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UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI NAPOLI "L'ORIENTALE"
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LXXXVI

CERAMICS AND THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL
ACHAEMENID HORIZON

CERAMICS AND THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL ACHAEMENID HORIZON NEAR EAST, IRAN AND CENTRAL ASIA

edited by
BRUNO GENITO and GIULIO MARESCA



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CERAMICS AND THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL
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A MULTI-HORIZON PERSPECTIVE
WESTERN ANATOLIAN MATERIAL EVIDENCE IN THE PERSIAN PERIOD

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(Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa)

Abstract

This paper focuses on Western Anatolia (present-day Western Turkey) under Achaemenid control. It aims at outlining the interplay of different cultural horizons in Western Anatolian material culture through a wide range of evidence. First, I shall assess some methodological issues regarding Anatolia in the Persian period. Second, I shall outline an overview of the debate concerning the visibility and presence of Achaemenid culture in the peripheries, in particular in Western Anatolia. Finally, I shall analyse a specific case study in order to outline the emergence of the Achaemenid horizons alongside the other cultures in Western Anatolian material evidence.

Western Anatolia and the Persian Empire

Western Anatolia (present-day Western Turkey) has recently become an undeniable protagonist in historical and methodological discourse on the Persian Empire. Indeed, numerous researches in the field and various sorts of available documentation allow for the investigation of the remarkable cultural interactions that took place in the western part of Anatolia.

The Anatolian peninsula was completely conquered by Cyrus the Great in the mid-6th century BCE. The turning point was the defeat of the Lydian king Croesus, who – according to Herodotus (*Histories* 1.53ff.) – misinterpreted the Delphic oracle and attacked Cyrus the Great. This event paved the way for the Persian conquest: Anatolia became the western fringe of the largest empire that had ever appeared in the ancient world – “*un bouleversement géopolitique majeur dans l’histoire du Moyen-Orient*” (Briant 1999, 1127) – with a specific administrative and bureaucratic structure. In the central decades of the 5th century BCE the Delian League controlled several cities on the coastal strip, on the Straits, on the Aegean

coast, and in Caria, Lycia, and Pamphylia (Marek 2016, 144). However, the Spartan victory over Athens in the Peloponnesian War allowed the Persians to re-establish their power over the western coasts of Anatolia. The strategic importance of this area became even clearer at the end of the 5th century BCE, when Cyrus the Younger – satrap of Sardis and *karanos* in Western Anatolia – was able to organise an expedition against his brother, the Great King Artaxerxes II, in order to seize the Persian throne. As we know from Xenophon's *Anabasis*, Greeks participated in his unsuccessful march.

Depending on perspective, Western Anatolia has a complex profile, the result of the coexistence of older traditions and contacts between various political and cultural worlds. On the one hand, Western Anatolia was a polycentric entity, a mosaic of different peoples characterised by long-standing and well-defined cultures (see the final remarks in Boucharlat 2016). On the other hand, Western Anatolia was also a contact zone between the Hellenic culture and the Persian element (Starr 1975; Asheri 1983). The art-historical category “Graeco-Persian” is telling with regard to the debate about Anatolia in the period of Persian rule. This label was conceived by Adolf Furtwängler for gems which he attributed to Anatolia, suggesting that they were the creations of Greek artists working for Persian patrons. Afterwards this label was gradually extended to other forms of Anatolian art, for instance sculpture, and scholars have tried to better define this category. Some have also tried to dismiss this label replacing it with new ones, such as “Anatolian-Persian” or “Perso-Anatolian” (Gates 2002; Baughan 2013). The Greek component turns out to be the most challenged, since, as we shall see, in the last few years the role of Achaemenid impact has increased in the scholarly debate.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that Hellenic culture was present not only as an Anatolian element, since it was expressed by the peoples of the western coastal area, but also through influence exerted directly by mainland Greece. The success of Hellenic culture throughout the Mediterranean, including also the eastern basin, was determined not only by the Delian League, but also by the mobility of intellectuals, artists, and materials for works of art, which are phenomena independent of political affiliation.

Depending on field researches and academic tendencies, then, scholarly debate has focused on different perspectives of Anatolia and its relationship with the centre of the empire.

