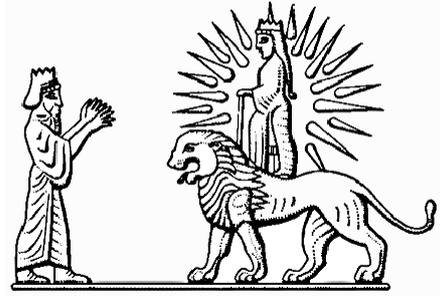


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“Gyges to Croesus. Historiography between Herodotus and Cuneiform”

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WALTER BURKERT Zürich

Gyges to Croesus:

Historiography between Herodotus and Cuneiform

This paper is about the impact of cuneiform, or the lack of such impact, on the history of Archaic Greece. Greek history had become part of general education since the very beginnings of the European school system. Father of history was Herodotus, we learned from Cicero (*leg.* 1,5); so early Greek history kept to Herodotus, with a center on the Persian wars. Herodotus however begins his account with Gyges, king of Lydia, and, coincidence or not: Gyges is the first ‘Western’ personality to emerge from the Assyrian evidence, a contemporary and partner of Assurbanipal at Nineveh. Thus Gyges marks not only the beginning of Greek history in a Herodotean perspective, but also the first meeting of Greek literature with cuneiform documents. Such meetings continue through more than a century down to the catastrophe of the Lydian kingdom, when Cyrus the Persian conquered Sardis in 547 B.C. This conquest made Anatolia part of the Persian empire and a province of the Near Eastern world, including a sizeable part of the people we use to call Greeks; the Easterners had developed the custom to call them ‘Ionians,’ Iana, Jawan in general – down to *Junan* in modern Turkish.

This paper is about the pre-Persian period; it tries to point out how and when

this meeting of Eastern and Western sources become known, how it was received and reflected upon in writing the ‘History of Greece.’ The interactions between cuneiform Mesopotamia, native Anatolian kingdoms and the cities of the Eastern Greeks, and their importance for the economic and cultural history of the pre-Persian world will be in focus.

Gyges looms large in Herodotus, but Herodotus is not the only source. There are traces of a rivalling account by Xanthos the Lydian, who was about a contemporary of Herodotus and, as his surname suggests, non-Greek by origin; what survives is a text of Nikolaos of Damaskos, age of Augustus. In addition there is the famous *Märchen* about the miraculous ring of Gyges in Plato’s *Politeia*.¹

The Eastern sources are mainly the so-called ‘annals’ of Assurbanipal, which survive in different recensions, as they were rewritten with the course of events; add some texts about the restoration of the temple of the Moon God at Harran and similar documents. The first and basic publication of the pertinent cuneiform tablets was by Rawlinson and Smith in 1870, followed by the *History of Assurbanipal* by George Smith in 1871. There were two cylinders and one tablet at that time; more evidence has come up later,

¹ Hdt. 1, 7-14; Plat. *Resp.* 359d-360b; Xanthos FGrHist 765, Nikolaos FGrHist 90 F 47. See Seel

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1956; Herter 1966.

such as the ‘Rassam cylinder,’ found in 1878 and published by Pinches in 1880.

The discovery was recognized and brought to the knowledge of classical scholars nearly immediately: In the best known classical periodical of the time, *Rheinisches Museum*, there appeared the basic and brilliant article “Das Zeitalter des Gyges” by Heinrich Gelzer already in 1875. Heinrich Gelzer was able to deal with the cuneiform evidence directly; he established the chronological sequence of the sources, and he drew the consequences for the history of Lydia and Greece, with critical evaluation of the Greek evidence.

In the Assyrian texts, the name of the king is written Gu-gu, his country is ^{mat}Luddu; there can be no question about the identification with Gyges, king of the *Lydoi*, to put it in Greek. The ‘Völker-tafel’ of the Old Testament has a country ‘Lud.’² In addition, Kimmerians appear as invaders of Anatolia in Assyrian documents even before the reign of Assurbanipal; these are normally written Gimiraia, which is sufficiently close to Greek Kimmerioi.³ Gyges had troubles with them, as we know from the Greek side; he was killed by them, the Assyrian documents say.

