thus inevitable: ironically, the same view of luxury as a corrupting force that leads to military defeat is attributed to Cyrus by Herodotos (IX.122). On the other hand, we do not know when Xenophanes formed his views about the gods⁷⁶⁷ and none of his extant writings give a rationale for the gods' behaviour that repudiated the current idea that deities punished or rewarded the behaviour of their creation. He may not have been quite as heterodox in ruling out divine involvement in the events at the time they occurred as has been supposed.

Ephesos

The city of Ephesos was at the centre of the Lydian king Croesus' conspicuous programme of religious integration with his Ionian subjects. Apparently unable to conquer Miletos or having to continue the treaty relationship struck by Alyattes, the renowned sanctuary at Didyma, with which Miletos retained close ties, was out of his reach. The political power of Miletos and the influence of the oracle of Apollo were to be ameliorated by the messages coming from another Ionian temple, of Artemis, at Ephesos. Croesus devoted considerable resources to the patronage of the rival sanctuary and in doing so propagated his reputation for support of the Greek cult and culture. Unlike other eastern-Greek sanctuaries, dedications of precious metal were not unusual here, highlighting the special connection between the temple of Artemis and Lydia, which controlled the monopoly on gold mining in western Asia Minor.⁷⁶⁸ The success of this integrative enterprise enabled him to solidify his political control of the region, using the common ground of religion. According to the excavator Anton Bammer, the architecture of the Croesan-period temple of Artemis aimed at one thing: the destruction of the many small cult shrines to various gods patronised by aristocratic families.⁷⁶⁹ Moreover, with the construction of the Archaic temple in the mid-sixth century BC featuring a colossal statue of Artemis in her marble naiskos, the statuettes and votives of the small cult places at Ephesos lost their meaning and ceased to appear. The statue became the focus of worship.⁷⁷⁰ By reforming the cult buildings of Artemis and affiliating her cult with that of Kybele (see above, Chapter 3), he was able to eliminate some of the advertised

⁷⁶⁶ Xenophanes, Fr. 3.

⁷⁶⁷ His theological views provide no clues, although other observations suggest he was already living in the West: Kirk, Raven, and Schofield (1983) 177-178.

⁷⁶⁸ Kerschner (2008) 224.

⁷⁶⁹ Bammer (2008b) 253.

⁷⁷⁰ Muss (2008) 64.

pluralistic characteristics of the Ionian territories, which were exacerbated by religious divergences, and also dilute aristocratic influence.

Evidently, Cyrus the Great was aware of the role Ephesos played in Croesian politics. Several strands of information go to show how and why Ephesos and the temple of Artemis emerged unscathed after the Persian invasion.

Firstly, the Ephesians apparently had little appetite for war. Ephoros of Kyme relates the defection of the Ephesian Eurybatos, who had been entrusted by Croesus with the task of recruiting mercenaries to fight against the Persians. Instead, the Ephesian turned the funds over to Cyrus.⁷⁷¹ Although Ephoros does not appear to have said so explicitly, the funds were surely a payment intended to preserve the city from attack and signified the willingness of (at least some) prominent Ephesians to abandon Croesus. The city thus escaped plunder. The Archaic city wall and gate above the Sanctuary of Meter on the slope of Panayır Dağ seem to have stood undamaged throughout the Archaic period.⁷⁷² The notorious episode coined a byword among Greeks: a ‘Eurybatos’ was a traitor.⁷⁷³

The Persian effort to stand in the tradition of the local kings is evident in Cyrus’ adoption of the role of patron of Ephesos and the propaganda put about in relation to divine support of the conquest. Croesus is described as a victim of the gods’ will and his own hubris. Herodotos (I.87) uses the following exchange between the kings to explain the cause of the war and absolve its protagonists:

“‘Tell me, Croesus, what man persuaded you to march against my country and be my enemy rather than my friend?’

‘King,’ Croesus replied, ‘the luck was yours when I did it, and the loss was mine. The god of the Greeks encouraged me to fight you: the blame is his. No one is fool enough to choose war instead of peace – in peace sons bury fathers, but in war fathers bury sons. It must have been heaven’s will that this should happen.’”

⁷⁷¹ *BNJ* 70 F 58a (Harpokration); 58b (Scholiast on Hermogenes); 58c (*Suda*); 58d (Diodoros). The excerpt of Diodoros states that Croesus intended to hire Peloponnesian mercenaries (9.32 from *Excerpta de virtutibus et vitiis* 1.220.9); Herodotos records that Croesus looked to Sparta for assistance but does not mention the Eurybatos episode (*Hist.* I.56, 69).

⁷⁷² Scherrer (2001) 60 and figs 3-4. No other city walls dating to the first half of the sixth century have yet been identified.

⁷⁷³ The expression appears, e.g., in Plato, *Prt.* 327; Dem. *De Cor.* XVIII.24.

The conversation begins a key didactic passage of the *Histories*. It encapsulates the theological belief of Herodotos and his contemporaries that the free will and fate of men is limited by the decisions of the gods. Croesus and Cyrus may use the supernatural resources at their disposal – oracles, dreams, and portents – to determine predestined events and follow a course that will ameliorate an unhappy or untimely outcome, but they must be careful not to overstep natural boundaries of mortal power and attract the envy of the gods, for fear of nemesis.⁷⁷⁴ That overreaching territorial expansion is one such impiety that results in other-worldly retribution is clear: Croesus crossed the Halys River, described as the natural boundary of Asia Minor (I.72), and lost his kingdom; Cyrus warred against the Massagetae, emboldened by “his belief in his superhuman origin” (I.204), and lost his life. Here religion provides the philosophical framework for understanding conquest and defeat.

It was said that Croesus was saved from the pyre by a combination of Cyrus’ mercy and a propitious storm sent by Apollo, went on to act as advisor to Cyrus and was even put under the special protection of the heir to the Persian throne, Cambyses (*Hist.* I.86-87; I.155-156; 207-208). No doubt the stories of Croesus’ last-minute reprieve from death and subsequent fate are apocryphal – the poet Bacchylides, writing three decades before Herodotos, describes the ‘suicide’ of Croesus on the pyre⁷⁷⁵ – but the persistent tradition implies Croesus was allowed to survive the conquest. The Persian king desired to be thought a legitimate and worthy ruler. Whether true or false, the temple authorities were no doubt complicit in the propaganda of Croesus’ hubris and Cyrus’ clemency, for it meant that the Artemis cult could continue without being discredited by the fall of its patron or the city.

The temple of Artemis, completed in the Persian period, itself demonstrates the Persian wish to assimilate rather than control. Predominantly in Ionic style, the temple carried typically Persian bull reliefs on its antae (or propylon) and a Persian man in local dress among the processing Greeks on its sima frieze.⁷⁷⁶ It did not reflect any conspicuous Persian religious

⁷⁷⁴ See discussion in Asheri (2007) 65-67, 143. For *hybris* and the gods, and nemesis as a safeguard of cosmic order in Herodotos’ *Histories*, see *ibid.* 39.

⁷⁷⁵ Bacchylides F3, English translation in Kuhrt (2007) 65-66, 3.17. An Attic, red-figure amphora from the early fifth century BC depicts Croesus seated, apparently voluntarily, on a pyre and pouring a libation over the head of his servant Eutymos, who is lighting the fire: see the ‘Myson’ vase from Vulci, Etruria, now in the Musée du Louvre. From a Persian point of view, burning someone alive would have been a profanation of fire; Croesus may well have been executed some other way or been killed during the siege of Sardis but, if so, it is strange that the death of such a prominent personality would have gone unremarked by Greek historians.

⁷⁷⁶ On the frieze, Muss (2008) 49.

impositions – but, unusually, the naos was set deep within a forest of 52 columns that the architect may have intended to suggest a formalised sacred grove.⁷⁷⁷

Samos

Like Chios, the island of Samos was a successful seafaring and trading state in the sixth century BC. It, too, counted itself a member of the Ionic League but did not intervene to assist its mainland allies when the Persian threat became reality. Samos sought to distinguish itself ideologically, and did so by singularising and promoting its religious culture, as is clear from their establishment of a sanctuary of Hera at the important trading emporion of Naukratis in the Nile Delta: other Greeks frequenting Naukratis, including the Ionian cities of Chios, Teos, Phokaia, and Klazomenai, shared in building a temple, the Hellenion (after 570 BC).⁷⁷⁸ The Samian sanctuary was older, built sometime between 625 and 550 BC (like its neighbour, the Milesian sanctuary of Apollo, between 570 and 555 BC).⁷⁷⁹ The badly damaged remains of the Hellenion are difficult to interpret but it is clear that both it and the sanctuary of Hera rivalled each other in terms of trade and influence. Whether for economic or religious reasons, or a combination of both, it appears that the Samians refused to participate in the Hellenion project because it was set up in opposition to the Heraion.

The desire for distinctiveness was evidently true also on Samos itself. The earliest temple of Hera, the Heraion, was erected on the south-east coast after 800 BC. It was remarkable for being one hundred feet in length and was soon embellished with a surrounding wooden colonnade; in the mid century the altar before it was rebuilt twice using ashlar masonry.⁷⁸⁰ The province of the Heraion was political as well as religious. For example, an undesirable gift (or tribute?) of 300 young prisoners of war en route from Periander, tyrant of Corinth, to King Alyattes of Lydia was deflected by turning the boys into suppliants of the goddess; the religious request gave the Samian actions a legitimacy that simple political interference could not have provided.⁷⁸¹

⁷⁷⁷ Wightman (2007) 445-446. He drew his comparison with the “forested halls” of Egyptian temples, but in this context a Persian influence is more likely.

⁷⁷⁸ *Hist.* II.178. Herodotos’ account is borne out by archaeology at Naukratis. See further Bowden (1996). For the date of the Hellenion, see Möller (2000) 106.

⁷⁷⁹ Möller (2000) 101; 97.

⁷⁸⁰ Shipley (1987) 28.

⁷⁸¹ The tyrant of Corinth died about 585 BC. On the intervention of the temple of Hera in the fate of the sons of the Corcyrean elite, see Nicolas of Damascus, *FGrHist* 90 F59(3), English translation in

Sanctuaries in the Greek world were the cornerstones of political communication between *poleis* and also loci of international messages, which were couched in religious terms. Valuable gifts from powerful connections were housed within the Heraion as dedications to the gods, such as a pair of statues of Pharaoh Amasis donated by the Egyptian king himself and a bronze Assyrian lion-headed cup.⁷⁸² these signalled the desire for good political relations between states, advertised the power and wealth of the donor, but also served as reminders of treaties and agreements as religious obligations. The Egyptian statues, for instance, may have helped the Saïte pharaohs to promote trade at Naukratis and recruit Greek mercenaries. The construction and use of the Heraion indicates that by this time Samos had acquired the civic values that would define the Greek *polis* in the Classical period. The association between civic identity and the temple had become essential to Greek political life. Ursula Brackertz identified the principal functions of poliadic deities as: unifying and sanctifying the polis, guaranteeing its existence and security, inspiring and assisting its political success, and representing it to the outside world.⁷⁸³ The prosperity of a polity could be viewed in relationship to the monumental religious architecture of its patron deity, under whose auspices its success occurred. Features of the first Hekatompedon became the standard for a patron deity's temple, notably its length, east-west axis, and exterior, covered colonnade. *Poleis* devoted significant resources to this public symbol of power and divine approval. Alan Greaves has suggested that the early adoption of coinage in Ionia and the rebuilding of temples that took place there in the Archaic period were connected and a result of the success of the region's priests and mercenaries, rather than its merchants.⁷⁸⁴ The bullion (and even dedications and mercenary spoils) in temple repositories could be minted in order to be spent on civic improvements, not least of which were the periodic renewals of temple buildings in an increasingly grand manner that signified the cities' prosperity. However, its centrality to the ideological programme of the city also made the temple a particular target for conquerors of a mind to reward or punish its populace.

The sixth-century Heraion (the so-called Rhoikos temple) was burned down within a generation of its completion about 560 BC. Scorch marks on pavement surfaces and column bases, as well as burned debris on pavements and in robbers' ditches, including some

Pedley (1972) 23 §58. In Herodotos, *Hist.* III.48-49, and Plutarch, *Mor.* XI 22 (859E-860B), the temple concerned was that of Artemis. The sixth century BC temple of Artemis was located near the harbour town of modern Pythagorion: Tsakos (1980) 318.