Looking for Persians: the case of Anatolia¹

“The administrative achievement of the Achaemenians bears no resemblance to that of the Romans, in whose Empire conquered peoples were forced to adapt themselves to the common culture and to participate in the collective economy. This usually entailed a levelling upward, and was required from men whose origins were as diverse as their traditions and abilities. The position under Cyrus and Darius was different. Apart from certain outlying regions with a low level of culture, these monarchs incorporated in their Empire, the most extensive in the history of the world, a synthesis of ancient civilizations, for they included under their rule Mesopotamia, Syria, Egypt, Asia Minor, the Greek cities and islands, and part of India. To make these countries conform to the level of their own civilization would have been a retrograde step, and, as newcomers in the concert of peoples, the Achaemenians were aware of the superiority of these ancient civilizations. Hence the large amount of autonomy granted by Cyrus; hence also the astute policy of Darius, as a result of which these ancient cultures were preserved and favoured at the expense, perhaps, of the stability of the State. Throughout the history of the Empire this lack of balance was to be a latent and sometimes dangerous weakness, and, in face of the expansionist tendency of the young and vigorous Persian people, was one of the causes of its greatest defeats and final fall” (Ghirshman 1954, 127-128).

In the 1950s Roman Ghirshman stressed the large autonomy of the peoples subdued by the Persians, peoples whom the Achaemenid rulers acknowledged as culturally superior. This scholar considers Anatolia, alongside Egypt and Mesopotamia, as an outstanding civilisation. From the artistic point of view, scholars interpreted the decoration of the Achaemenid palaces as a Persian outcome resulting from the interplay of different artistic languages from the subdued civilizations, as stated by Henri Frankfort (1946). Textual and epigraphic evidence, alongside with stylistic analysis, fuelled the issue of Greek influence over Achaemenid art:

“The Achaemenids, by inviting foreign artists to build and adorn their palaces, produced a new art – an art partly Oriental and partly

¹ The critical assessment of the present section aims at presenting the shifting perspectives in the scholarly debate about political and cultural connections between Persia and Anatolia without an exhaustive intent. For recent analyses, see McCaskie 2012; Colburn 2013; 2017; Briant 2015.

Greek, which we now call Achaemenian. But it was Achaemenian not because it was created by Achaemenian artists, but because it was produced for the Achaemenid kings by foreign artists, who under new conditions created a new style” (Richter 1946, 30).²

Consistently, Carl Nylander’s analysis of the techniques used for stonework in Pasargadae was welcomed as the conclusive demonstration of the role of East Greek masons in Achaemenid Persia (Nylander 1970; Boardman 1973, 106).

With this interest in the artistic presence of periphery in the centre, there followed a differentiated balance between centre and periphery in the Persian Empire: on the one hand the centre emanated political power, on the other hand peripheries appeared as dominant from the cultural and artistic points of view.

In the 1970s the perspective began to change. On the Persian side, scholars started dismissing the interpretation of Achaemenid art at the heart of the empire as merely “derivative” and “repetitive”, regarding it as the result of Persian rather than external agency (Root 1979; see also Colburn 2013). On the Anatolian side, Ekrem Akurgal had underscored already in the 1960s that Anatolia was part of the Persian Empire (nevertheless a marked interest in the Persian elements on the periphery now began, Akurgal 1961, 167-174). Chester G. Starr’s study – in two articles (Starr 1975; 1977) – became a milestone in this regard:³

“My objective in this study is to consider afresh the relations between Greeks and Persians from a point of view which seeks to hold the two sides in more even balance. [...] the Persians will turn out to be less passive than is usually suggested” (Starr 1975, 42).

Thus, Starr considered frontiers as the best point to investigate cultural contacts between Greeks and Persians. He chose Asia Minor as the best case study, in particular the regions between the coast and the interior, where important economic and cultural developments took place.

² A Greek role in the monumental art of Persepolis is challenged by Curtis and Rasmussen (2005, 54).

³ As to the place of these articles in the scholarly literature, see Kuhrt and Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1991, xv.

What made possible this new interest? Looking at Anatolia, a number of important discoveries and researches in the 1970s allowed scholars to assess the Achaemenid phase from material evidence. First, from 1971 onward Matcheld Mellink (1971, 249-255) published the accounts of the discovery of a painted tomb in the Lycian inland, the so-called Karaburun II tomb (ca. 470 BCE). The rear wall showed a banqueter in Persian attire and, as stressed by Margaret C. Miller (2011, 96 fig. 1), this event marked a turning point in Achaemenid studies, in particular in the art-historical field. This perception was clear from the first mention of the tomb:

“[...] we can speak indeed of Anatolia as a link between Orient and Occident, and of Graeco-Persian art as an important entity instead of a provincial offshoot of Greek art.” (Mellink 1971, 254).