The story told from the side of Assyria is touching: “There arrived envoys from a country of which nobody had heard before, none of the kings who went before me; they said that king Gugu had been told in a dream to do obeisance to the king of Nineveh.”⁴ One version, which is evidently later, tells the continuation: Gugu did not conform with the duties of this allegiance, he rather made an alliance with the rebellious king of Egypt;

hence Gugu was cursed by Assurbanipal, and deservedly killed by the Kimmerians; his successor resumed the obeisance to Nineveh.

Nothing of this is to be found in Herodotus; nothing, on the other side, is mentioned at Nineveh about Gyges’ usurpation, which gave rise to the very different tales in Herodotus, Xanthos-Nikolaos, and Plato. It is still worth while to state, as against certain trends in modern Herodotean scholarship,⁵ that the Eastern contemporary sources do confirm Herodotus as to the existence and importance of king Gyges of Lydia: Whatever about his miraculous ring or his affair with the wife of Kandaules, Gyges is not the product of Greek fantasy or mythology. New as against Herodotus is the alliance of Gyges with the king of Egypt, who must be Psammetichos, and the death of Gyges by the Kimmerians in battle, as well as the renewed ‘homage’ to Nineveh by the successor of Gyges.⁶ According to Herodotus, this should be Ardys.

As already Eduard Meyer has seen, the Eastern and the Herodotean evidence, if they do not overlap, are still fully compatible. Just because Gyges was a usurper, he was eager to seek recognition from East and from West: He sent his embassy to Nineveh, and he consulted the oracle at Delphi, leaving conspicuous amounts of gold there. We may get an idea about Apollo’s response to Gyges just from the Eastern evidence: We have messages to Esarhaddon from the inspired priestesses of Ishtar at Arbela. These usually have the dull but reassuring message: Hail to the king, do not be afraid, the God is with you.⁷ Apollo’s oracle to Gyges will

² *Gen.* 10,22, beside ‘Aram.’

³ See Ivantchik 1993.

⁴ Streck 1916, 20 f.; Luckenbill 1927, §§ 909 ff.

⁵ Fehling 1989; cf. Pritchett 1993.

⁶ His name cannot be read in the cuneiform documents; Gelzer 1875, 234 suggested *Ardu]su*.

⁷ ANET 449 f.

have been very much like this: The oracle gives reassurance to the king, and the king gratefully retaliates by rich donations. The warnings about the fall of Lydia within five generations, which we find in Herodotus (1,13,2), will probably come from hindsight, after the Persian conquest.

Yet the great and scandalous impact of cuneiform evidence concerns chronology: Whereas the list of Lydian kings given by Herodotus would put Gyges in 716-678 B.C., Assurbanipal's reign is about 668-631. Thus the chronology of Herodotus is falsified by some decades, the date of Gyges has to be lowered by about 30 years, with consequences for the length of reigns for all the following Lydian kings as given by Herodotus. Already Heinrich Gelzer discussed the various dates given for Gyges in post-Herodotean Greek sources; he proposed to accept the date given in the chronicle of Eusebius, who evidently used non-Herodotean information: death of Gyges in 652. The dates have remained debatable: Some modern reexaminations of the cuneiform evidence would go down to 648 for Gyges' death, others keep to 652.⁸ At any rate, a basic correction of Herodotean chronology has been established which cannot be contradicted. There are consequences for the whole of early Greek history. Already Herodotus had noticed that Archilochus, the first among Greek poets to present himself in his personal individuality, mentions "Gyges, rich in gold" (Fr. 19 West) and hence should have been his contemporary. The solar eclipse also mentioned by Archilochus (Fr. 122 West) has to be arranged with the Gyges date; one usually accepts 648 B.C.

Heinrich Gelzer's article drew due attention at his time. Still if Erwin Rohde, in a very learned article in *Rheinisches Museum* 1878, refers to "the results of assyriology,"⁹ while discussing Gelzer's reconstructions of Eusebius, we see how this field of scholarship is perceived as a foreign continent: 'die Assyriologie' in general brings 'results,' without detailed documentation or dialogue. Precise information and discussion keeps to the familiar Greek world, from Herodotus to Eusebius.