⁷⁸² For the wooden statues, which Herodotos claimed were still in the temple in his own time, see *Hist.* II.182; a photograph of the cup is published in Kyrieleis (1986) colour plate II(c).

⁷⁸³ Brackertz (1976) 155.

⁷⁸⁴ Greaves (2010) 88-89.

statuary, confirm there was a substantial fire.⁷⁸⁵ From an archaeological standpoint the cause and precise date of this event is uncertain. Destruction at the town's West Cemetery after 550 BC has been cited as support in the argument for conflict on the island at the time of the Persian conquest of Ionia, but the evidence is now in doubt.⁷⁸⁶ Literary support comes from three sources: Pausanias records a Persian attack that resulted in the burning of the Heraion; and two historians recount a tradition that, after the fall of Lydia, the Samians won a battle against Cyrus for control of the seas.⁷⁸⁷ In the same breath, Pausanias reports that the Phokaian temple was also burnt, implying that both events occurred about the same time. As we saw above (*Phokaia*), the Phokaian sanctuary of Athena was burnt following the siege of the city perpetrated by General Harpagos about 546 BC. The golden *krater* made by Theodoros of Samos that is reported to have been displayed in the king's chambers in the Persian royal palace may have been loot from the Samian adventure.⁷⁸⁸ While true that the Persians had no navy to speak of, they had acquired vessels over their years of conquest in

⁷⁸⁵ Buschor (1930) 95; Freyer-Schauenburg (1974) 173. Buschor suggested that the wood content of the temple fed the fire, which was, in his opinion, not caused by warfare. But note recent objections to the theory of a mid sixth-century BC fire: foundational weakness was suggested as an alternative cause for the destruction of the Heraion by Kienast (1992) 180. He was followed by Kyrieleis (1993) 134: "Presumably the marshy building site and insufficiently sturdy foundations are to blame for making this first marvel of Ionic architecture so unstable that it had to be dismantled." Note also that, despite its find-spot in a trench of the new temple building with discarded offerings of the old (Rhoikos) temple, a white marble head of a female votive relief showing signs of burning has been dated to the 530s on stylistic grounds: Freyer-Schauenburg (1974) 172.

⁷⁸⁶ Stelai were broken up for reuse in later graves. On the grounds of pottery from these later burials dating before the third quarter of the sixth century BC and that the palmette reliefs of the stelai were judged to be contemporary with the burnt temple, the destruction of the necropolis was put mid-century: Boardman (1959) 200-202; (1999) 102; Barron (1961) 295-297; Shipley (1987) 79. But see now the meticulous reassessment of the West Cemetery evidence in Tsakos (2001), which upends the earlier hypotheses.

⁷⁸⁷ Paus. VII.5.4; Malalas, Ch. 6, section 12; Cedrenus, Vol. 1, pp. 242-243. The latter two both state that Pythagoras of Samos wrote about these events but, as the philosopher's teachings were transmitted orally, the source of the pseudo-Pythagorean tradition was probably Julius Africanus (about 221 BC), who is also cited by Johannes Malalas in connection with the information. The similarity of the historians' tales indicates that Georgius Cedrenus (c. 11th century AD) also utilised Africanus, copying Malalas or perhaps coming to it via a different source: see further Wallraff (2007) xlvii-xlviii. Doubts about the accuracy of the passages are heightened by the inclusion of erroneous claims about the death of Cyrus, however: Cedrenus writes that it took place in the war against Samos, while Malalas states that Cyrus was slaughtered on his return to his homeland.

⁷⁸⁸ Ath. XII.514-515.

Ionia, not to mention the allegiance of seafaring Miletos, a city now obliged by treaty to provide ships and soldiers to Persia as required; Diodoros (IX.35) recalls Cyrus' appointment of General Harpagos as "commander on the sea". J. Penrose Barron observed that the objectives of Harpagos' raid "were chosen with a sound grasp of Greek psychology";⁷⁸⁹ this may indeed have been the case, but the targeting of religious centres was more likely in keeping with the deliberate strategy of the Persian king (see further, Chapter 6). Gifts of weapons and armour to the Heraion plainly show its military concerns, and an especial connection with the Samian naval force: important dedications known to posterity include two large ship bases, which were placed in the south temenos in the seventh century BC; and another six ships gifted to Hera in the sixth century BC.⁷⁹⁰ One of the goddess's principal functions was plainly to act as protectress of the island's soldiers and fleet, so the attack on the Heraion may have occurred because of its military or ideological, rather than religious, significance. Although Persian forces at sea were clearly not any match for the experienced Samian ships, their ambitions clearly boded ill for the future and were probably a factor prompting Samos to join the other islanders (*Hist.* I.169) in offering earth and water to the new masters of the mainland.

A more pressing reason for Samian acknowledgment of Persian rule was no doubt to salvage some connection with its *peraia*. The Samians had acquired territory on the mainland about 700 BC as a consequence of the Meliac war (Chapter 3); the area encompassed the prestigious Panionion in the Mycale mountain ranges. The *peraia* grew over time to include arable and pastoral lands, and anchorages. As Graham Shipley pointed out, possession of the land "changed the balance of production and diversified the economy", as well as assisting with trade in Asia Minor.⁷⁹¹ Recognising the Persians now was a prudent economic decision.

Priene

General Mazares reportedly began his reprisals against the supporters of Pactyes and his rebellion at Priene (and Magnesia: *Hist.* I.161). Today the site of the Archaic city is not known. What remains dates from the Hellenistic (re?)foundation of the city. It is possible that

⁷⁸⁹ Barron (1961) 298.

⁷⁹⁰ For the archaeology of seventh century BC ships in the temenos (one built over in the sixth century BC), see Walter (1990) 83, Abb. 92; 88-89 and Abb. 98; and Kyrieleis (1981) 88-90; the dedication of the six sixth-century BC ships is recorded on a bronze plate: Baumbach (2004) 165.

⁷⁹¹ Shipley (1987) 36. On the Samian *peraea* in general, see *ibid.* 31-37.

‘new Priene’ was built over the Archaic city, or that ‘old Priene’ lies buried in silt at the former mouth of the Meander River (modern Büyük Menderes), beneath valuable agricultural land. Either way, there is regrettably no Archaic period archaeological material available for examination.⁷⁹²

Literature provides some clues. Bias of Priene, a wise man, according to Herodotos (I.170), and who would become known as the best of the Seven Sages, urged the relocation of the entire Ionian population overseas in order to regain their freedom.⁷⁹³ Bias had organised the city’s defences against the attacks of King Alyattes of Lydia and reputedly twice negotiated good terms for Priene when struggles against Samos and Miletos were lost;⁷⁹⁴ but now, in the wake of the Ionian defeat, he advocated to the Panionic League a mass migration to Sardinia (*Hist.* I.170). Needless to say, his recommendation was not acted upon. The anecdote as expressed in the *Histories* is a clear example of the attitude of the Greek cities toward monarchy or despotism: “tyranny binds and weakens the people, whereas liberty releases their energy and prepares the rise of a state to hegemony”.⁷⁹⁵ The Greek cities of Ionia had lived with Lydian hegemony but clearly the Persians were regarded as a menace of a different kind, i.e. to their ability to develop as independent, ideologically distinct societies (implicit also in the emigrations from Klazomenai and Teos, discussed above). Pausanias (VII.2.10-11) makes a moralising comparison between the citizens of Priene and Myous, emphasising that the Prienians endured the conflict with the Persians without abandoning their city or, he implies, losing their civic identity, as the Myousians did when they forsook their individuality and took their gods away with them to Miletos (see below, *Myous*). Although Priene apparently retained the integrity of its community immediately after the Persian victory, unfortunately this was not long the case. Herodotos (I.161) tells us that the

⁷⁹² Schipporeit (1998) 195-197 made a case for the existence of an earlier Demeter sanctuary under the extant temple remains, primarily on the basis of a wall of ashlar stone that seems to have been dismantled to foundation level at the time that the fourth-century BC temple was built. The wall could not have been a part of the temple, as it shows a building oriented south-east and comprised blocks of a different size. Whether the site was used for Demeter worship and what its history might have been, unfortunately, cannot be determined.

⁷⁹³ The earliest reference to the seven wise men, including Bias of Priene, is in *Pl. Prt.* 343a.

⁷⁹⁴ The Samian withdrawal from the Batinetis in 591 BC was alleged by the Prienians to have been negotiated by Bias, although in reality the land was abandoned because of invasions by the Kimmerians: *Mor.* IV 20 (296); Welles (1934) 46-51, no. 7. In 585 BC, when a Milesian-Samian coalition inflicted a major defeat on Priene, Bias agreed a tolerable settlement, probably by ceding the Batinetis to the Samians: see Aristotle, *Frag.* 576 and Shipley (1987) 53-54 for discussion.

⁷⁹⁵ Asheri (2007) 45.

Prienians were punished with *andrapodismos* (sale into slavery) for their part in supporting the 546 BC rebellion of Pactyes. If the people were indeed thus dispersed, Priene recovered within half a century, when it was able to contribute a dozen ships to the battle of Lade (*Hist.* VI.8). General Mazares was not so fortunate, falling mortally ill shortly afterwards. Herodotos' words αὐτίκα νοῦσφ̣ τελευτᾷ (I.161) imply that the general's death was regarded as divine punishment for his conduct.⁷⁹⁶

Myous

The inhabitants of Myous (modern Avşar Kalesi) would not have been flattered by Pausanias' comparison of them with the Prienians: unlike the Prienians, who held their ground and bravely withstood suffering at Persian hands, the people of Myous were pusillanimous in taking refuge with the capitulators of Miletos only some 15 kilometres distant.⁷⁹⁷ In the sixth century BC the hill behind which the city lay was adorned with sacred monuments. There was a niche cut into the rock in the traditional Anatolian manner and a peripteral temple with Ionian architectural decoration but that faced west, suggesting the merging of the local and Greek traditions here, in the manner of Artemis at Sardis, Ephesos, and Magnesia-on-the-Meander.⁷⁹⁸ If the promontory on which the city stood was overrun by the Persians, evidently this was a temporary setback. Later in the century the terrace wall of the temple was filled in with soil and covered, to create an upper terrace for the building of a second, much larger Ionic temple higher up on the hill, believed to have been dedicated to Apollo or Dionysus.⁷⁹⁹ This uncertainty and general confusion about the chronology of the temples is due to the thorough dismantling of their remains and removal of the stones to Miletos in Roman times, where they were reused in the construction of civic buildings such as the theatre and the temple of Athena. Archaeology therefore provides no information about the fate of the Archaic (lower) temple at the time of the Persian conquest. It is possible that their decision to join with Miletos extended the amnesty granted by Cyrus to that city also to its new confederate. We are informed by Pausanias that the inhabitants of Myous

⁷⁹⁶ Asheri (2007) 183 and 522, comparing the episode of Otanes, punished by the gods with disease for what must have been a religious fault, perhaps for allowing a massacre within the sacred precinct on Samos, which he attempted to expiate by repopulating the island: *Hist.* III.147-149.

⁷⁹⁷ VII.2.10-11.

⁷⁹⁸ Akurgal (2002) 239. For the Anatolian-style cult site consisting of a flight of steps and a large basin/cist carved into an outcrop of rock at Myous see Greaves (2010) 104-105 and fig. 5.1. On the fragmentary decorative remains from the Archaic temple see Weber (1967) 138-140.

⁷⁹⁹ Weber (1967) 142.

were eventually driven out of their city by mosquitoes, rather than war, and took with them to Miletos everything portable, including the images of their gods; in his time there was one temple of white marble still standing that had evidently survived the Persian period.⁸⁰⁰

Miletos

The fate of the Ionian cities may be contrasted with that of Miletos, the only city of the Panionic League to submit to Persia on first request and which thus obtained favourable terms from Cyrus. These terms are said by Herodotos to be the same as they had been under Croesus (*Hist.* I.141), themselves presumably a continuation of the treaty agreed between Alyattes and Miletos after the incident of the Assesos temple burning (Chapter 3). From the Persian point of view, efforts to influence the Milesian intelligentsia through religious ideas and good relations, imposing no more onerous terms on the city than had the Lydian kings, won them a valuable Greek ally as well as pre-empting opposition to Cyrus' Ionian campaign from a city of some military capabilities. Miletos was a seafaring power with excellent connections with, among other places, Greece and Egypt, as donations to Milesian sanctuaries reveal.⁸⁰¹ It controlled a number of islands and its ships could blockade any Ionian coastal territories that the Persians conquered. The outer defensive walls of Miletos had already withstood years of Lydian aggression and an inner wall over a metre thick had been added on the summit in the mid-sixth century BC for good measure.⁸⁰² The city was sufficiently confident that it consented to shelter the inhabitants of nearby Myous within its walls, although these Ionians had presumably not sworn fealty to Cyrus. To the rulers of Miletos, the ideological incentives for choosing the Persian side were perhaps a spur to the desire to preserve as far as possible the current regime of the city; while the disruption and possible loss of agricultural lands in the *chora* must have been an economic blow, the sanctuaries there went unharmed and the city's sense of security seems to have been little affected by the wars in Ionia. New temples to Aphrodite *Oikus* on Zeyintepe, Artemis *Kithone* on Kalabaktepe, and Athena near the theatre harbour were built in the later half of the sixth century BC.⁸⁰³ A new, colossal phase of the temple of Apollo at Didyma also commenced at this time, perhaps inspired by the scale of other Ionian temples not engaged in

⁸⁰⁰ Paus. VII.2.10-11. See Mackil (2004) on the eventual absorption of Myous, its population, and even its monuments by Miletos in Hellenistic times.

