

# THE BATTLE OF THE ECLIPSE (MAY 28, 585 BC): A DISCUSSION OF THE LYDO-MEDIAN TREATY AND THE HALYS BORDER

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UDK: 94(35):355.4

902/904(35):355.4

Pregledni rad

Primljeno: 3. X. 2016.

Prihvaćeno: 10. I. 2017.

## SUMMARY

In his Book I, Herodotus relates the war between Lydia of Alyattes and Media of Cyaxares. This war ended with the well-known occurrence of the total solar eclipse, which astronomical researchers propose to date to 585 BC. After these hostilities, a treaty between the two kingdoms was concluded, and was sealed by a royal wedding. This paper analyzes this event, better known as the “battle of the eclipse”. It will revisit the problem of the location of the battle and that of the identity of the Lydian and Median kings who reigned during this conflict. The paper will study the role that the eclipse played on the conclusion of hostilities and its impact on the minds of the Greeks; it will also examine the nature of the treaty concluded between the Lydians and the Medes. Finally, the paper will examine the problem of the Halys border that separated the Lydian and the Median kingdoms, modern scholars asserting that this border was chosen during the Lydo-Median treaty. This examination will allow us to study the view of the ethnic, geographical and political space that the river played in Herodotus’s mind.

Keywords: Lydian Kingdom, Alyattes, Halys River, Median Empire, Cyaxares, Eclipse.

## INTRODUCTION

In his Lydian *logos*, Herodotus relates that Croesus, upon joining with the Spartans in a campaign against the Persians, decided to march his army to Cappadocia. The historian suggests two reasons for Croesus to cross the Halys, the border between

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I would like to thank Claude Baurain (University of Liège), Nicholas Kondoprias (Athens) and Peter Cobb (University of Pennsylvania) for reading and re-reading the original and the English manuscript.

Lydia and Media at that time. First, trusting Apollo's oracular response,<sup>1</sup> the Lydian king was confident that he would annex a new territory. He was also especially interested in avenging his brother-in-law, Astyages, who had recently been dethroned by Cyrus, Persian king.<sup>2</sup>

In order to explain the origins of the connection between Croesus and Astyages, Herodotus digresses from Croesus' story to focus on the prior war between Alyattes' Lydia and Cyaxares's Media. This war ended, according to Herodotus (I. 74), with the well-known occurrence of the solar eclipse predicted by Thales of Miletos. This episode, however, raises several issues that this paper seeks to clarify.

The purpose of this article is to comment on various key elements of Herodotus' Lydian *logos*. Here, we explore the entire episode of the Lydo-Median war, beginning with the eclipse battle itself: the location of the battle, the identity of the protagonists during the battle and the role of the solar eclipse in the battle's conclusion. We also review the treaty that ended the war, including its stipulations such as the resultant royal wedding and the issue of the Halys border.

## THE LYDO-MEDIAN WAR

The historian from Halicarnassus reports (I, 73-74) that Cyaxares accepted some Scythians as suppliants (ικέτας) after they arrived at the court of Ecbatana seeking refuge. The Median king placed some children in their care, to whom they taught the craft of archery and the Scythian language. One day these nomads returned empty-handed from a hunting trip and Cyaxares treated them very roughly and spitefully. The Scythians decided to take their revenge by cooking one child in their care and serving the dish to the Median king. After they committed this crime, they escaped to Sardis to take refuge at Alyattes' court. When the king of Lydia refused to hand over the Scythians to Cyaxares, a war broke out between the two kingdoms. This conflict went on for five years with neither side managing to take the upper hand, but it ended with the solar eclipse that Thales predicted. Modern astronomical research places the date of the battle on May 28<sup>th</sup> 585 BC. Following a total solar eclipse, both the Lydians and the Medes hastened to conclude a peace treaty. The treaty was established through the mediation of two people who are quite difficult to formally identify: Syennesis of Cilicia and Labynetus<sup>3</sup> of Babylon.

<sup>1</sup> This is a well-known passage: the Delphic god predicted that Croesus would destroy a mighty empire (μεγάλην ἀρχήν). Herodotus, I, 53. But here, Herodotus only mentions one oracle (witness the singular of χρηστηρίῳ); but in the chapter 53 of his Book I, Herodotus suggests that the oracles of Delphi and of Amphiaraus had given similar responses.

<sup>2</sup> Herodotus, I, 71-73. In this paper, all the quotations from Herodotus come from the translation of A. D. Godley in the Loeb edition.

<sup>3</sup> The mention of Labynetus is quite surprising. Some scholars recognise Nabonidus (last king of Babylon before the capture of the city by Cyrus in 539 BC) in the name of Labynetus. But in 585 BC, Nebuchadnezzar was the king of Babylon, so the Labynetus mentioned here would be either Nebuchadnezzar or Nabonidus who would have acted as the rep-

To seal the agreement, Aryenis, Alyattes' daughter, was offered to Astyages (the son of Cyaxares) in marriage.