In the following generation it was Eduard Meyer most of all to take full account of all the new materials – still without Hittite. Eduard Meyer needs no praise. He made the first and last great synthesis of *Geschichte des Altertums*. He knows the Greek sources as well as the cuneiform ones; he discusses the different cuneiform versions.¹⁰ Gyges appears in vol. II (1893) which became vol. III in the new edition. What is surprising: Gyges comes up three times, in the history of Assyria and the Kimmerians, which includes Gyges' embassy to Assurbanipal; in what Meyer calls 'Griechisches Mittelalter,' describing Greek 'colonization' thwarted by the Kimmerians; and in a special chapter on Ionia which finally comes to praise the Greek genius.¹¹ Thus even Eduard Meyer does not succeed in presenting one 'history of antiquity' from Mesopotamia to the Aegean; Oriental and Greek persist as different compartments.

No decisive new evidence has appeared after Gelzer and Meyer. Additional texts brought some refinements. The main Assyrian text was accessible in transcript and German translation since

⁸ See Ivantchik 1993.

⁹ Rohde 1878, 196,1: "den Ergebnissen der Assyriologie."

¹⁰ Meyer 1936, 84,2; 86.

¹¹ Meyer 1936, 84,2; 86; 131-134; 425-427; 566-573.

1890,¹² and the whole material was collected, republished, and translated by Maximilian Streck in his *Assurbanipal* (1916). But I have not found any historian writing on Greece to quote the one or the other publication. The new edition of Eduard Meyer's work by Hans Erich Stier at least refers to the most accessible English edition of the Assurbanipal texts, George Luckenbill's *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia* (1927). Only selections of Assurbanipal's texts are included in ANET¹³; the passages about Gyges are missing.

In German historiography on Greece after Gelzer and Meyer, Assyria is getting out of focus again. Of course Gelzer and Meyer were not forgotten, but Nineveh remains beyond the horizon. The extensive *Griechische Geschichte* of Georg Busolt (I² 1893) has no room at all for non-Greeks. The more original and very critical history of Greece by Julius Beloch (I² 1912) mentions the "inscriptions of Assurbanipal" for Gyges and his embassy, with explicit reference to Eduard Meyer¹⁴ – no use of *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek*. Here and elsewhere, cuneiform literature appears in the category of "inscriptions"¹⁵ which is absolutely misleading for classicists¹⁶: They know *Inscriptiones Graecae* and *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* as totally separated from literature such as Herodotus or Livy; cuneiform tablets however are not 'inscriptions' in such a sense, but the form of literacy proper. The Greek History of Helmut Berve (1931), has an impressive chapter on Ionians, their

achievements and their weaknesses; the Lydian kingdom of Gyges comes as an intruder. Gyges, we learn, was fighting the Kimmerians "in an alliance with the Assyrians" – this is correct, but skips the details which had been in Gelzer and Meyer.¹⁷ The *Griechische Geschichte* by Helmut Bengtson finally, in the *Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft*,¹⁸ has no mention at all of the Assyrians. Bengtson still has the merit to call attention to what he thought the first mention of 'Greeks' in cuneiform, the vicissitudes of Iamani of Ashdod at the time of Sargon – though it has been argued in the meantime that Iamani could be an epichoric name which has nothing at all to do with 'Greeks,' and an earlier text about 'Ionians' plundering in Syria has been published in the meantime.¹⁹

It pays to have a look at the relevant articles in Pauly-Wissowa's *RE*: There are impeccable articles by competent Near Eastern experts, esp. Franz Heinrich Weissbach on Kyros and Kroisos as well as on Sargon, Sardanapal and Nabonid.²⁰ But the articles on Gyges and on Kimmerier done by Karl Lehmann-Haupt are problematic.²¹ Karl Lehmann-Haupt no doubt was a specialist as to the cuneiform evidence, and he was well at home with the Greek sources too. But he had more ideas than method, let alone didactic ability. His articles, jumping between details of Urartu, Assur and Eusebius, with polemics to various sides, remain baffling. Instead of gaining the confidence of classicists for the new evidence, he rather gave permanence to the impres-

¹² *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek* II (Berlin, 1890), 173-177.

¹³ ANET 294-296.

¹⁴ Beloch 1912, 343 f.

¹⁵ See also Stein 1901, 188; 190.

¹⁶ Even if it occurs in original publications such as Rawlinson - Smith 1870; R. Borger, *Die Inschriften*

Assarhaddons, Graz, 1956.

¹⁷ Berve 1951, 142.

¹⁸ Bengtson 1950, 67.

¹⁹ ANET 286; see Elayi-Cavigneaux 1979; Braun 1982, 15.