⁸⁰¹ Greaves (2002) 99.

⁸⁰² Greaves (2002) 86-87.

⁸⁰³ Greaves (2002) 82-86.

the conflict, such as those of Samos and Ephesos. Persianising features are not evident from the fragmentary remains but the temple did display elements compatible with Persian religious practice: it was hypaethral (open to the air), with an interior specially lowered to permit access to a sacred spring and containing a holy grove of trees.⁸⁰⁴ Good relations between Didyma and Persia are hinted at by a massive, 200kg bronze *astragalus* (knucklebone) dedicated in the temple of Apollo by two Milesians about 550-525 BC that somehow made its way to Susa.⁸⁰⁵ It appears that the Milesians and their confederates had little to fear as a result of their bargain with Cyrus.

Smyrna

The Phokaiaans emptied their temples of sacred statues and objects before abandoning their city, rather than permit General Harpagos to loot or destroy them (*Hist.* I.164). That this was perceived genuinely as a threat is seen in archaeological evidence of the mid sixth century BC at Smyrna (present-day Bayraklı, a few kilometres north of İzmir). A temple had stood on the site since the early seventh century BC and before the coming of the Persians had already been subjected to several military attacks. Of the Lydian campaigns against Smyrna mentioned by Herodotos (I.14; I.16) the first, of King Gyges, has left no trace, but that of his great-grandson King Alyattes about 600 BC is visible in the archaeological record. Weaponry discovered within the sanctuary reveals that Alyattes took the fighting right into the heart of the sanctuary, perhaps even into the cella of the temple.⁸⁰⁶ One life-size terracotta sculpture, a votive of a woman or perhaps a goddess, was the focus of exceptionally violent treatment. It had stood against an outside wall of the temple but was brought inside to be broken; most of its pieces were then thrown back outside where they were smashed and the fragments scattered widely across the site.⁸⁰⁷ By the end of the conflict, the temple too was most likely in ruins, and was vacant for some twenty years, with dense reoccupation,

⁸⁰⁴ Greaves (2002) 115.

⁸⁰⁵ The object has also been described as 'loot' by Boardman (1999) 108, fig. 125; and as 'pillage' from the post-Ionian revolt sacking of the Branchidai-Didyma temple by the Louvre museum, in whose collection the knucklebone can now be found: inventory number Sb2719, www.louvre.fr.

⁸⁰⁶ Cook and Nicholls (1998) 22-25. Rather than leavings from battle, the spears and arrowheads discovered in the cella itself might have comprised a votive deposit deliberately left on the floor before it was covered over, but the context is too confused to be certain. The capture of Smyrna by Alyattes is also recorded by Strabo (*Geog.* XIV.1.37), who mentions the razing of old Smyrna by the Lydians, though note the objections of Meriç and Nollé (1988) 231 to Strabo's account.

⁸⁰⁷ Cook and Nicholls (1998) 25, 138.

rebuilding of the shrine, and resumption of votive offerings not occurring for another twenty years after that.⁸⁰⁸ Alyattes used the harbour, which was connected to Sardis by a good road, for trade (as his efforts to subdue the superior harbour city of Miletos had failed) and Smyrna and villages in its environs experienced some economic recovery; however, the walls of Smyrna were not rebuilt, so that when Persia attacked, the city could not offer much by way of resistance.⁸⁰⁹

During the Persian onslaught Lydian period votive statues of men, women, and at least two lions, of life size and larger, were broken and buried⁸¹⁰ and the recently rebuilt sanctuary of Athena was burnt. However, the rest of the town was unaffected,⁸¹¹ which may suggest where the ideological emphasis of the conquest lay: resistance to the Persians was met with punitive action against Athena, Smyrna's protectress, who was at the heart of its civic identity. In the following sixty years or so there is no evidence of votive offerings of even a modest kind and, although the destruction debris was cleared away, no rebuilding took place; instead, domestic pottery indicates a change of use of the temenos.⁸¹² The cult of Athena was interrupted here until the period of the Ionian Revolt.

This survey of interactions between the invaders and inhabitants of Anatolia about the time of the Persian conquest will serve as the basis for an assessment of the early religious policies of Cyrus the Great, to which we now turn.

⁸⁰⁸ Cook and Nicholls (1998) 160.

⁸⁰⁹ Meriç and Nollé (1988) 230-232.

⁸¹⁰ Cook and Nicholls (1998) 168-169.

⁸¹¹ Cook and Nicholls (1998) 170.

⁸¹² Cook and Nicholls (1998) 171. The authors speculated that if the area was still in use for religious purposes, the pottery could reflect the introduction of sacred feasting: *ibid.* 159.

6.

CYRUS THE GREAT, RELIGION,
AND THE CONQUEST OF ANATOLIA:
SUMMARY

Postulating the religious-political policy applied by the Persian conqueror of ancient Anatolia is necessarily a speculative task, no matter how much evidence is at hand to guide the hypothesiser, and many scholars have balked at the idea that it should even be attempted for better-known parts of the empire. Those scholarly works that have appeared about Cyrus' impact on the religious lives of his subjects, notably in Babylonia and the Trans-Euphrates (described in the Introduction), have proceeded from a point later in the history of Cyrus' career and left a notable gap that deserves to be examined. The Cyrus Cylinder demonstrates that by 539 BC the King of Persia had ready a fully developed policy that employed and manipulated local religious institutions for political ends. Clearly, a declaration so mature, with all its implications, could not have sprung from nowhere; the formulation of the strategy for securing the loyalty of conquered populations must have occurred in the period preceding the invasion of Babylonia, when Cyrus made Persia's first international conquests. In his trailblazing foray into Anatolia we may glimpse the formative period of the Persian imperial strategy made manifest in the Cylinder and reflected in the Old Testament. The period and territory also illustrate the unique manner of acculturation prevalent in Persian-occupied territories, where the king's longstanding reputation for religious tolerance could have begun.

Control of an occupied territory in the ancient world could be achieved only partially through military means. This was a lesson exemplified by the spectacular fall of the Neo-Assyrian

Empire, one that the new monarch of Persia cannot have failed to understand. Whatever coherence Assyrian rule in the provinces achieved depended on a combination of military and economic methods of compulsion of the conquered, as expounded by Mann's imperial theory (Chapter 1). Engagement with local religion, as we saw in Chapter 2, was normally confined to binding the conquered to Assyrian ideology and emphasising that recalcitrance would result in military reprisals that could be justified on religious grounds. Diverging from the Assyrian approach, Cyrus the Great of Persia relied strongly on "cultural cohesion" among local leaders to consolidate his conquests.⁸¹³ It was essential to establish co-operation with the local elite in order to create conditions conducive to stability, prevent revolt, and institute the desired governance structure. His principal method of doing so was through implementation of an ideological strategy centred on religion and religious practices.

Logically, the formulation of a strategy for securing conquered territory must have occurred in the period preceding the invasion of Anatolia, the location of Persia's first truly international conquests. The roots of Cyrus' policy can be discerned in the earliest expansion of his power base, from Anšan into Media (Chapter 4). The successful military campaign was not consolidated in the Assyrian way: local deities were not removed or made subservient to the god of the victor, nor was there a deportation of the defeated elite that included key personnel from the priestly class.⁸¹⁴ Earth and water were offered to the Persian conqueror as a sign of submission, but loyalty to him was not articulated or construed as an act of obeisance to a foreign god. In the unique circumstances of the case, Cyrus was uniting (or, indeed, reuniting) populations that shared a cultural and historical background. Cyrus made use of the Indo-Iranian religious background that the peoples held in common, stepping directly into the tradition of kingship legitimised by the priestly authority of the magi. Securing their support was crucial ideologically in order to obtain the loyalty of the Median people; his success may have generated the kernel of Cyrus' future strategy. The religion and religious institutions of the conquered, rather than the conqueror, were pivotal to the taking and exercise of power in newly-subordinated provinces – an original approach that brought about Cyrus' positive reputation in posterity.

Using the evidence of Chapter 5, we can characterise the imperial programme at the time of the Anatolian invasion as follows:

⁸¹³ Mann (1986) 167.

⁸¹⁴ Anyway Persia did not yet possess any distant territory to which resisting Medes could have been relocated forcibly.

- a military operations employing a tactic of ‘strategic damage’. Co-operation was rewarded with immediate benefits for religious institutions and the territories under their protection, while opposition was met by deliberate targeting of religious institutions for punishment, thus removing ideological centres of resistance without causing irreparable damage to economically valuable resources;
- b delegitimising rival kings or rulers and legitimising Persian kingship through usage of indigenous rather than imported traditions of kingship as recognised by local religious customs and institutions;
- c establishment of Persian religion alongside rather than in the stead of existing custom, and encouraging acculturation of Persian and Anatolian religious customs;
- d reconciliation with local communities by re-establishing peacetime norms through restoration of traditional religious centres, not hindering traditional religious expression and, indeed, encouraging its perpetuation.

a *Strategic damage*

Co-operation with the Persian invaders was rewarded immediately, as the example of Miletos demonstrates. In exchange for agreeing to become a client of the invading king, the local tyrant was permitted to keep his seat and his city continued to prosper, so that aggrandisement of Miletos’ temples occurred while other Ionian cities struggled with the after-effects of siege warfare, depopulation, and loss of their independent identities. Milesian extra-mural territories and their sanctuaries (Branchidai and Assesos) were also unharmed. Although Ephesos initially offered resistance, the willingness of at least one faction to hand over the town and its subsequent complicity in Cyrus’ propaganda (see below) were enough to save it from the kind of devastation experienced by its neighbours.

Wouter Henkelman has stated that “[I]ncidental punitive measures taken against local sanctuaries always were politically, not religiously motivated”.⁸¹⁵ At first glance, this seems too categorical an assertion. It is difficult to tell, in the case of Anatolia at least, if the damage done to religious institutions and objects was incidental. The Erythrai temple may have been burned unintentionally, in the course of capturing the acropolis, but damage inflicted at Smyrna bears the signs of deliberate action. As Thomas Harrison pointed out, “any act of rebellion is conceived as a kind of ontological rebellion”.⁸¹⁶ However,

⁸¹⁵ Henkelman (2008) 342.

⁸¹⁶ Harrison (2011) 82.

Henkelman is probably right that the Persians had exclusively political reasons for punitive measures against religious institutions, unlike the at least partly religious motivations of Assyrian and Anatolian conquerors (Chapter 2), such as extinguishing or subordinating a city's protector deity because of refusal to bow to Aššur and his representative monarch or because conquest ideology required acknowledgment of the victor's god. Persian policy in the first instance was to avoid the post-warfare disturbances so familiar from Anatolian and Assyrian history, such as large-scale deportations and religious impositions. Religious institutions were left unscathed and customs respected, indeed encouraged, as we will see below. But political disloyalty vitiated the arrangement. Herodotos recollected the Persian position at the time of the Ionian revolt explicitly:

“[T]hey shall suffer no hurt for their rebellion, and that neither their temples shall be burnt nor their houses, nor shall they in any regard be more violently used than aforetime.”

Thus, when the advice to submit was not heeded:

“There the Persian generals failed not to fulfil the threats which they had uttered against the Ionians when they were encamped over against them... and burnt the cities, yea, and their temples.”⁸¹⁷

Any destruction of temples or idols (such as at Smyrna and perhaps Erythrai and Samos) during Cyrus' conquest of Anatolia occurred probably for the same reasons as the destruction of temples later, after the Ionian revolt⁸¹⁸ – because of unbending identification between autonomist civic identity and the deity, who represented independence and provided a focal point about which resistance could rally. An additional reason for the targeting of sacred enclosures could have been because their precincts made ideal refuges for resisting troops.

