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## Spear-won land: Sardis from the King's Peace to the Peace of Apamea

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## **Review by**

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[The Table of contents is listed below.] Published as part of the Hellenistic Sardis Project (started in 2014), the contributions collected in

this beautiful volume offer a rich and interdisciplinary status quaestionis about urbanism and life in Sardis and its regional interactions in Asia Minor, from Lydian down to Roman times. The chronological core of the research embraces the period between the early  $4^{\text{th}}$  and the early  $2^{\text{nd}}$ century.[1] The volume provides a significant case of how an interdisciplinary study of microhistory focusing on one site can effectively contribute to a detailed and nuanced understanding of macro-regional history, in this case of Classical and Hellenistic Asia Minor. Some major trends of the period are dealt with in the papers: the development of new centres and systems of government and their relationship with past ones; the replacement of the Achaemenid court by the Seleucid and other contemporaneous courts as the fundamental stakeholders with whom local elites should negotiate their interests; the rapidly increasing influence of Greek traditions, as manifested by material culture.[2] The authors make a strong point that, in Sardis, the shift from the Achaemenid to the Hellenistic world was a complex and multi-layered one. However, some prominent turning points can also be detected: the reoccupation of the ancient Lydian centre of Sardis after Alexander's conquest (late 4<sup>th</sup> to early 3<sup>rd</sup> cent.) and the progressive monumentalization of the city during the century of Seleucid domination (281 to 188 BC). Part I ('City and Empire') investigates the impact of the major geopolitical changes in Western

history of the city is outlined by Cahill (Chapter 1) and Kosmin (Chapter 3), who together provide a rich portrait of urbanism in Sardis and of the city's transformation from Lydian urban settlement to Greek polis. The fundamental narrative emerging from these studies can be summarized as follows: the Persian capture of the city by Kyros in 546 BC led to the 'deurbanisation' of the ancient Lydian capital of the Mermnads, whose monumental centre was to a large extent neglected in favour of a village-type settlement situated west of the Pactolus river. This epoch-making change was long overlooked by modern archaeologists, who thought that the Lydian city lay under the Achaemenid Pactolus settlement, whereas recent excavations have allowed to rediscover it under the Hellenistic and Roman layers north of the acropolis. The aftermath of Alexander's conquest, conversely, marked the beginning of the 're-urbanization' of the city centre, with a rapid sequence of local initiatives corresponding to the tumultuous half century of the Diadochi wars. Only at a second stage local initiative was replaced by a set of more monumental projects which revealed the establishment and consolidation of Seleucid power and the reshaping of Sardis as a polis and provincial capital. The other contributions (of different length) enrich this narrative with more specific case studies. Dusinberre's analysis ('Spotlight') of sealstones from the Achaemenid period portrays a multiethnic elite which employs a combination of various iconographic types while also sharing a

Asia Minor from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. The link between archaeological data and the political

distinctive taste for imperial Achaemenid models. Bruce ('Spotlight') shows that the Pactolus suburbs changed from a mainly industrial function under the Mermnads to a residential one under Persian domination, with a rapid abandonment around 300 BC, after which this area functioned as a necropolis until the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD. Berlin (Chapter 2 and 'Spotlight') focuses on household pottery and terracotta antefixes to shed light on a significant change in the lifestyle of the inhabitants of Sardis between the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. Here it is only possible to provide a very brief summary of this engaging analysis: the modest sets of ceramics used for eating and drinking and the long duration of simplified Lydian typologies point to a static society during the period down to the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century; conversely, the advent of the Seleucid domination appears to have reconnected the city with the Aegean market and its new trends, revealing a higher standard of life and a new set of household eating and drinking tools. Similarly, the stratigraphy of the monumental core of the city along the acropolis hill points to a new level of monumentality and access to precious imported goods. Evans (Chapter 4) studies the activity of the mint in Hellenistic Sardis, distinguishing between various phases (c. 330-317, from Alexander to Philip III; 301-287, between Ipsos and Demetrios' invasion; 282/1-240, between Kouroupedion and the revolt of Antiochos Hierax; c. 220-190, from Achaios to the battle at Magnesia). An interesting section concerns civic coins, which were struck

in bronze following local weights and types, circulated locally, and point to the rising of civic

initiative and identity in moments of decline of royal power: 6 out of 9 civic bronze types are

indeed dated after Apamea, while the 3 types from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century must belong to the tumultuous

years 240-220, when civic magistrates had to finance new coinages before the Sardis mint started issuing royal coins once again under the secessionist Achaios. Cahill ('Spotlight'), Gallart Marqués (Chapter 5) and Yegül (Chapter 6) deal with the religious life. Cahill expounds recent archaeological discoveries about the Metroon, a major sanctuary of the city which occupied an area nearby the later Roman synagogue. Of particular interest is the 2017 reassessment of the blocks of the inscribed *antae* of the temple, which implies a new reconstruction of the order of the texts composing the diplomatic dossier between the city and Antiochos III in 213 BC. Gallart Marqués deals with the terracotta statuettes of Kybele found near an early-Hellenistic sanctuary of the goddess, which stood east of a probable Lydian-era palatial district in the period 275-250, before it was destroyed to leave space to a Greek theatre. By contrasting this Hellenistic Kybele to the earlier Lydian Kubaba, the author points to the effects of a rapid process of Hellenization in iconography, but also stresses the importance, for the Sardians, now free to reoccupy the historical centre of their city, of accompanying this process