²⁰ See bibliography.

²¹ Lehmann-Haupt 1912; 1921.

sion of a foreign continent, unsufficiently explored, to be left to certain specialists but far from archaic or classical Greece.

More modern scholarship is rich and dispersed. The chronology of the Lydians has been restudied in a much-quoted article by Kaletsch in 1958. The very learned article of Hans Herter on Lydia is attentive to the Anatolian background – Hittites had made their entrance into classics; but Assyrians are not mentioned. Non-classicists reexamined “Gyges and Ashurbanipal”²²; a careful account of the Kimmerian material is due to the Russian Askold Ivantchik.²³ A broad synthesis of ancient history is presented by Cambridge Ancient History; the new edition has a very good article by T. F. R. G. Braun on “The Greeks in the Near East” (1982) and by Machteld Mellink on the Lydian kingdom (1991). It is still characteristic that the two sections appear in two different volumes, even if Mellink does stress the impact of Greek style and art on Lydia. It still remains practically impossible to make one history.

To get beyond Gyges: The next problematic meeting of Herodotus and Near Eastern evidence is the Eastern king ‘Labynetos’ in Herodotus. Labynetos appears in two unrelated situations, and it has usually been concluded that these must be two different personalities: One Labynetos of Babylon, together with Syennesis king of Cilicia, was mediating the conflict of Medes and Lydians at the time of the famous solar eclipse in which Thales is involved²⁴; this is usually fixed to 585 B.C. But Labynetos son of Labynetos also appears as the last king of Babylon,

conquered by Cyrus; he is called tyranos.²⁵ Since oriental history has been recovered, we know that in 585 king of Babylon was Nabu-kudurri-uzur, or ‘Nebukadnezar’ of Protestant Bibles, whereas the last king of Babylon was Nabuna’id (556-539), usually called Nabonid today in accordance with the Berossos tradition.²⁶ Ναβόννηδος is sufficiently close to Labynetos, but comparatively far from Nabu-kuduri-uzur the king of 585, and there are more errors, since the father of Nabonid king of Babylon was Nabû-balassu-iqbi and not another Labynetos, as Herodotus would have it. We see: Confusion has infected the tradition presented by Herodotus. It is tradition nevertheless, modified tradition, but not sheer invention. The events lay 100 years back when Herodotus tried to organize his ‘History.’ Later Greek texts had some additional information, directly from oriental sources, Ktesias first, then Berossos; this material went into the late chronicles, Abydenos, Eusebius. The Hebrew Bible was drawing on a different line of tradition; Qumram has a totally different edifying story on Nabonid recognizing Jahweh,²⁷ whereas the book of Daniel outdoes Herodotus through total confusion about Babylonian, Median, and Persian kings.

As to Labynetos in Herodotus, it seems as if two transmutations have taken place: three Nabu-names have been confused, Nabu-kuduri-uzur ‘Nabu guards the son,’ alias Nebukadnezar, Nabu-balassu-iqbi ‘Nabu has pronounced his life,’ father of Nabonid, and Nabu-na’id himself, ‘Nabu is exalted;’ in addition there is the

²² Cogan-Tadmor 1977.

²³ Ivantchik 1993; Gyges-texts: 256-270.

²⁴ Hdt. 1,74. On the date cf. Plin. *n.h.* 2,53.

²⁵ Hdt. 1,77; 1,188.

²⁶ Ναβόννηδος Berossos FGrHist IIC p.394 = Ios. c. Ap. 1,152; Ναβοννήδοχος in Abydenos, FGrHist

IIC p.408 = Euseb. *PE* 9,41,4. Xen. *Kyrup.* 5,4,5; 7,5,30 has no name for the last Babylonian king. ‘Belsazar’ in *Daniel* 5 is fantasy. See Dandamyev 1998.

²⁷ Meyer 1962; F. García Martínez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated* (Leiden, 1994), 289.

change of the initial consonant, Nabuna'id to Labunetos. Weidner in his *RE*-article on Labunetos asserts that this is a 'graphic variant,' for which 'many parallels' are to be found; he presents none.²⁸ Nikosia / Λευκωσία the modern capital of Cyprus would be a very distant parallel. For the Greek philologist the suspicion remains that misreading within Greek writing has occurred: NA and ΛA are very similar just in Greek letters. This would mean that certain written sources are to be assumed in the chain of information down to Herodotus – an intriguing possibility – still lacking confirmation.