⁸¹⁷ *Hist.* VI.9; VI.32. On the notorious plunder and burning of the shrine and oracle of Apollo at Branchidai-Didyma: *Hist.* VI.19. Elsewhere in the Milesian chora, a sondage at the same sanctuary of Athena at Assesos burned and rebuilt during the reign of King Alyattes of Lydia (see Chapter 3) shows it was again destroyed in 494 BC: Lohmann (1995) 313-314.

⁸¹⁸ Herodotos interprets the destructions visited on temples as tit-for-tat revenge on Athens and Greek deities following the Greek burning of the temple of Kybebe at Sardis: *Hist.* V.102; see Gould (1991) on reciprocity in Herodotos. See Tozzi (1977) 27-28 and n. 23 for a list of Persian offences carried out in retribution. Tozzi, *ibid.* 24-27 perceived a change in Herodotos' depiction of the Persians' attitude towards the Greek temples beginning from the Ionian revolt at the outset of the fifth century BC.

They were often walled and located at eminently defensible sites of the city.⁸¹⁹ Idols and temple complexes, then, represented political and military dangers rather than religious threats, but the Persians appreciated the symbolic meaning that damage to religious institutions would have for the defeated peoples. Their recently acquired familiarity with Greek customs, moreover, was useful in the ideological battle against insurrection in another way. The right of sanctuary and inviolability within the sacred precinct, respected thus far by the Persians among other Greek religious precepts, would be moot in the event that the temple was demolished. Perhaps the threat of destruction was intended as a warning that rebellion would result not only in the loss of the architecture but also in the forfeiture of religious privileges and customs.

b Delegitimisation of earlier kings and legitimisation of Persian kingship

Ktesias was probably right to look back to the Assyrian empire for the Persian model of conquest that extended to northwest Anatolia.⁸²⁰ After all, the Cyrus Cylinder hearkened back to the policies of the Assyrian king Aššurbanipal. Like that Near Eastern monarch, Cyrus plundered the treasures in the towns and temples of the places he conquered and sent them to Persia.⁸²¹ Other similarities of customs related to kingship included the institution of prayers specifically for the wellbeing of the king and Persians (attested in *Hist.* I.132 and the *Avesta*);⁸²² but, unlike Assyria, there is no indication that these were compulsory or forced upon non-Persians.

The only instance that may be cited for the extinguishment of an indigenous Anatolian cult in favour of a Persian one is that of the conversion of the Lydian altar of Kuvava/Kybele in the metal-refining precinct at Sardis to a Persian fire altar (Chapters 3 and 5). Rather than construing this act as dogmatic, the religious usurpation should be seen as politically motivated: the goddess had protected the mint on behalf of the Lydian royal house and, since control of the facility had passed into new hands, the change had to be reflected by the presence of the Persian tutelary religion. Whether this constitutes an exception to Cyrus'

⁸¹⁹ Thiers (1995) 507, 512-13 made these observations in relation to Egyptian temples (including in the Persian period) but they are also applicable to Ionia.

⁸²⁰ The conquests of Ninus, (mythical) King of the Assyrians and founder of Nineveh, extended to the Hellespont: Ktesias, *Persika*, Frag. 1b (Diodorus, 2.1.4-28.7), 2.3.

⁸²¹ e.g. Ecbatana: Nabonidus Chronicle *ABC* 7.ii §§1-4; and Sardis: *Hist.* I.88-89.

⁸²² de Jong (1997) 115-116.

general policy of religious acculturation and integration is debatable. The altar was located in a facility that would not have been accessible to the public; it would probably have been used to invoke divine blessings on the operations occurring there for the benefit of the state hegemon. Although the workers now fell under the protection of the Persian deity, non-Persian individuals had effectively been deprived of the daily blessings of the regional goddess for political reasons. On the whole, the conversion of the altar appears to have been mandated by the need to delegitimise the old regime and assert Persian authority in its stead.

If we look to the Anatolian forms of kingship and legitimisation of the time, partially preserved for us in literature and archaeological remains (and happily contemporary at Kerkenes Dağ), we are able to compare some of Cyrus' practices and begin to understand why the Persian king came to be regarded as different. He did not place religious stelai, idols or statues in areas such as gateways, where the public was accustomed to conspicuous displays of the ties between ruler and protective god, nor did he conduct ritual observances there which were connected to state religious ideology.

A principal means of articulating the power and prestige of Phrygian and Lydian kingship was via built religious monuments, such as impressive façades and stepped altars sculpted out of naturally occurring rock, and monumental tombs for kings and royalty (Chapter 3). The era of rock-cut monuments had almost passed by the time of the Persian conquest, although its iconography was still alive (as the semi-iconic stelai of Kerkenes Dağ go to prove). Once again seizing on similarities between the religious cultures, this time the creation of elaborate rock reliefs and the use of the lion motif to represent divine as well as worldly authority, the Persians signalled continuity with the past while breathing new life into the tradition. The lion motif of the Phrygian and Lydian state goddess, so closely associated with royalty, was now employed in large-scale rock reliefs on the tombs of non-royal, but Persianised elite individuals (Yılan Taş and Arslan Taş). Acculturation was encouraged by gifts and seals bearing Persian motifs, which made their way into the provincial repertoire. Their use in new contexts served to declare that iconography formerly associated with the monarchy and state was now available to others and, although in no way egalitarian, there existed increased possibilities for status mobility than had been the case under previous rulers. This impression is reinforced by another funerary phenomenon, the tumulus tomb, once reserved to royal individuals and their family members: under Persian rule the tumulus tomb and its construction technology was accessible to other individuals. Moreover, there was liberty to elaborate on the traditions of content and decoration, which signifies that the mortuary practices, too, had lost their rigidity: wall and floor painting occurred, doorways were ornamented, funerary gifts (notably now of precious metals) and

furnishings varied. The exclusive privileges of the earlier kings, along with their particular connections to the religious sphere, had effectively been annulled.

c. *Acculturation of religion and religious practices*

The introduction of Persian religion in Anatolia began with the establishment of sanctuaries and rites in commemoration of or thanksgiving for Cyrus' victories, from Zela in the east and Hierocaesarea in the west. This was a common Near Eastern practice. The state religion accompanied the conquerors and was established as a part of the apparatus of state administration. The garrisons and Persian governors that Cyrus left behind him practiced their religious traditions in these new territories, publicly and in monumental fashion, as is evidenced by the stepped altar in the Pactolus valley near Sardis, later the site of the Artemis precinct. The *partetaš*, too, was introduced at Daskyleion, Sardis, and perhaps elsewhere.⁸²³ Persian funerary buildings and practices also followed.

The evidence of burial customs provides some of the most compelling evidence of the religious acculturation that took place in the years following the establishment of Persian rule. While distinctively Indo-Iranian burials occurred (with horse/horse paraphernalia and chariot: see nn. 659 and 699), it is the funerary monuments blending Persian and local traditions that are the most instructive. The innovative re-working of the freestanding tomb traditions of Anatolia and Persia, pillar tombs and 'pyramid' tombs (chambers above stepped platforms), attest to the early acculturation of burial customs in this territory largely unfamiliar with Persian mores (the earliest example of these monuments at Taş Kule occurring before the consolidation of the initial conquest). The contents of Persian-period burials are equally informative. The introduction of stone couches, tables and drinking vessels in mortuary contexts, as well as the popularity of the reclining banquet in funerary reliefs, demonstrate the introduction and acceptance of Persian practices, at least in the case of wealthy individuals.

Acculturation of the Persian and Greek goddesses was greatly aided by the Persian custom of aniconic worship. There were no statues or other preconceived imagery to be elided into a new cultural context. The Lydians and the Ionian Greeks were free to visualise the female

⁸²³ Dusinberre (2003) 70-72. Although attested archaeologically only for later periods, the example of the sacred park at Pasargadae suggests that the practice was already central to Persian ideology in Cyrus' time.

deity in an accustomed manner and draw parallels between her worship and that of their own goddess Artemis. Similarities between the cults – associations with water, the protection of vegetation, and fertility⁸²⁴ – meant that the Greeks could worship the goddess of the new ruling power (as they had done with the goddess of their Lydian overlords) and, conversely, that Artemis could also be worshipped and patronised by Persians. The conversion of the Persian stepped altar to a conventional Greek shape and the formation of the Artemis precinct around it are incontestable evidence of Greek adaptation of Persian cult, as well as the willingness of Persian authorities to support syncretistic worship. A complete merger of the cults was not possible, given the Persian aversion to burning offerings, but a combination of traditions is certainly evident here, as well as in funerary practices (at Taş Kule, further illustrated on the Daskyleion stela, Figs 5.15 and 5.6).

d. Support of local religion and religious traditions

As well as introducing Persian religion and encouraging its acculturation, Cyrus and his representatives also sponsored indigenous religion, firstly in cases where commonalities of practice could be identified. While the customs of the Medes could be adopted wholesale, in other places equivalences were drawn between deities or practices that particularly attracted Persian support: cultivation of the *partetaš*, for example, found a parallel in the sacred gardens associated with the Ionian Greek temples that could result in the award of privileges to temple gardeners (such as those at the sanctuary of Apollo at Aulai). Interactions between Persian priests and Greek philosophers in Ionia (perhaps especially in Miletos) may indicate attempts to find common ground even before the conquest.

We can also cite examples of good relationships with oracular sanctuaries (Klaros, Aulai) and Persian participation in Greek religious building projects. The evidence of the building projects particularly confirms the freedom of development of indigenous religion in local style and also shows Persian involvement. The completion of the temple at Ephesos with Persian bull antae is one example; the Persian ‘tapestry’ design on a threshold stone of the Metroon at Sardis may be another. In general, Ionia experienced a boom in the construction and elaboration of religious structures in the Archaic period, all the more noteworthy because of the comparatively modest scale of any other kind of building. Evidently, Cyrus’ intention was to divert resources away from civic projects that could lead to dissent or revolt, such as walls and fortifications, toward those of a non-political nature. The development of religious

⁸²⁴ Brosius (1998) 237.

institutions provided an opportunity for encouraging unity in communities in which Persian patrons could also participate. Temples may have received Persian attentions for the economic benefits such foci attracted to the community (especially in the Greek tradition, as discussed above). As observed earlier, it was only when ambitions of secession were acted upon that the authorities retaliated with repression of the populace and pointed action against their poliadic deity.

Cyrus' policies on religion

In the ancient world, it has often been observed, politics and religion were symbiotic. As Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg put it:

“Religion is inextricably intertwined with all other facets of the construction of political and social coherence. It is anachronistic to regard religion as an isolated factor. In fact, any explanation of the interaction between king and subjects that fails to see religion as but one factor in a complex of political realities out of which ethnic identities are created is unhelpful.”

We should take care, however, not to marginalise the role of religion or consider Persian respect of local beliefs, as Sancisi-Weerdenburg did, simply “expedient” for the pacification of the conquered populace.⁸²⁵ In the case of the conquest of Anatolia, religion provided a platform for a kind of unity of ethnicities under Cyrus’ rule that was not based overtly on military force. Perhaps only the approach of Croesus at Ephesos, where the king’s sponsorship directed the development of religious institutions which were developed with the intention of rivalling the influence of Miletos, can be compared. Cyrus was perhaps the first imperial leader to act on the understanding that “[a]dapting to local customs and traditions could be expected to cause less friction than imposing foreign mores or allochthonous beliefs”.⁸²⁶

Arguments that Cyrus’ actions were driven by political expediency only are impossible to prove, and are specious because they proceed from a modern viewpoint where religion is no longer the primary driver of imperial action (at least, not ordinarily). Religious belief formed the basis of a ruler’s ideology in the ancient Near East, informing his policies and directing

⁸²⁵ Sancisi-Weerdenburg (2001) 336.

⁸²⁶ Sancisi-Weerdenburg (2001) 336.

his conduct. It would be presumptuous to state that religion was used cynically by Cyrus to mask purely military or political ambitions. Certainly he made use of the traditions he encountered, but there is no reason to suppose he did not believe in divine appointment or that he had not carried out the rituals required by his and other patron deities sufficiently well to feel he had attained their support.