Second, in 1973 the famous trilingual inscription in the Letoon sanctuary near Xanthos in Lycia (see lastly Molina Valero 2016) was discovered. The stele bears three versions of the same decree, inscribed in Lycian, Greek and Aramaic, datable to the 4th century BCE. Since Aramaic was the administrative language of the Persian Empire, this find raised the issue of the role of the Persian element alongside the local and the Hellenic cultures. Lycia – a region of south-western Anatolia that was well-defined both in geographic and cultural terms – was normally inserted in a Hellenised horizon on account of its peculiar artistic language, but this inscription reaffirmed its belonging to a broader political structure, the Persian Empire. David Asheri's words are illuminating for understanding the value of the Trilingual inscription:

“La mia prima visita a Xanthos fu nella sala arcaica del British Museum. Cioè, mi rimase un ricordo di arte greca. Poi venne, nel 1973, la scoperta entusiasmante dell'iscrizione trilingue del Letoo. Il testo aramaico fu una ammonizione molto opportuna. Si risvegliò cioè la sempre latente volontà di emancipazione dalla ipoteca troppo gravosa dell'ellenocentrismo, nonostante il pericolo di ricadere nel vizio opposto” (Asheri 1983, 9).

Departure from hellenocentricity was to be a major impulse for the development of Achaemenid Studies in the following years (Hornblower 1990, esp. 94-95). Consequently, a similar desire of emancipation from hellenocentricity in the art-historical field was revealed by William A.P.

Childs's research on the so-called city-reliefs in Lycia. This scholar concluded that these representations – characterising the funerary art of the region – were of Oriental inspiration but in Greek forms, paving the way to a long-standing debate on the different sources of Lycian art (Childs 1978).

Third, since 1971 a French team has been working on the site of Meydancikkale, in Rough Cilicia. The French visited the site in 1969 after the announcement of the finding of Hittite reliefs, which actually turned out to be Persian. Here, men were depicted in procession according to the Persepolitan model (Laroche and Davesne 1981; Davesne and Laroche-Traunecker 1998; Gates 2005). This is probably the most direct connexion to the Achaemenid monumental art of Persia ever discovered in Anatolia (Briant 2015, 182).

In a broader perspective, it is worthwhile stressing both the role of postcolonial studies and the increasing importance given to the concepts of “centre” and “periphery” in social science theory. In 1974 Immanuel Wallerstein published his famous work on the world-system theory, which had at its heart the centre/periphery concept (Wallerstein 1974). This perspective affected also the humanities. Enrico Castelnuovo and Carlo Ginzburg analysed the relationship between “Core” and “Periphery” in post-antique art history from multiple points of view, avoiding the simplistic vision of peripheries as a passive repository of influences from the centre and proposing a role of peripheries in elaborating innovative solutions (Castelnuovo and Ginzburg 1979, 285-352).⁴

Thereby a new scholarly debate on the role of peripheries and important discoveries contributed to renewed interest in Anatolia both as a periphery of the Persian Empire and a contact area between different cultural worlds. In 1983 John Cook suggested that the court art of the centre of the empire had been translated in other regions:

“At Susa and Persepolis, then, a court art-style was created which can fairly be termed Achaemenid; and its special idioms, with the prestige that they carried, were widely diffused and taken into the repertory of craftsmen in many regions of the empire” (Cook 1983, 166).⁵

⁴ Ten years later a focus on the dynamics of peripheries was devoted to the case of the Roman Empire (Settis 1989, 827-878).

⁵ See also Dandamaev and Lukonin 1989, 263.

This means that the impact of the centre on peripheries became an important issue in the research of the empire. In the same year Asheri's work outlined the profile of Western Anatolia in the Achaemenid phase on the basis of long-lasting cultural phenomena. In this dynamic Asheri stressed the role of local elements as well, which interplayed with the Hellenic and Persian ones:

“Si tratta cioè di una serie di aree contigue di antichissime civiltà epicoriche, combacianti direttamente le costiere pregne di grecità, attraverso le quali si incontrano e si compenetrano nell'età achemenide l'ellenismo e l'iranismo” (Asheri 1983, 16).