The third meeting point of oriental and Greek sources is the end of king Croesus of Lydia in 547. Let us just recall that the most direct testimony to king Croesus is his name on some marble columns from the great Temple of Artemis at Ephesus, evidently sponsored by that monarch.²⁹ The legendary fame of Croesus rested on his gold at Delphi, squandered by the Phocians in the sacred war 355 B.C. The detailed and impressive tales about Croesus in Herodotus are matched by just one cuneiform tablet, the so-called 'Nabonidus chronicle'; this tablet is damaged in the decisive line. The tablet became known in 1880, edited by Pinches, it was included in *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek* in 1890.³⁰ A supplement of the decisive passage to bring in Sardes and Lydia was already proposed in 1881; the most promising integration came from Lehmann-Haupt in 1898,³¹ confirmed by Pinches on the original tablet. In this form the text appeared in Sidney Smith's Edition of 1924, and this went to ANET 305 f. It was contradicted by Santo Mazzarino³²

with the arguments that the geographical indication does not fit, and that we know from Herodotus and Bacchylides that Croesus survived. The new edition by A. K. Grayson (1975), with reexamination of the tablet, remains non-committal: the reading *lu-u-du* for the country concerned is 'not impossible,' but it is not there. Was there more to be seen when Pinches examined the tablet? We have, as Cargill wrote two years after Grayson, "consensus based on crumbling feet of clay." New was the insight that the tablet really is from the time of Darius, i.e. a nearly contemporary account. Glassner, in 1993, comes back to <*kur*> *lu₂-u₂-di*, "land Lydia."

This text, produced by the priests of Belu-Marduk in Babylon, is mainly interested in the defective rituals Nabonid performed or failed to perform at Babylon, and the piety of Cyrus who restored the Babylonian rituals. In such a context the text mentions, first, the overthrowing of 'Istumegu' king of 'Anshan' by Cyrus – this must be Astyages king of Media of the Herodotus tradition, overthrown by Cyrus –, and then a campaign of Cyrus to some land beyond the Tigris, with the conquest of a city and the end of a king. In simple translation, the sentence goes: "he killed its king, he took his possessions, his own garrisons he put up."

If this regards Lydia and Sardis, this is in blatant conflict with the Herodotean version. Herodotus has the touching incident of Croesus surviving the pyre on which Cyrus was about to burn him; Croesus, stepping down from the pyre, became the wise and estimated advisor of Cyrus in various situations afterwards.

²⁸ Weidner 1924, 311 f.

²⁹ SIG I³ 6.

³⁰ *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek* III 2 (Berlin, 1890), 128-137.

³¹ *Arch. Anzeiger* 1898, 122 cf. Lehmann-Haupt 1921, 415.

³² Mazzarino 1947, 156 n. 459.

And behold, cuneiform has proved incapable to withstand Herodotus. Lehmann-Haupt himself, the originator of the decisive reading which makes the passage refer to Lydia, came to the rescue of Herodotus³³: the verb *idûk* (written GAZ) in the sentence quoted should not mean 'he killed,' but something like 'he defeated.' No doubt 'to kill' is the central meaning of this word, but 'to smite,' 'to conquer' is possible.³⁴ Hence Grayson translates, even without question mark: "He defeated," whereas Glassner has "Il mit a mort son roi" (203), again without question mark. Lehmann-Haupt had even proposed that the next sentence, "Afterwards his garrison and the king remained in the midst of..." should not refer to King Cyrus but to Croesus remaining at Sardes, and thus definitely confirm Herodotus; this is nonsense: Even Herodotus does not say that Croesus remained at Sardes, where of course a Persian satrapes took up residence, and Croesus, had he ever survived a 'defeat,' would no longer have been a 'king' for Babylonian writers. But Lehmann-Haupt succeeded to soothe classical scholars, happy with Herodotus.