Cyrus used the local religious language to negotiate his rule in newly conquered territories. In some ways he was not unusual in this – for example, the Assyrians made local gods parties to loyalty treaties – but in others he was a pioneer. No imperial ruler before him had facilitated the acculturation of his own religion while not interfering with the freedoms of local religions and religious institutions. The mutability of his own religion made this possible. Had he been Zoroastrian, his philosophy could not have accommodated, for example, animal offerings as part of a fire ritual at Taş Kule or the conversion of the Persian stepped altar at Sardis into a Greek-style altar for Artemis. His political power would perhaps have been exercised in accordance with Assyrian precedent, and the Persian period would have left a very different mark in history.

It was not passivity, then, but policy that avoided the dominance of Persian religion and only cursory retention of a territory's former traditions. Persians deliberately involved themselves in local religion, acting as patrons, and adopting norms and customs that served to ingratiate rulers with the ruled.⁸²⁷ The ideology tied the groups together; the aim from the Persian perspective, no doubt, was to encourage religious dependency and stability in communities so as to facilitate economic exploitation of their resources. Notably, there was no interference by the state in cultic matters.⁸²⁸ Early Persian goals were pragmatic and did not involve

⁸²⁷ Acculturation was visible more clearly as time wore on. Notable Anatolian examples include the fourth-century BC trilingual inscription at Xanthos, in which the satrap guaranteed benefices for a Lykian cult: see Briant (2002) 707-709; and a statue dedicated to Lydian Zeus by a Persian official: Briant (2002) 707-709; 677-678.

⁸²⁸ The extant Old Testament account of Ezra, sent to establish the law of the Persian king and Ezra's god in Yehud (7:25-26), is probably an invention of the second century BC editors of the Ezra-Nehemiah tradition for the purposes of making Torah central to the post-exilic 'Second Temple' history of Jerusalem: Fitzpatrick-McKinley (2003). Aspects of the story emphasising the respect of the Persian king for the Jewish god are probably embellishments. For example, rather than the Persian monarch funding the rebuilding of the temple of Yahweh, the money was probably collected from the community (1:2, 4; 3:7; 6:4-8; 7:15-16); in return for not annexing the money, the king (Darius?) may have been the subject of prayers for his wellbeing (6:10; compare this with the Persian practice of praying for the king in *Hist.* I.131).

imposing cultural homogeneity. Of course, whether Cyrus had a single policy to govern all territories remains a disputed question.

From the earliest scholarship Cyrus the Great has been lauded as unusually tolerant of the religions, religious practices and institutions within territories in his possession. The term 'religious tolerance' connotes forbearance of belief systems other than one's own. Its use in relation to the ancient world is, however, anachronistic: pervasive polytheism meant that there were always other gods aside from one's own to reckon with. It was the method of treating them that differed: for example, Assyrian kings subordinated these to Aššur, the Hittites incorporated them into their pantheon. What set Cyrus apart from other conquerors was not that he acknowledged the existence of deities other than his own, or that he explicitly supported their worship, nor even that he did not impose his own deities or practices on defeated populations, any and all of which could be said for other imperial leaders; his reputation emerged from the success of a policy combining the embracing of local religious culture on its own terms (rather than syncretising it with his own religion), encouragement of the restoration of cultic norms, and permissive attitude towards acculturation of his native religious practices. The latitude in matters of religious independence experienced by the peoples conquered by Cyrus was unprecedented, so much so that it drew the puzzled attention of historians and prophets for centuries afterwards and continues to intrigue scholars today.

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The Kerkenes Project: www.kerkenes.metu.edu.tr

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United Nations: <http://www.un.org/events/humanrights/2008/history.shtml>

Appendix

THE CYRUS CYLINDER TEXT

(from *ANET* 315-316)

... [r]ims (of the world... a weakling has been installed as the *enû* of his country; [the correct images of the gods he removed from their thrones, imi]tations he ordered to place upon them. A replica of the temple Esagila he has... for Ur and the other sacred cities inappropriate rituals... daily he did blabber [incorrect prayers]. He (furthermore) interrupted in a fiendish way the regular offerings, he did... he established within the sacred cities. The worship of Marduk, the king of the gods, he [chang]ed into abomination, daily he used to do evil against his (i.e. Marduk's) city... He [tormented] its [inhabitant]s with corvée-work (lit.: a yoke) without relief, he ruined them all.

Upon their complaints the lord of the gods became terribly angry and [he departed from] their region, (also) the (other) gods living among them left their mansions, wroth that he had brought (them) into Babylon. (But) Marduk [who does care for]... on account of (the fact that) the sanctuaries of all their settlements were in ruins and the inhabitants of Sumer and Akkad had become like (living) dead, turned back (his countenance) [his] an[ger] [abated] and he had mercy (upon them). He scanned and looked (through) all the countries, searching for a righteous ruler willing to lead him (i.e. Marduk) (in the annual procession). (Then) he pronounced the name of Cyrus, king of Anshan, declared him (lit.: pronounced [his] name) to be(come) the ruler of all the world. He made the Gutí country and all the Manda-hordes bow in submission to his (i.e. Cyrus') feet. And he (Cyrus) did always endeavour to treat according to justice the black-headed whom he (Marduk) has made him conquer. Marduk, the great lord, a protector of his people/worshippers, beheld with pleasure his (i.e. Cyrus') good deeds and his upright mind (lit.: heart) (and therefore) ordered him to

march against his city Babylon. He made him set out on the road to Babylon going at his side like a real friend. His widespread troops – their number, like that of the water of a river, could not be established – strolled along, their weapons packed away. Without any battle, he made him enter his town Babylon, sparing Babylon any calamity. He delivered into his (i.e. Cyrus') hands Nabonidus, the king who did not worship him (i.e. Marduk). All the inhabitants of Babylon as well as of the entire country of Sumer and Akkad, princes and governors (included), bowed to him (Cyrus) and kissed his feet, jubilant that he (had received) the kingship, and with shining faces. Happily they greeted him as a master through whose help they had come (again) to life from death (and) had all been spared damage and disaster, and they worshipped his (very) name.

I am Cyrus, king of the world, great king, legitimate king, king of Babylon, king of Sumer and Akkad, king of the four rims (of the earth), son of Cambyses, great king, king of Anshan, grandson of Cyrus, great king, king of Anshan, descendant of Teispes, great king, king of Anshan, of a family (which) always (exercised) kingship; whose rule Bel and Nebo love, whom they want as king to please their hearts.

When I entered Babylon as a friend and (when) I established the seat of the government in the palace of the ruler under jubilation and rejoicing, Marduk, the great lord, [induced] the magnanimous inhabitants of Babylon [to love me], and I was daily endeavouring to worship him. My numerous troops walked around Babylon in peace, I did not allow anybody to terrorize (any place) of the [country of Sumer] and Akkad. I strove for peace in Babylon and in all his (other) sacred cities. As to the inhabitants of Babylon, [who] against the will of the gods [had/were..., I abolished] the corvée (lit.: yoke) which was against their (social) standing. I brought relief to their dilapidated housing, putting (thus) an end to their (main) complaints. Marduk, the great lord, was well pleased with my deeds and sent friendly blessings to myself, Cyrus, the king who worships him, to Cambyses, my son, the offspring of [my] loins, as well as to all my troops, and we all [praised] his great [godhead] joyously, standing before him in peace.

All the kings of the entire world from the Upper to the Lower Sea, those who are seated in throne rooms, (those who) live in other [types of buildings as well as] all the kings of the West land living in tents, brought their heavy tributes and kissed my feet in Babylon. (As to the region) from... as far as Ashur and Susa, Agade, Eshnunna, the towns Zamban, Me-Turnu, Der as well as the region of the Gutians, I returned to (these) sacred cities on the other side of the Tigris, the sanctuaries of which have been ruins for a long time, the images which (used) to live therein and established for them permanent sanctuaries. I (also) gathered all their (former) inhabitants and returned (to them) their habitations. Furthermore, I resettled upon the command of Marduk, the great lord, all the gods of Sumer and Akkad, whom

Nabonidus has brought into Babylon to the anger of the lord of the gods, unharmed, in their (former) chapels, the places which make them happy.

May all the gods whom I have resettled in their sacred cities ask daily Bel and Nebo for a long life for me and may they recommend me (to him); to Marduk, my lord, they may say this: "Cyrus, the king who worships you, and Cambyses, his son..." ... all of them I settled in a peaceful place... ducks and doves,... I endeavoured to fortify/repair their dwelling places...

THE 'YALE' FRAGMENT

Lines 37-44 of the Cyrus Cylinder text

(from Cogan, *COS II*, 2.124, 316)

I increased the offerings [to x] geese, two ducks and ten turtledoves above the former (offerings) of geese, du[cks, and turtledoves []. I sought to strengthen the [construction(?)] of Dur-Imgur-Enlil, the great wall of Babylo[n]. [] The bricks at the bank of the ditch, which a former king had built, [but had not comple]ted its construction [], on the outside, which no former king had made, a levy of workmen of Babylonians, [with bitumen] and bricks, I built anew. [] overlaid in copper. The thresholds and the pivo[ts] their [doors]. [An inscription with] the name of Ashurbanipal, a king who had proceeded (*sic*) me [I sa]w. []... for e]ternity.

ILLUSTRATIONS



Fig. 1 The Cyrus Cylinder, Babylonia.



Fig. 2.1 The Hittite king Tudhaliya IV (1227-1209 BC) in the protective embrace of the god Šarruma. Rock relief at Yazılıkaya sanctuary.



Left: Fig. 2.2 An altar of Assyrian king Tukulti Ninurta I depicting the king standing and then kneeling before the altar of Nusku (about 1240 BC). The square object on the altar may be a stone or a tablet and stylus ready for the king's prayer.

Right: Fig. 2.3 Altar of King Tukulti-Ninurta III from the Ištar temple in the Assyrian capital, Assur. The relief features military standards topped with the symbol of his protector deity.

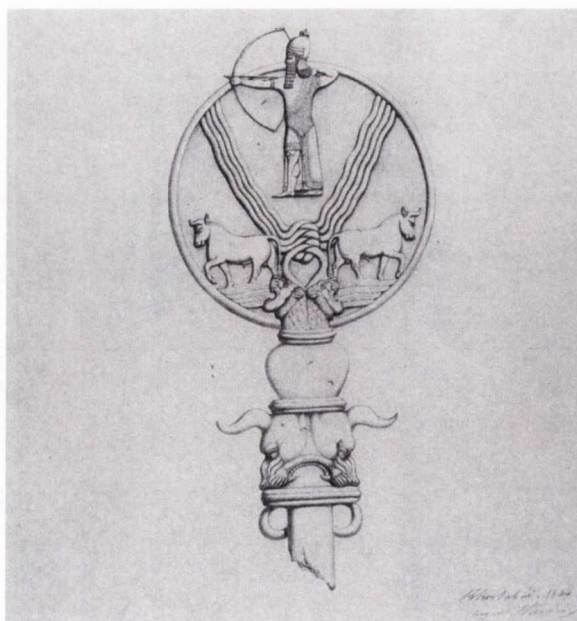
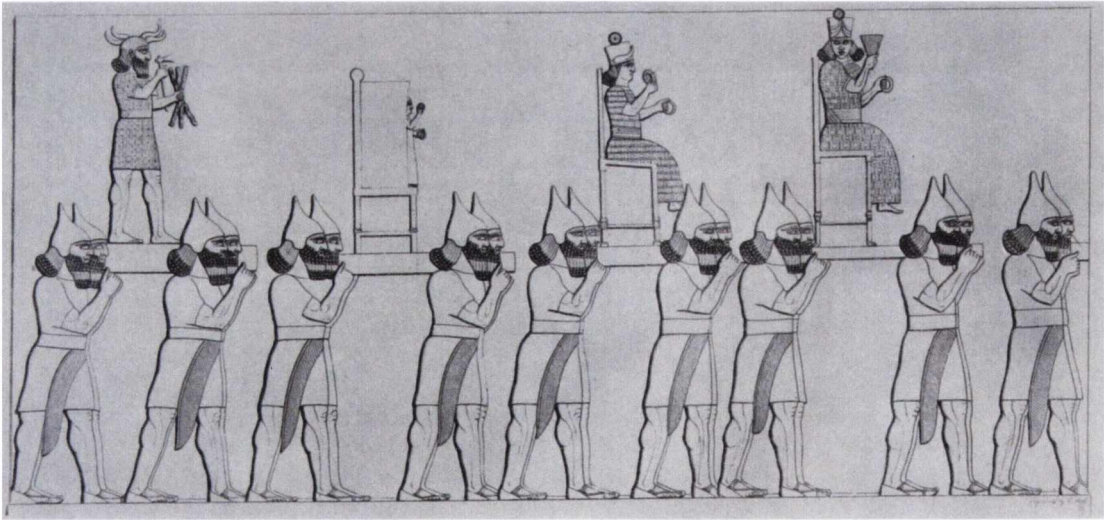


Fig. 2.4 The "weapon of Aššur" depicted on a relief at Khorsabad, drawn by Flandin (1849).