with the foundation of a sanctuary which must have immediately played a role as *lieu de mémoire* of the link between the community and its prestigious past. Like Kybele, Artemis already had a cult place at Sardis in the late-Lydian and Persian periods, but the establishment of a temple does not date before the mid-3<sup>rd</sup> century. Yegül convincingly points out that, although the early Hellenistic sanctuary remained unfinished, the monumental marble fabric of Artemis' cella on the Pactolus river was a paramount statement of Seleucid grandeur, while the unusual proportions and 'deliberately archaic sensibility' (p. 134) implemented in the project were meant to rival the great Ionian sanctuaries of Ephesos and Didyma. Stinson (Chapter 7) concludes Part I by briefly summarising the contributions brought by the previous chapters and by setting them in the comparative context of the long-term history of Sardian urbanism from Achaemenid down to Attalid and Roman times. Part II ('Cities in a Landscape') shifts the focus onto the interactions between Sardis and its landscape from Lydia to the macro-regional scale of Anatolia and the connections with the Aegean world. Roosevelt (Chapter 8) draws on archaeological and epigraphic evidence to explore the patterns of occupation of Lydia from the perspectives of economic production, defence, and the activity of rural religious centres, revealing the impact of Hellenistic institutionalization in

the administration but also a substantial continuity as regards the functioning and interaction of

settlements across time. The fundamental demographic, socio-economic, and military unit of the

Lydian landscape was constituted throughout by small communities ('farmsteads, hamlets, and

villages'), which overarching Hellenistic powers tried to aggregate 'into larger estates let out for

management by and the benefit of a combination of local and foreign elements, with a proportion of revenues paid to the king or the city' (p. 164). Unsurprisingly, this distributed network of small and medium-sized nodes is reflected by the distribution of defensive structures and military garrisons. Religious life further strengthens the impression of a Lydian *koiné* which largely echoes, but not entirely reproduces the patterns known from Sardis. Bielfeldt (Chapter 9) successfully investigates the scanty traces of political and cultural interactions between Sardis and Pergamon in the Hellenistic period, starting with a unique bilingual dedication in Lydian and Greek from the late 4<sup>th</sup>-cent. temple of Athena in Pergamon (IvP I 1.1) and then providing a nuanced discussion of the evidence about Philetairos' initiatives in Lydia and the neighbouring areas, as a founder of urban settlements (Attaleia) and of sanctuaries (Meter Aspordene at Mamurt Kale). The paper finally deals with the impact of Attalid hegemony after Apamea. Ladstätter (Chapter 10) investigates the developments of two major coastal cities, Ephesos and Smyrna, thus enlarging the spectrum of comparison in search of military, political, and economical common trends in Hellenistic Asia Minor. Rotroff (Chapter 11) extends this comparison to material culture and to the Aegean world, studying the diffusion of

similar types of drinking pottery in Sardis and Athens. The success of decorated hemispherical

increasing exchanges between cities and Hellenistic rulers. In Sardis, this process was facilitated

cups in the two cities is explained by the author as the impact of a *koiné* promoted by the

by the establishment of the Seleucid provincial capital as a medium of Hellenization, whereas in Athens the penetration of new types was related to gift exchange as part of the diplomatic interactions with Hellenistic courts. Finally, Dusinberre (Chapter 12) provides a portrait of Gordion as a city whose decline had started during the Achaemenid period and continued down to Hellenistic times, when it was confined to the periphery of the main axes connecting Western Asia Minor with the Seleucid inland. By means of a case of differential comparatism, this final chapter makes even clearer how Hellenistic connectivity fundamentally changed the face and destiny of Sardis. The book ends with a summarising chapter written by the editors, in English and Turkish, a general bibliography and a detailed index. The volume is rich in pictures and plans of good quality, which help readers follow the discussion of each chapter with a high degree of detail. In terms of content, By fruitfully examining different types of evidence and their interaction, the contributors have improved our understanding not only of the life of Classical and Hellenistic Sardis, but also of its positioning within a Hellenistic network of peer-polity interactions among poleis and of negotiating dynamics between poleis and courts. All these qualities make this book a reference for researches on Hellenistic Sardis, Lydia, and Asia Minor, while also providing an

inspiring model for new researches on ancient cities embracing an interdisciplinary method and

N. Cahill, Chapter 1, Inside Out: Sardis in the Achaemenid and Lysimachean Periods, p. 11

E.R.M. Dusinberre, Spotlight, Sealstones from Sardis, Dascylium, and Gordion, p. 37

combining local and macro-regional perspectives in the longue durée.

W. Bruce, Spotlight, Life outside the Walls before the Seleucids, p. 44

A.M. Berlin, Spotlight, Continuing Crafts – Antefixes and Roof Tiles, p. 68

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[1] However, archaeological and textual evidence only reveals minor changes within the period

of Achaemenid domination (546-334 BC), making the King's Peace of 387/6 BC a less relevant

[2] For a similar range of questions and methodological solutions applied to Pergamon and its

kritische Revision', *MDAI(I)* 67 (2017), p. 43–130; also the following ongoing research projects: *The* 

neighbouring regions, see F. Pirson, 'Die Siedlungsgeschichte Pergamons – Überblick und

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A.M. Berlin, P.J. Kosmin, translated by G. Eren, Sardis'e Yeni Bir Bakış, p. 241

Transformation of the Pergamon Micro-Region; The archaeology of death in the Hellenistic period: Modern methodology, social relations and local identities in Pergamon and in the Aeolian cities (NekroPergEol).

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