An article of 1985³⁵ has pointed out that in fact the Greek pre-Herodotean evidence indicates the death of Croesus at the conquest of Sardis: A redfigure vase painting of about 490 B.C. which shows KROESOS on the pyre, and the poem of Bacchylides of 468. If Bacchylides has Croesus transported by Apollo from the pyre to the land of the Hyperboreans, this leaves him as dead as any martyr at the place of his execution, even if he should be transferred to

heaven by angels. There is no need to depart from the simple translation of the Akkadian text. The lesson to be learned is rather a critical position as against Herodotus' alluring tales – he is 'fourth grade as against the facts,' as he presents a rationalization of Bacchylides' poetic imagination. Yet Herodotus is to survive. Even Weissbach, when writing on Croesus and Cyrus in the *Realencyclopädie*, felt ravished by the story of Cyrus and Croesus³⁶: "Man denkt unwillkürlich an Napoleon III. und Wilhelm I. bei Sedan," the vanquished emperor and the victorious king, performing the impeccable etiquette of monarchs above the slaughter of war in 1870. Who would like such a story to be annihilated by cuneiform GAZ?

Coming back from stories to history, some remarks about the historical importance of the Gyges embassy and the Lydian kingdom in general:

The earlier Greek connection with the East had mainly been by the sea route, via Lycia, Cyprus, and Syria, with Crete, Rhodes, and Euboea as the active centers of commerce and interactions. Writing spread to Greece by this route in the eighth century, Al Mina, Chalkis, and Ischia being decisive steps.³⁷ It must have been on this line too that the name Iawones-Jawan-Iauna established itself with the Easterners, which from the Eastern side is first attested in Syria about 734.³⁸ There are two glimpses at that situation, one from West, one from East: The poet of the Odyssey has Poseidon returning from the Eastern Aethiopians and beholding the raft of Odysseus, as he comes from the far West, from the "Mountains

³³ Lehmann-Haupt 1929.

³⁴ W. von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch* (Wiesbaden, 1965) 152: "töten; schlagen."

³⁵ Burkert 1985a.

³⁶ Weissbach 1931, 462.

³⁷ Burkert 1992; probably Cyprus is to be added, even if so far there is no evidence of Greek writing from Cyprus. See Woodard 1997. Writing came to Lydia from Ionian Greeks.

³⁸ Burkert 1992; 1998; cf. n. 19.

of the Solymoi,” that is from Lycia at the Southern coast of Anatolia³⁹: This is where the far East, Aethiopia, and the far West, from Kalypso to Phaeacia, will meet. From the other side, Assurbanipal’s record of Gyges’ embassy has the strange indication that these people came “from the other side of the sea,” *shanibirti tamti*⁴⁰; Heinrich Gelzer found this “schwer zu erklären,” because a look at the map shows there is no sea to pass between Mesopotamia and Sardis. But there were no maps at the time. It must have been the presupposition of the Assyrians at Nineveh that ‘Western countries’ meant Cyprus and beyond, so that even the Aegean coast was “beyond the sea.” The Anatolian continent had not been permeable before Gyges’ embassy.

Thus the real benefit that came to the Greeks from Gyges was not his gold at Delphi, but rather the new connection of Ionia, in the wake of Lydia, with the Near East. Lydia became a central connecting link between Assyria and Greece. Lydia had been a country “which nobody had known before” at Nineveh; but from that embassy onwards regular interrelations were developing. A new route had been opened, the land route from Aegean Anatolia to Mesopotamia, later known as ‘the king’s road.’ This road must have had its beginnings with the Phrygians before Gyges, because, as described by Herodotus, it takes the striking detour via Gordion.⁴¹ But it was Gyges who, after the collapse of the Phrygian kingdom through the attack of the Cimmerians, established the definite link from the Aegean to the Eastern route. Since then, this road definitely extended as far as Sardes and was open to the Ionian

Greeks, from Smyrna to Miletus.

The rise of Ionia has often been commented upon. It now appears that Ionia takes its real start only in the 7th century, that is, in the ‘Age of Gyges.’ The colonial activities in the Black Sea, too, only begin in the seventh century, in contrast to the Chalkidian and Corinthian colonisation in the West which belongs to the eighth century. In other words: The flourishing of Ionia is later than the advent of Gyges, it is to be seen in connection with the new route opened up at that time. Ionia was thriving through symbiosis with Lydia.