Fig. 2.5 Assyrian relief from Nineveh depicting divine images (probably Median) being taken hostage by soldiers of Tiglath-Pileser III.



a



b



Fig. 2.6 Bronze gate decoration from Balawat, showing the rituals conducted by the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III upon reaching the shores of Lake Van.



Fig. 2.7 Re-used bronze belt from the Giyimli bronze hoard, showing a female figure incised upside down over three registers of animals.

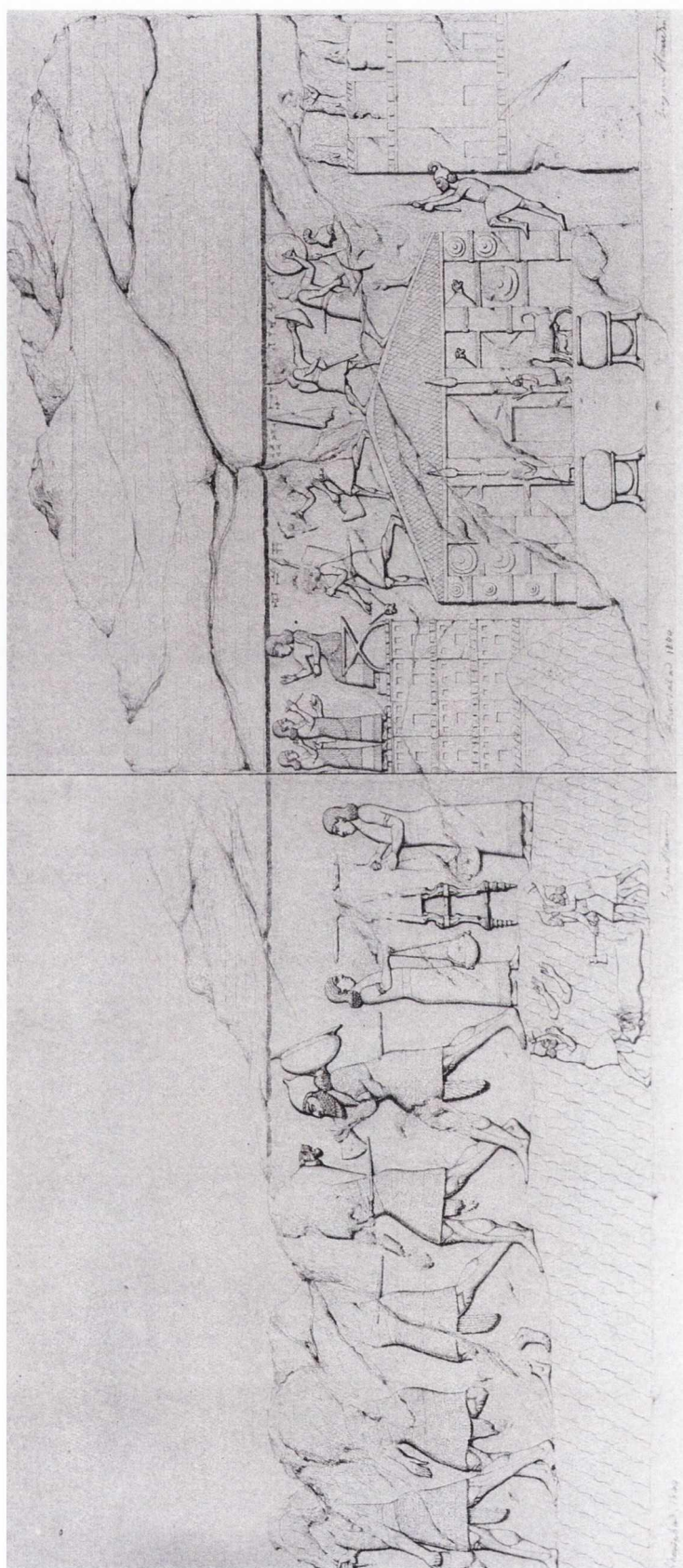


Fig. 2.8 The sack of Muṣaṣir: relief carving at Khorsabad, drawn by Flandin (1849).

The Phrygian Goddess and the State

At city gates



Fig. 3.1 Delik Taş: south side, with monumental entrance gate.



Fig. 3.2 Delik Taş: niche with image of the goddess Matar *in situ*, west of the south monumental entrance gate.



Fig. 3.3 Boğazköy: the Phrygian goddess Matar and musicians found *in situ* at the city gate.

In association with the megaron

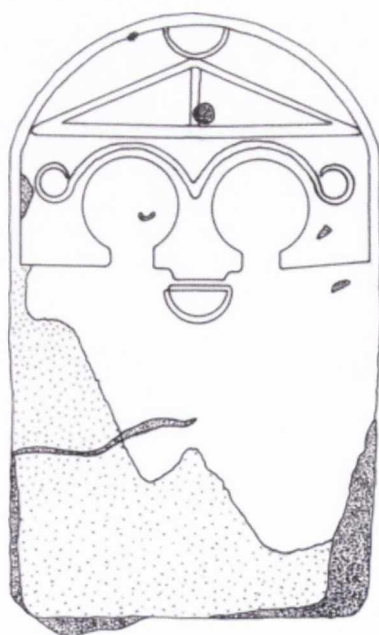


Fig. 3.4 Sincan: stela with relief of double idols beneath gable-roofed structure.



Fig. 3.5 Gordion: Megaron 2, east wall, incised drawings of gable-roofed buildings featuring niches and acroteria. Note the bird drawn over the building at left.

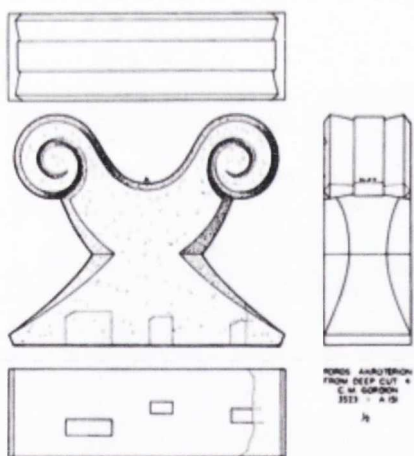


Fig. 3.6 Gordion: acroterion discovered before Megaron 2.



Fig. 3.7 Midas City, Phrygia: the 'Midas Monument'.

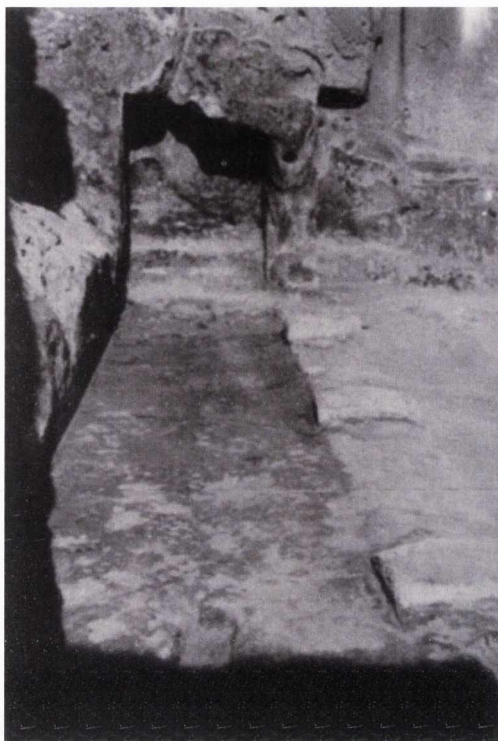


Fig. 3.8a-b Stoa adjacent to the Midas Monument, incorporating the Phrygian goddess's niche.



Fig. 3.9a-b Arslankaya: Phrygian goddess flanked by lions, symbols of the Lydian royal house.



Fig. 3.10 Midas City: Stepped monument, now with throne and offering bench.



Fig. 4.1 Bronze relief of Elamite warrior deities discovered in the royal chapel at Susa.

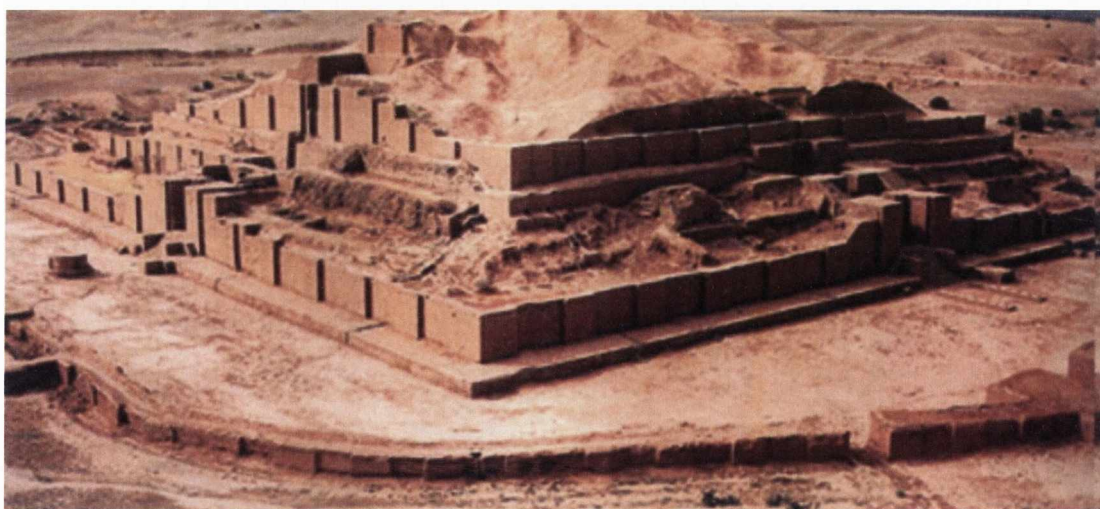


Fig. 4.2 Čoġā Zانبīl, built in the Middle Elamite period halfway between Susa and Anšan as a religious centre where both lowland and highland deities were worshipped.

Fig. 4.3 Reliefs at the Kūl-e Farah (Īzeh) sanctuary.



a Relief III depicting the king raised on a platform making sacrifice, surrounded by processing and (below) dancing figures. Probably prior to the Neo-Elamite period.



b Relief IV depicting a procession and banquet accompanying rituals of animal sacrifice. Probably prior to the Neo-Elamite period.

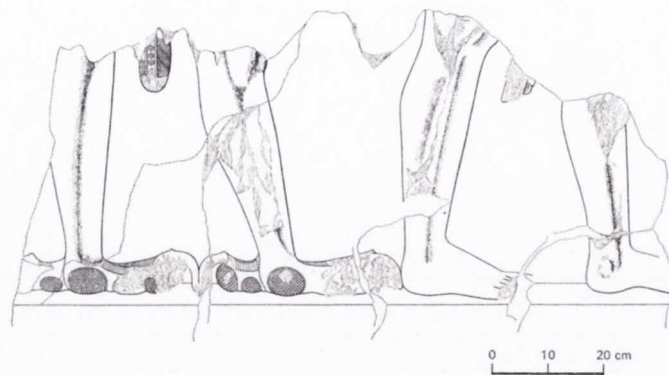


c Relief I depicting the ruler Hanni and, behind him, the figures of the chief minister of the army and a vizier. On the right musicians process and animals are led toward an altar for sacrifice. Hanni was a client of the Neo-Elamite king Šutur-Nahhunte.

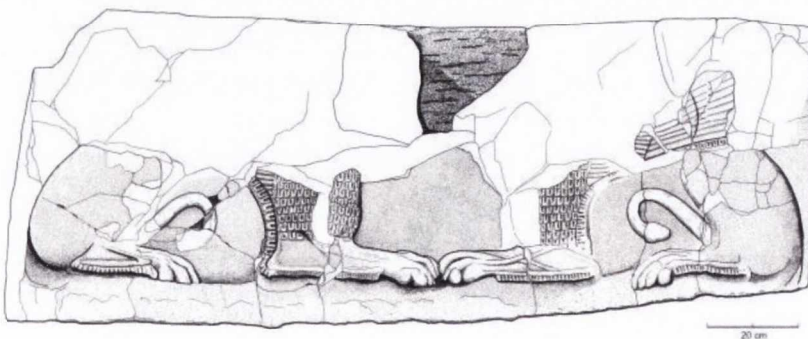
Fig. 4.4 Carved images showing Assyrianised apotropaic motifs in common at a) Susa, Elam; b) Pasargadae; c) and d) Kerkenes Dağ.



a Apotropaic plaque, Susa.



b Relief sculpture from north-west doorway of Palace S (Audience Hall) at Pasargadae.



c-d Carved plinth in the Cappadocia Gate, Kerkenes Dağ, Phrygia.