Similarly, in the proceedings of the 1983 Achaemenid History Workshop Pierre Briant stressed the importance of examining in an exhaustive way regional situations in order to understand the general dynamic of the empire (Briant 1987, 6).

The Achaemenid History Workshops occupied the entire decade of the 1980s and marked the birth of the young discipline of Achaemenid Studies through analysis of different themes in a multidisciplinary perspective (Tuplin 2007, xiii; see also Kuhrt 2009). The 1986 Achaemenid History Workshop embodied this renewed interest in peripheries of the Persian empire focusing on *“how the centre interacted with daily life in areas far distant from it”* (Kuhrt and Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1990, xi). One meeting of the series was devoted to Asia Minor and Egypt in 1988, since evidence from these areas was more abundant and might reveal the Persian impact on long-lasting local cultures as well (Kuhrt and Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1991, xiii-xiv). The importance of peripheries in Achaemenid Studies of the 1980s is marked also by the birth of the series *Transeuphratène* in 1989.

This attention on the impact of the centre on periphery stressed the issue of Persian visibility in subdued lands:

“The Persian empire is so frequently almost invisible in the archaeological record, that at the end of one long session, the chairman exclaimed in exasperation: «Was there ever a Persian empire?»” (Kuhrt and Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1990, xiii).

The invisibility of the central political structure in local evidence became a key-theme in Achaemenid Studies, stimulating new answers. Margaret

Cool Root, for instance, theorised a proper politics of meagreness – therefore a deliberate Achaemenid policy – to explain low visibility in periphery (Root 1991). And Briant expressed the contradiction between historical sources and archaeological evidence with explicit reference to Western Anatolia:

“Il suffit par exemple de se promener sur le site de Sardes pour que s'impose une question telle que: «Mais où sont donc passés les Perses?» Cependant, la réalité est également plus complexe qu'il n'apparaît, car, dans le même temps, la présence perse/achéménide est particulièrement bien attestée à Sardes et dans les environs par les textes littéraires et par des inscriptions tardives. Il y a là une contradiction entre l'image archéologique et le texte, qu'il revient à l'historien de prendre en compte et de résoudre, en évitant de recourir à un raisonnement binaire simplificateur (oui/non)” (Briant 1996, 783).

Trying to solve this contradiction, scholars started including in their analysis a wide set of material records in the investigation of Anatolian sites and regions. Western Anatolia, in particular, is an area that scholars unanimously acknowledge as privileged for examining complex cultural dynamics through different sorts of materials.

Scholars' effort to detect Achaemenid presence in the material culture of Western Anatolia is revealed by a specific lexical choice, since from the 1990s onwards scholars made explicit reference to Persian impact on Anatolia using mostly the expression “Achaemenid Anatolia” (in different languages, of course). Jan Zahle, analysing Hecatomnid Caria in “Achaemenid Asia Minor”, outlined a particular “culture” arisen from the integration of Greek, Anatolian and Persian social and ethnic groups (Zahle 1994, 86-87). Important meetings were organised in order to assess the Achaemenid phase of Anatolia: the round table “Mécanismes et innovations monétaires dans l'Anatolie achéménide. Numismatique et Histoire” (Istanbul, May 22-23, 1997); the symposium “Achaemenid Anatolia” (Bandırma, August 17-19, 1997) and the workshop “The Achaemenid Impact on Local Populations and Cultures in Anatolia (Sixth-Fourth Centuries BCE)” (Istanbul, 20-21 May 2005).⁶ Among the “*monographies proprement achéménides*” which in 1999 Briant considered much desired in Achaemenid Studies, was Olivier Casabonne's “*monographie régionale*”, which aimed at outlining the Achaemenid period in Cilicia by

⁶ Respectively, Casabonne 2000; Bakır 2001; Delemen 2007.

detecting different sorts of sources (Briant 1999, 1136; Casabonne 2004).⁷ Moreover, Elspeth R.M. Dusinberre published two studies on specific classes of materials, more precisely Achaemenid bowls from Sardis (Dusinberre 1999) and coinage from Achaemenid Anatolia (Dusinberre 2000). Then, in 2003 she published her PhD thesis – defended in 1997 – as a monograph on “Achaemenid Sardis” (Dusinberre 2003). On the art-historical side, however, Bruno Jacobs reaffirmed the absence of Persian influence in Western Anatolia, since belonging to a specific political sphere did not necessarily imply artistic effects (Jacobs 2002; see also Jacobs 1987, reviewed in Childs 1991).