Four details of cultural transfer to Greece from the East via Lydia should be considered in this context:

First, the Great Goddess Kubaba-Kybebe. The name of Kubaba is attested at Karkemish. Kubaba is related to, but linguistically different from the Phrygian name of the Mother Goddess, Matar kubileya. For the image of the goddess, an Anatolian road can be traced from Cilicia to Phrygia. But Lydia has the name of the goddess in the form derived from Karkemish, *kuvav*. She is Kybebe in Ionia with Hipponax (Fr. 127 West), possibly already with Semonides of Amorgos (Fr. 36 West). Greeks later have both forms of the name, preferably Kybele, but Kybebe too.⁴²

Secondly, more practical and more ubiquitous, a new form of luxury behaviour that spread from Assyria via Lydia to Ionia and to the Greeks in general: The use of *klinai*, of couches for ‘lying’ at the symposium. The key piece of evidence is a relief from Nineveh, termed ‘Assurbanipal’s garden party’; it became a type of iconography directly copied by the Greeks.⁴³

³⁹ Od. 5,283.

⁴⁰ Gelzer 1875, 231,4; Streck 1916, 20 f.

⁴¹ See Burkert 1998.

⁴² The evidence is collected in Burkert 1985b, 177 f.

⁴³ London, Brit. Museum; Strommenger 1962, fig. 241; cf. Dentzer 1982; Matthäus 1993, 177-179. The pattern is copied in the well-known vase of Andokides, Munich, LIMC IV s.v. Herakles Nr. 1487.

Thirdly, more of a problem, the yearly magistrates. We are so used to lists of archons and consuls as the backbone of bureaucracy and chronology in ancient history that we may forget that this is a very special institution – it is not found in the Middle ages – and that in the East it appears first and only in Assyria, since 911 B.C. The Assyrian term is *limu*.⁴⁴ In the system of Eusebius ephors start with 754/3 B.C., Athenian archons with 683/2.⁴⁵ It seems that the Assyrian parallel has never been discussed in the context of Greek history. Had the Greek institution to do with the introduction of writing, the development of economy, or some progress in politics? Is there anything to connect it with Lydia, or rather with Phoenicians and Carthaginians?⁴⁶ At any rate, independent development seems quite unlikely, and the priority of Assyria is indisputable.

Fourth, the word *tyrannos* which somehow goes together with Gyges. A Hellenistic scholar-poet in fact says Gyges was the first to be called *tyrannos*.⁴⁷ In Greek literature, the word appears with Archilochus in connection with Gyges.⁴⁸ The word has been suspected to be of Asian derivation. Thus the Assyrian term *turtanu* will come to one's mind⁴⁹:

turtanu is a title of the highest official after the Assyrian king, it is used also for the kings of Urartu, Elam and Egypt, it would equally fit the king of Lydia. Linguists will still forbid us to delete one consonant to get from *turtanu* to *turannu*. The question remains open.

The reign of Lydia was not oppressive. The first big marble temple of Greece, that of Artemis at Ephesus, was built by king Croesus. The impressive rock façades of the Phrygian Mother Goddess too belong not to the time of Midas, but to the later period of Lydian dominance. It has been usual to comment on Lydians as foreign conquerors subduing free Ionian cities; it seems more to the point to see the symbiosis of Ionians and Lydians that evolved in the generation following Gyges 'rich in gold,' in spite of ongoing diversity and quarrelling. No native Lydian literature,⁵⁰ and very few inscriptions survive. The big tumulus not far from Sardis, at Bin Tepe, was thought to be the tomb of Gyges; tunnels dug in this mound by George Hanfmann in the Sixties brought to light graffiti which Hanfmann read as *Gugu*; but no burial chamber was discovered, and the archaeological date seems not to fit.⁵¹ Gyges still keeps his secret.

⁴⁴ See Ungnad 1938.

⁴⁵ Cf. Samuel 1972, 195-245; archons are used for chronology in Hdt.8,51,1, archons and ephors in Thuk.2,2,1.

⁴⁶ Carthage had eponymous officials at least in Hellenistic times, see Ehrenberg "Suffeten" *RE IV A* (1931) 645 f.

⁴⁷ Euphorion Περί Αλευάδων = Clem. *Str.* 1,117,9.

⁴⁸ Fr. 19 West cf. Fr. 23. Hippias (Diels - Kranz 86 B 9) stated that the word became known "at the time of Archilochus." See Jeffery 1976, 46; 211.

⁴⁹ See *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch* 1322.

⁵⁰ See also Burkert 1995.

⁵¹ See Ratté 1994; *Arch. Rep.* 1998/9, 145.

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