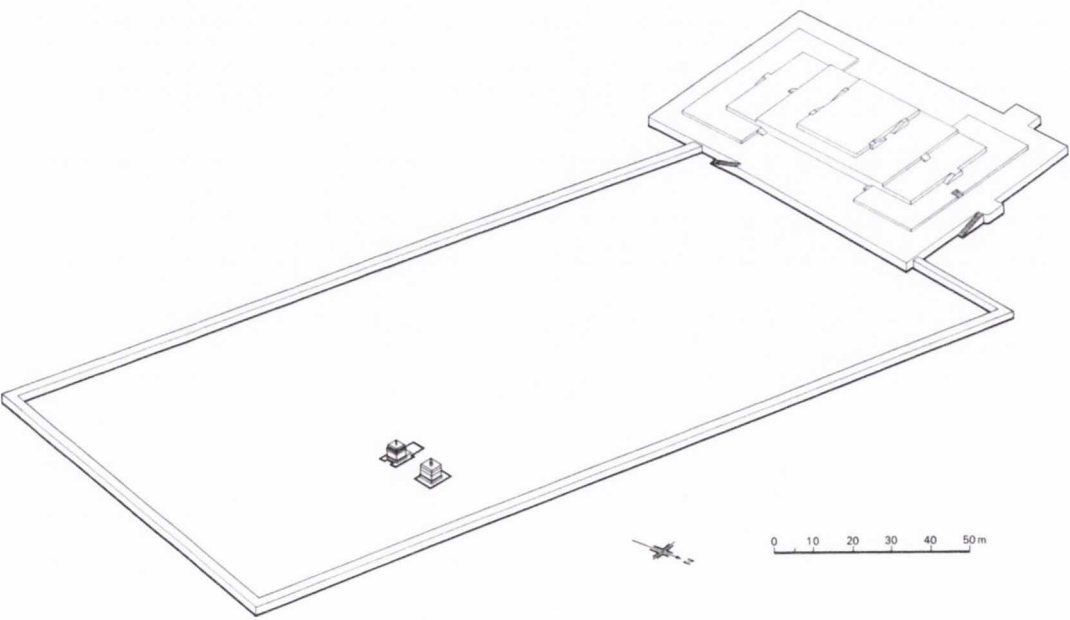


Fig. 4.5 Detail of a relief from the Palace of Aššurbanipal at Nineveh showing Assyrians carrying off booty from the Elamite campaign, including the statue of a bull-deity (or apotropaic gateway oxen?) on a cart.

Fig. 4.6 The “sacred precinct” at Pasargadae.



a From the east.



b Axonometric drawing of the enclosure with plinths in the foreground and terraced mound behind.



Fig. 4.7a The plinths within the sacred precinct, before excavation.



b Top portion of a stepped fire altar or fire holder from Pasargadae dating to the reign of Cyrus, upside down. The broken corner reveals the depth of the fire bowl.



c Elevation and section of the restored fire altars/fire holders.

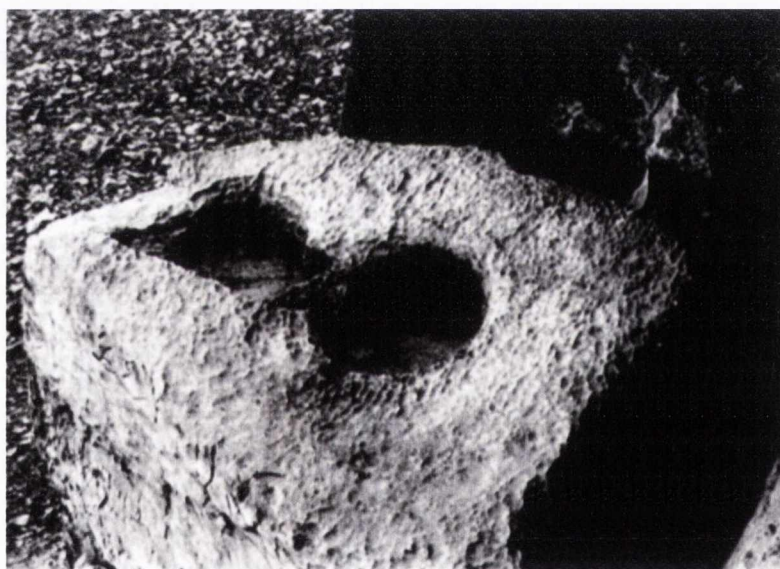


Fig. 4.8 Fire bowls at the Elamite sanctuary at Kūl-e Farah (Īzeh).



Fig. 4.9 The sanctuary of the Central Temple at the Median settlement of Nush-i Jan, partially cleared of shale (excavators supported the corners of the stepped fire altar with piles of rocks to prevent its collapse). The site provides evidence of non-Zoroastrian practices in Media at the end of the seventh century BC.



Fig. 4.10 The *sit shamshi* ("bronze sunrise") of the Middle Elamite king Šilhak Inšušinak, depicting an open-air ritual.



Above: Fig. 4.11 The Arjan tomb “ring”, displaying multi-cultural influences. *Below:* Fig. 4.12 Drawing of the Arjan tomb bowl decoration: Assyrianised style adapted to Elamite customs.



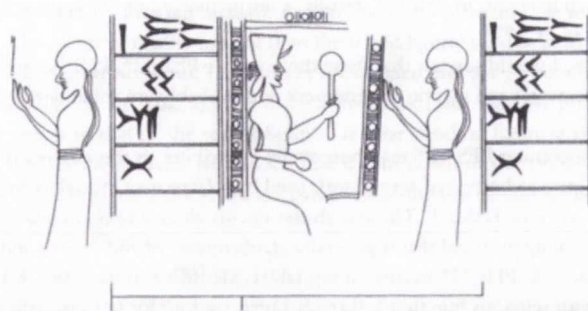


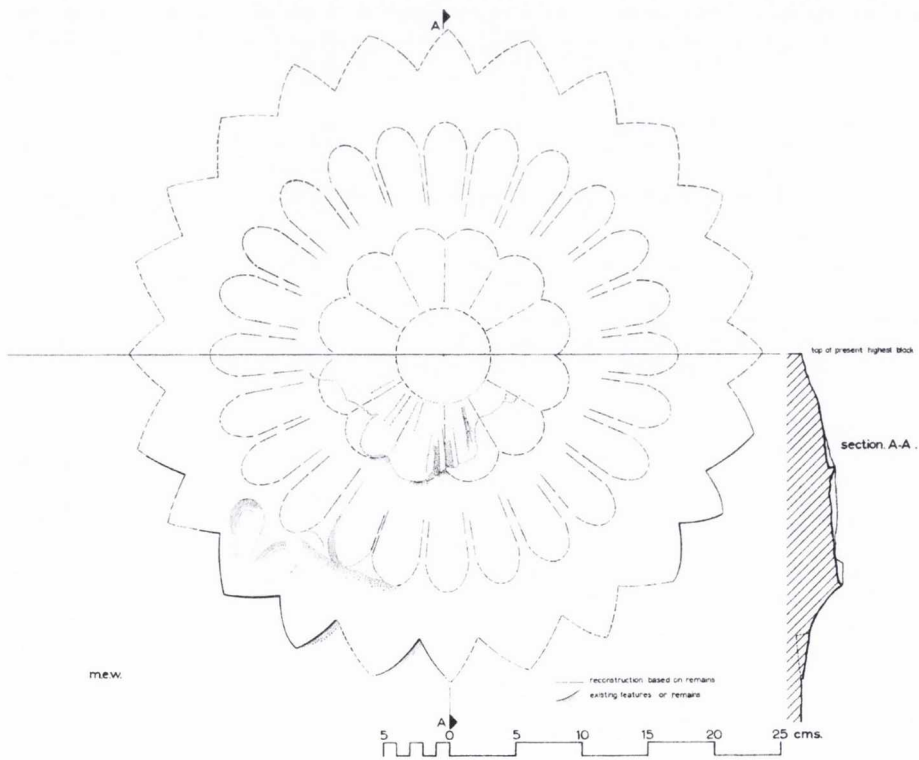
Fig. 4.13 Line drawing of Anshanite “heirloom” seal PFS 1308 from the Persepolis Fortification archive.



Fig. 4.14a-b Relief and drawing of the winged figure from the Gatehouse (‘Palace R’) at Pasargadae.



Fig. 4.15a Tomb of Cyrus, Pasargadae.



b Reconstruction of the moulding on the north-west pediment of the tomb of Cyrus.

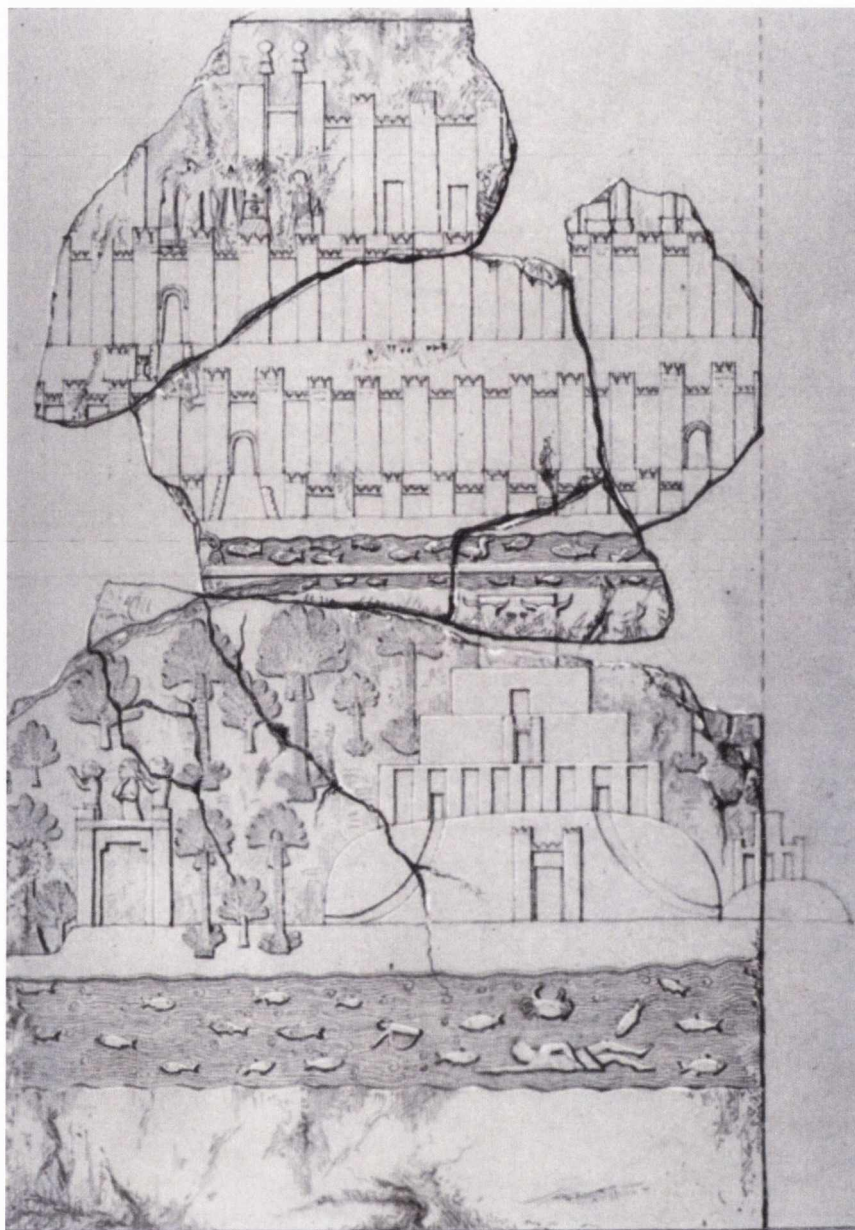
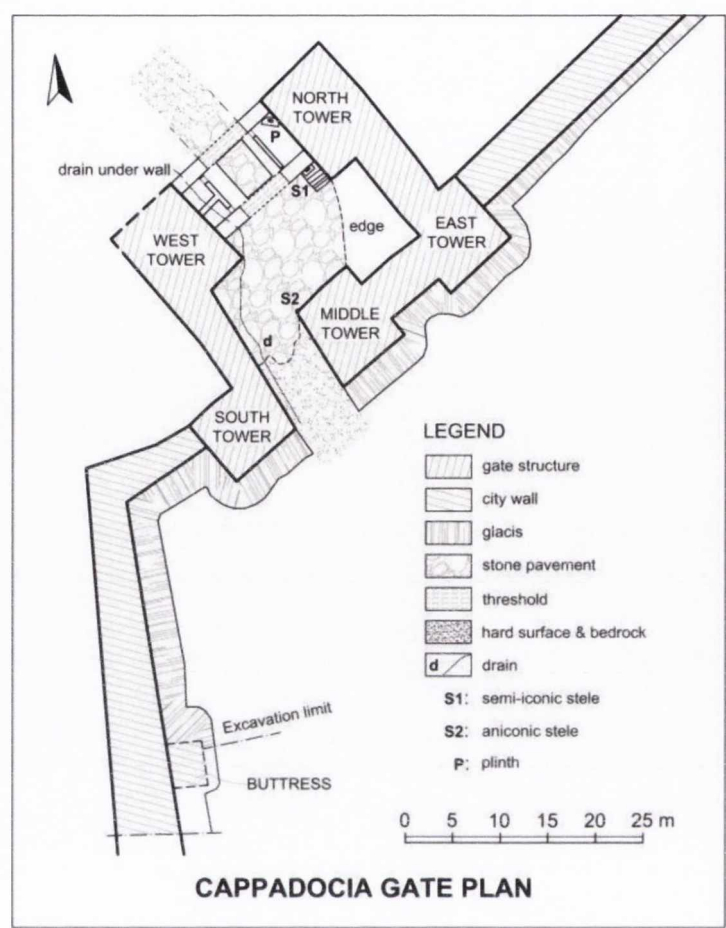
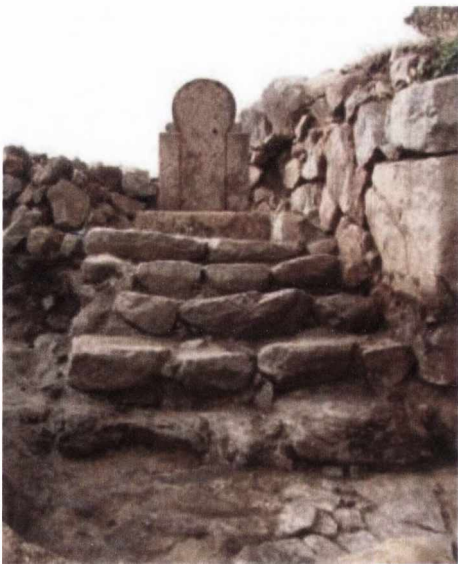