The term “impact” was much used in order to label the Persian influence on peripheries: in other words, the acknowledgement of a Persian impact aimed at solving the issue of visibility, not much evident but widespread in different fields. However, the pertinence of the term “impact” was questioned by Lori Khatchadourian, since she believed that this category would generate an excessive expectation of cultural and artistic phenomena neatly referred to the centre. Therefore, she stressed the importance of “*more subtle forms of social re-engineering within materially constituted sociopolitical worlds*” proposing a comparison by themes of social life. Such a position expresses the need of reconsidering the archaeology of the Achaemenid provinces in combination with the most recent anthropological approaches (Khatchadourian 2012, 964-965). In other words, material culture should be considered not the final goal of research, but the means to explore social and political life from a different perspective.

A thematic organisation in social “behaviours and actions” is followed in Dusinberre’s most recent monograph *Empire, Authority, and Autonomy in Achaemenid Anatolia* (Dusinberre 2013). This study emerges in the panorama of Anatolian Studies because here a single scholar aims at embracing Anatolia in one theoretical framework, outlining differences and similarities between various Anatolian regions.

The need of overcoming single regional studies and comparing different “provinces” of the empire through homogeneous criteria is felt very much in Achaemenid Studies.⁸ However, this task is difficult since Anatolia, as I

⁷ See also some observations in Salmeri and D’Agata 2011, CIII-CIV. For another regional monograph, see Roosevelt 2009.

⁸ The need of comparison between different “provinces” is stressed by Khatchadourian (2012) and Briant (2015).

have said, was uneven both in its cultural compositions and in its relationship with the Persian political sphere. It is not fortuitous that Anatolia did not represent a unified political entity under the Achaemenid rule, as recognised by Dusinger herself.⁹ The inclusion of regions that would require a specific discourse, and the analysis of different fields linked to diverse social behaviour (religion, banqueting, etc.) make it inevitable that Dusinger seeks a more flexible model than the traditional core-periphery concept. As Anatolia did not have a monolithic relationship with the centre, Dusinger proposes what she calls an “authority-autonomy model” in order to pinpoint a particular balance of central authority and local autonomy in different behaviours and actions. Rémy Boucharlat, expressing some doubts on the geographical extension declared by the title of Dusinger’s work, noticed that she analysed mainly the western part of Anatolia (Boucharlat 2015). As I have said, Western Anatolia is a unique case to test cultural dynamics in a supra-regional dimension from a multiple perspective.

Western Anatolian material evidence in the Persian period through the example of banqueting

Alongside the increasing importance of Western Anatolia in the discourse of cultural dynamics within the Persian Empire, a refinement in the research of material evidence has improved the analysis of social behaviour in Persian-period Western Anatolia. The set of material evidence used by scholars spans from monumental works to portable objects.¹⁰ These two categories, which have become very important *foci* in the latest developments in Ancient Near Eastern studies, are the opposite poles of a broad range of material records, each with its own social values resulting from the combination of features such as portability, materiality, accessibility and visibility.¹¹

In this section I shall concentrate on the themes of banqueting. This activity implies precise behaviours within a social group, therefore it can provide useful data about specific contexts (Dietler 2003). In Western

⁹ See Baughan on “Anatolian-ness” (Baughan 2013, 349 n. 6).

¹⁰ I intentionally avoid the notion of “work of art” or “artwork” in order to embrace the largest set of material documents.

¹¹ For monuments, see for instance Gilibert 2011, Harmanşah 2013. For portable art, see Thomason 2014.

Anatolia banqueting has been treated by scholars from different perspectives depending on the evidence considered.

Starting with vessels, which are the basic accoutrements for banqueting, the study of pottery conveys information about historical, social, economic and cultural aspects in the area under investigation. Whereas scholars have affirmed the elusiveness of Persian Empire in Paphlagonia, since the ceramic repertoires of the Late Iron Age seem to suggest a broad range of influences rather than a specific impact (Matthews and Glatz 2009, 155-156. See also Briant 2015, 179-180), important centres of Western Anatolia have been investigated providing meaningful data from pottery.