Fig. 4.16 Drawing of a lost relief from the Palace of Aššurbanipal at Nineveh depicting the sack of the city of Susa in Elam. Note the bull horns at the top of the ziggurat and the setting of the ziggurat in a grove.

Fig. 5.1 The Cappadocia Gate complex, Kerkenes Dağ, Phrygia, mid-sixth century BC.



a Sketch of the Gate indicating placement of its monuments.



b The stepped monument with Photoshop reconstruction of semi-ionic idol.

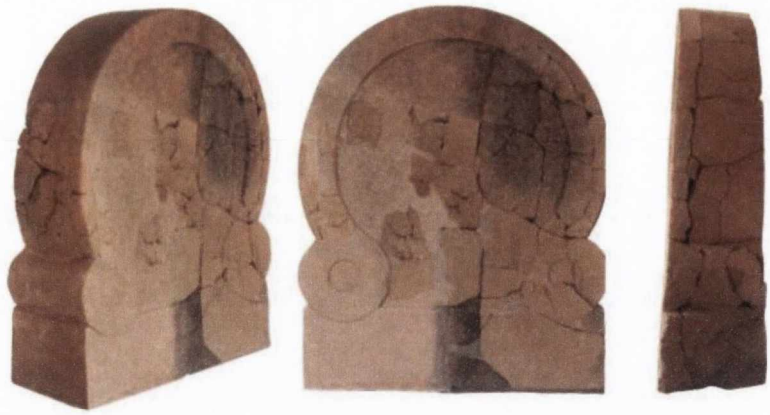


Fig. 5.2 Semi-iconic idol from the monumental entranceway to the Palatial Complex at Kerkenes Dağ.



Fig. 5.3 Amphora-rhyton from Duvanlij.



Fig. 5.4 Early Persian-period relief fallen from the 'Broken Lion' tomb, Yilan Taş, Phrygia.



Fig. 5.5 In the middle distance: the stepped construction of the sixth century BC altar exposed within the later Altar of Artemis at Sardis.

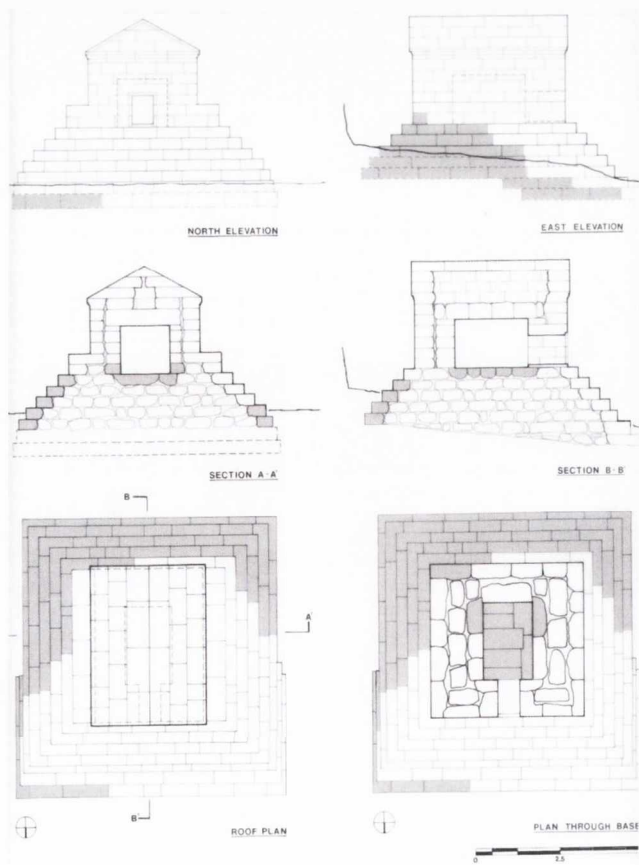


Fig. 5.6 Funerary relief from Ergili, Daskyleion, depicting magi conducting a ritual involving what appear to be sacrificial animals.

Fig. 5.7 'Pyramid tomb' at Sardis.



a From above.



b Reconstruction of the tomb with a gabled-roofed chamber, on the grounds that the weight of a pyramid-shaped upper would be too much for the ceiling beams to bear.

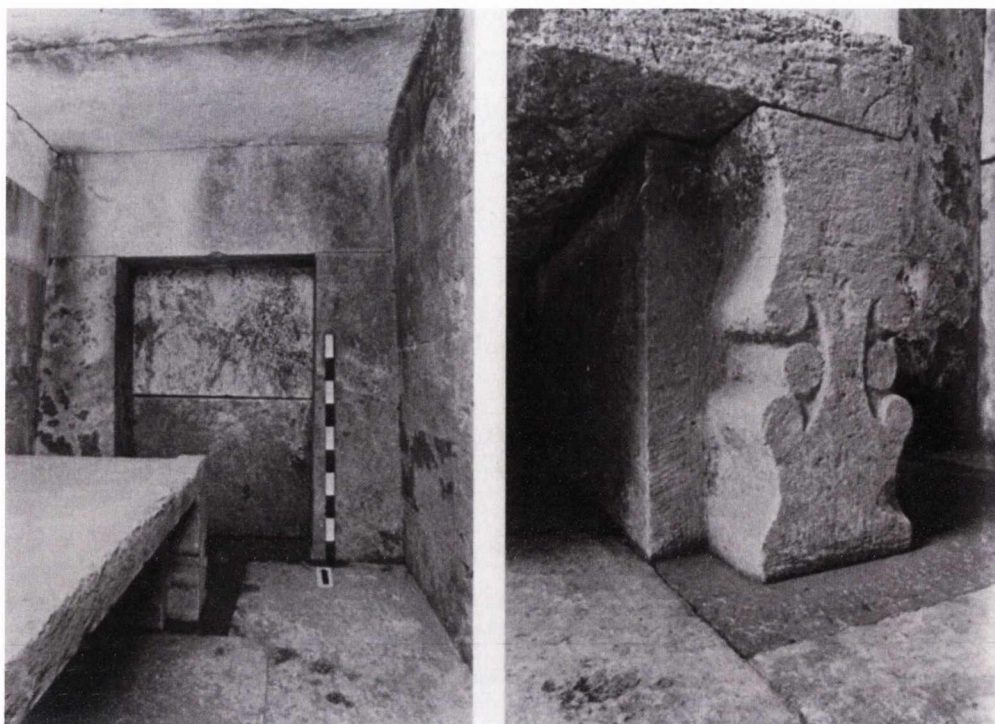


Fig. 5.8a-b Chamber tomb BK 71.1, Başlıoglu Köy, Lydia, with *kline*; detail of couch.

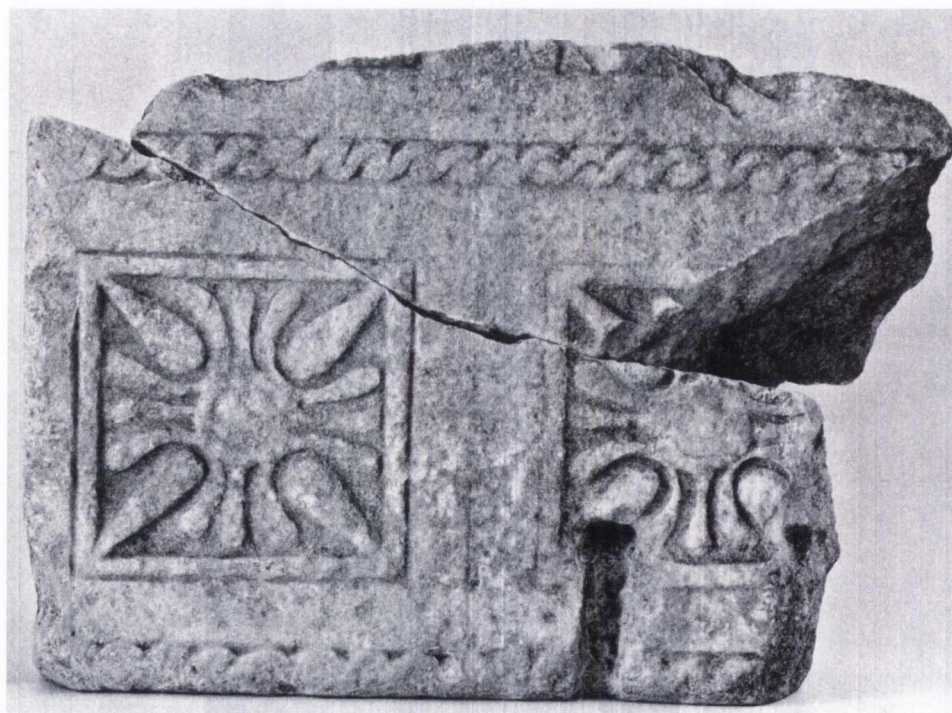


Fig. 5.9 Threshold stone from Sardis, possibly of the Metroon.



Fig. 5.10 Gypsum door-sill from the North Palace of the Neo-Assyrian king Aššurbanipal, Nineveh, about 645 BC.



Fig. 5.11 Glazed brick with lotus motif from Bukān, Iran.



Fig. 5.12 Kybele shrine sculpture from Sardis.



Fig. 5.13 The altar of Kybele in the refinery sector of Sardis, renovated by the Persians into a fire altar.



Fig. 5.14 View into the city gateway at Phokaia, destroyed in the Persian siege of c. 546 BC.
On the floor are remains of carbonised wooden posts and a catapult stone. In the background is the fill used to block the opening immediately after the fire.



Fig. 5.15 Taş Kule tomb, viewed from the northeast.