Gordion, which was the Phrygian capital, was conquered by Lydians in the first half of the 6th century BCE and then included in the Persian Empire. Robert C. Henrickson has acknowledged that the changes of power determined by foreign hegemonies impacted on the ceramic production, together with other social and cultural aspects. Henrickson has pointed out that potters were specialists ready to satisfy the request of the market, therefore they were influenced by pottery types from abroad, especially among the utilitarian wares (Henrickson 2005, 135). This happened after the Lydian conquest, which brought coloured pots and the characteristic lydions, but also in the Persian period, when an increase of imports and changes in locally made pots occurred (Dusinberre 2013). According to Mary M. Voigt and T. Cuyler Young, Achaemenid influence is visible in “*pottery, weapons, horse trappings and other small finds from Late Phrygian Gordion*” (Voigt and Young 1999, 192).

Investigations in Sardis, capital of the Lydian kingdom and then satrapal city, have focused on a specific shape, called the Achaemenid bowl, which is a handleless cup characterised by a hollowed base, rounded plain body, and offset carinated rim. As to the materials, clay bowls look like imitations of precious metal items, and there are glass examples as well.¹² This shape, rooted in the Near East, became popular throughout the empire and beyond, especially during Achaemenid times. Achaemenid bowls seem to have no precedent in Western Anatolia before the arrival of the Persians, but their distribution is not pervasive in Western Anatolia: surprisingly, Daskyleion, the north-western Anatolian satrapal capital in the Hellespontine Phrygia, is almost devoid of Achaemenid bowls (Coşkun 2006).

¹² On the type see Pfrommer 1987, 42-74; see also numerous studies of specific items, such as Saldern 1975.

Dunsiberre, investigating eight closed deposits in Sardis dated on the basis of external evidence, underscores that the Achaemenid carinated bowl shape began to be locally produced in Sardis from the early 5th century BCE, competing and overcoming the Lydian skyphos as a drinking vessel (Dunsiberre 1999; 2003, 172-195).

From the chronological point of view, the late appearance of the Achaemenid bowls in Sardis suggests slow and deep-rooted penetration into local society, since they were produced here up to the 3rd century BCE (Rotroff and Oliver 2003, 61).

The study of the Achaemenid bowl shape can be extended to other centres of Western Anatolia thanks to recent archaeological researches in Turkey. The Phrygian site of Seytömer Höyük was probably a Persian administrative centre, since clay tags with sealing impressions – assigned by Deniz Kaptan to the “Western Achaemenid koine” – have been found there (Kaptan 2010). These tags appear to reveal administrative practices and activities clearly referred to the Persian period, and archaeological investigation here indicates that the usage of Achaemenid pottery bowls – imported from other centres – started as early as the 5th century BCE and continued well into the Hellenistic Period (Coşkun 2011). The time span of this specific shape thus is consistent with the long-lasting presence in Sardis.

Two sites in Pamphylia, the region located on the southern coast of Anatolia east of Lycia, have provided interesting data about Achaemenid bowls as well. In the site of Karaçallı, Achaemenid bowls in bronze and pottery have been found from the 5th and 4th centuries BCE. Moreover, numerous Achaemenid bowls of local fabric were found in a Hellenistic *bothros* in Perge, about 9 km far from Karaçallı. This *bothros* was filled with the remains of ritual meals between the end of the third century and the beginning of the 2nd century BCE (Çokay Kepçe and Recke 2007). Achaemenid bowls dating back to the fifth-fourth centuries BCE have been found in Lycia as well (Toteva 2007, 120; Dündar and Rauh 2017, 550-551).

The study of pottery from different sites of Western Anatolia, thus, testifies to a change in the material record during the Persian period, but not immediately after the Persian conquest in the mid-6th century BCE. As stressed by Sagona and Zimansky, Anatolia did not undergo “*any dramatic transformation in material culture*” in the first phase of the Persian power (Sagona and Zimansky 2009, 367-368). Achaemenid bowls seem to confirm this dynamic since they appeared no earlier than the 5th century BCE. A further common feature is the

long-term use of Achaemenid bowls. In Sardis and Seytömer Höyük this shape is attested over a long time span beyond the Persian period, and in Pamphylia this continuity is suggested by two neighbouring sites. The long-lasting use of Achaemenid bowls in western Anatolia is demonstrated by a few sherds found in the Pisidian city of Sagalassos in the Odeon kiln fill layers, which have been dated between the end of the 3rd century and the first half of the 2nd century BCE (Poblome *et alii* 2013: 199).¹³ This means that the penetration of Achaemenid bowls was well established.

From the material point of view, the production of Achaemenid pottery bowls in Western Anatolia would suggest the non-elite's emulation of precious metalware used by the "Persian and persianising elite". The mechanism of emulation is detectable in Lydia, where metal vessels were locally produced imitating Achaemenid motifs with some "irregularities" (Miller 2007).¹⁴ Scholars have stressed that the case of Achaemenid bowls suggests changes of shapes, techniques and probably of workshop organisation in local production (Dusinberre 2003; Ebbinghaus 2004). Dusinberre, furthermore, attributes to this phenomenon a marked social significance: emulation of vessels would suggest emulation of customs (Dusinberre 1999, 96-98). This hypothesis is confirmed by Miller, who invokes other evidence such as visual art to detect real changes in social praxis (Miller 2011, 112-113). Banqueting was one of the most widespread iconographies in diverse media (sculpture, painting) and contexts (mostly funerary). Similarly, it is worthwhile recalling the numerous examples of tombs with *klinai* (couches) in Western Anatolia during the Persian period (Baughan 2013). Miller reconsiders the corpus of Western Anatolian banquet representation during the Persian period and chooses as case study the Karaburun Tomb II, in northern Lycia, which I have already mentioned. On the west wall a reclining man is flanked by a woman and by two male attendants, one holding a fan and a towel, the other holding two vessels. Both the cup-bearer and the main character handle their cups in a peculiar manner, balancing the vessel on three fingers. Miller identifies this gesture as a non-Anatolian formula that should be referred to a Persian practice:

¹³ In Sagalassos this shape was continued in Roman Imperial Sagalassos red slip ware.

¹⁴ On emulation see also Kistler 2010.

“In the act of drinking in this manner, or in the act of sponsoring art that depicted it, individual members of the ancient peoples who skirted the eastern Mediterranean declared to their peers a personal sense of identity with the Persian dominant ethno-class” (Miller 2011, 120).

Miller’s discourse on identity and social practices in Achaemenid Anatolia shifts from the pottery itself to the performative aspect (on this issue see also Rojas 2016): if archaeological excavations provide us with pottery, visual evidence depicting banquet offers images of people’s interaction with vessels.

With regard to the later phase of Persian-period in Western Anatolia it is interesting to analyse material evidence which allows us to reconstruct banqueting spaces. The sanctuary of Labraunda, 14 kilometres north of the Carian city of Mylasa, was characterised by dining-rooms suitable for egalitarian gatherings, such as the so-called *oikoi* and the East Stoa, and two monumental buildings, which were referred to as *andrones* in their monumental dedicatory inscriptions (known as Andron A and B).¹⁵ As in ancient Greece the *andron* was designated as a dining-room in private houses and sanctuaries, scholars interpreted the *andrones* in Labraunda as two monumental banqueting-halls for ritual or ceremonial meals. This hypothesis has been fueled also by the archaeological remains in Andron A, which suggest the presence of a platform for couches. It is likely that each *andron* was able to host 20 *klinai* arranged according to a marked axiality that stressed the importance of a particular couch for distinguished banqueters (Hellström 1989; 1996).¹⁶ Since the sanctuary was monumentalised in the mid-4th century BCE by the Hecatomnid dynasty and Mausolus’s patronage is explicitly mentioned in the inscription of the Andron B, it is probable that Mausolus himself was one of such distinguished banqueters during his visits to the sanctuary (Poggio, *forthcoming*).

The presence of a space devoted to a crowded convivial gathering with a possible hierarchical emphasis in the disposition of *klinai* in the middle of the 4th century BCE fits very well with the contemporary visual evidence. In the first half of the 4th century BCE representations of collective banquets become more common in Lycia, a region neighbouring Caria that was included in the

¹⁵ On Labraunda, in general, see Hellström 2007.

¹⁶ See now Umholtz 2016, esp. 401-402, with bibliography.

Hecatomnid sovereignty precisely in the fourth century (Poggio, *forthcoming*). The multiple banquet is an iconographic innovation since in 6th and 5th centuries BCE Western Anatolian the formula of the *monoposias*, a single reclining person normally surrounded by other characters, prevailed, in particular in the funerary context (Draycott 2016, 219-220). In particular, this iconography characterises the banqueting scenes in two dynastic contexts, the Nereid Monument of Xanthos (Childs, Demargne 1989, pls. 130-134) and the heroon of Trysa (Landskron 2015, pls. 155-162). These tombs – traditionally dated to the first quarter of the 4th century BCE – had different architectural layouts, since the Nereid Monument was a temple-like structure (Childs and Demargne 1989; Poggio 2016), whereas the Heroon of Trysa was a precinct surrounding a tomb of a local shape (Poggio 2007; Landskron 2015).¹⁷ However, with regard to their dimensions, positions within the cityscape and landscape and to their decoration both these two monuments can be referred to characters of dynastic rank.

The gatherings at Xanthos and at Trysa are based on the pattern of the Greek symposium (see also Lockwood 2016, 312-313). At Xanthos, however, two isolated participants were represented. A man, identified as the dynast for a number of attributes and visual features, is depicted as a single banqueter: he holds a rhyton with an animal protome, which recalls precious Achaemenid items (Ebbinghaus 2000, 103; Childs and Demargne 1989, pl. 133). Another banqueter, less well preserved, was probably represented on the same frieze as a single banqueter. This means that the banqueters are not of equal social status. It is undoubtable that the *andrones* in Labraunda and the banquet of the Nereid Monument – both referring to a dynastic context – reveal a marked importance of banqueting amongst the ruling elite of south-western Anatolia. Ebbinghaus has remarked that the banquet of the Nereid Monument “*does not seem to take place in a Greek andron*” (Ebbinghaus 2000, 100): instead, a “western Anatolian *andron*” like those in Labraunda could be a likely architectural setting of the Xanthos gathering (see also Draycott 2016, 269).

Ebbinghaus’s detailed analysis has revealed that the rhyton held by the dynast on the Nereid Monuments follows a motif of official Achaemenid art. Other elements suggesting an Achaemenid horizon can be detected, such as the isolation of the main banqueter. We are fortunate to have some information about the meal of the Persian Great King:

¹⁷ For a different datation of the Heroon of Trysa see Landskron 2015, 347-349.

“Some of those who dine with the King eat outside, and anyone who wants to can see them, whereas others eat inside with the King. But even they do not eat in his company; instead, there are two rooms opposite one another, and the King has lunch in one and his guests in the other. The King can see them through the curtain that covers the door, but they cannot see him. [...] After they come in, they drink in his company, although not the same wine; they do this sitting on the floor, whereas he lies on a couch with gold feet.” (Olson 2006, 193, 195).¹⁸

In light of Athenaeus’s passage, suggesting a separate position of the Great King during meals and drinking gatherings, one would be tempted to establish a further link between the ideology of royal meal in the centre and in the periphery of the empire.

A multi-horizon perspective

As this brief analysis has shown, the inclusion of an Achaemenid horizon in the scholarly debate on Western Anatolia has resulted in the Persians no longer being completely invisible. This Achaemenid horizon, however, is sustained by the dialogue, the exchange or the contrast with other cultural horizons. In the case of the banquet scene on the Nereid Monument, the Hellenic horizon of the symposium pattern and the Achaemenid/Persianising horizon of the isolated dynast are combined in order to transmit a message. They can be easily distinguished, but the one would not make sense without the other.

The case of banqueting demonstrates the complexity of investigating material culture and social praxis in Western Anatolia during the Persian period. Whilst specialisations by region or by discipline (studies on ceramic, art historical research etc.) are important to the most complete understanding of specific contexts, only the combination of a wide range of evidence, from monumental to portable, can clarify the complex mosaic of cultures in Western Anatolia.

A multi- and interdisciplinary approach is the most suitable for western Anatolia in the Persian period: the investigation of different sorts of evidence (e.g. pottery, visual art, architecture) and the inclusion of different cultural horizons may help to better understand the cultural dynamics simultaneously at work.

¹⁸ Ath. IV 26 (145b-c) = *FGrH* 689 F 2 (Transl. by Olson 2006, 193, 195).



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