Although Herodotus, in his usual manner, provides us with this fanciful explanation for the conflict, in reality the cause of hostilities likely resulted from the expansionist nature of both great powers (on how to wage war in the Ancient Greek world, including the Lydians, see Greenewalt & Heywood 1992; Roosevelt 2009; Brouwers 2013). Subsequent to his successful campaigns to the west against the Greek cities of Anatolia,<sup>4</sup> Alyattes must have intended to expand his dominion to the east. Here he encountered Cyaxares, who likewise wanted to increase his territory towards the west (Radet 1893: 201-203; Mellink 1991: 649; Roosevelt 2009: 25-26). Even if nothing in Herodotus' story allows us to affirm his account without reservations, Herodotus' passage (implying Scythian suppliants) should merely reflect an episode of rivalry between the two powers. In any event, a Scythian presence in Media and in Lydia is attested by multiple authors.<sup>5</sup>

## I. Locating the Battle Site

Herodotus does not mention a precise location of the site of the eclipse battle. Many modern authors situate this military fight in the vicinity of a place called Pteria<sup>6</sup> and the Halys River (See especially: Radet 1893: 201-203; Summers 1999 "Introduction"; Roosevelt 2009: 25-26). Between 1997 and 1999, Geoffrey Summers proposed that the city of Kerkenes Dağ was a Median foundation and that the Medes took control of this area under Cyaxares' leadership at the beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. At that point, Kerkenes would have become an army base from which the Medes set out to campaign against Alyattes (Summers 1997: 81-94; 1999). However, ongoing excavations have led Summers to reconsider the date of the site's foundation: the city appears to have belonged to the Phrygian culture and would have been founded before 585 BC (Brixhe & Summers 2006: 93-135; Draycott & Summers 2008: 2-4). Therefore, the argument for Pteria being a Median military base against Alyattes is no longer convincing.

Without any written sources from Greece, Media, or Babylonian, it is impossible to determine accurately where the Lydian and the Median troops fought against each other and *a fortiori* nothing indicates where "the Battle of the Eclipse" took place.

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representative of the Babylonian king. See Legrand 1932: 77 n. 4, 183, n. 1; Wiseman 1985: 8-9; Asheri et al. 2007: 135.

<sup>4</sup> Herodotus details his campaigns against Smyrna, Klazomenai and Miletos. Hdt. I, 17-25. Polyaeus adds that he also took the city of Colophon thanks to a trap. Polyaeus, *Stratagemata*, VII, 2.

<sup>5</sup> The Scythians had dethroned the Medians around 653 BC. Once he became king, Cyaxares expelled them from Media (ca 625 BC). After the fall of Nineveh and Assyria (ca. 612 BC), the Scythians were incorporated into the Median kingdom, except those who returned in Lydia. Sulimirski & Taylor 1991: 566-567.

<sup>6</sup> Pteria has been identified by G. Summers, with a convincing argument, as the modern archaeological site of Kerkenes Dağ. Summers 1997: 81-94; 2000: 55-73; Brixhe & Summers 2006: 93-135; Draycott & Summers 2008.

Herodotus relates (I. 74) that this war lasted five years (ἔτεα πέντε). During that time, 'each won many victories over the other'. Without any topographical information, we must assume that this long war was not confined to only one location, but rather affected the entire region that Alyattes wanted to annex.

We know that Alyattes had already campaigned in the East before confronting Cyaxares, so the Lydian king would have controlled Phrygia, and Gordion in particular, before 585 BC (Mellink 1991: 649; Henrickson 2005: 124-136). Moreover, in I. 28, Herodotus gives a list of all the people who were subjugated by Croesus (Alyattes's son) and the Phrygians were among them. As Ph. Legrand also commented: '[Croesus] ne les avait pas tous subjugués lui-même';<sup>7</sup> we may thus consider that it was Alyattes who seized Phrygia, or at least the capital, Gordion. We also know that the Mermnad kings' policy was to place a governor at the head of the conquered territories, so the local elites were maintained but had to pay a tribute to the Lydian king (Radet 1893: 212-213; Glotz 1925: 269; La Bua 1977: 10, 25-26)<sup>8</sup>. We can make the link between this policy and the story of Croesus' son who was killed by a Phrygian prince while hunting (Hdt. I, 35). Herodotus' description of the Phrygian prince as originating from a family friendly to the Lydians seems to indicate the reality of the Mermnad's policy and Phrygia's subjugation to Lydian domination from Alyattes' reign onwards.

However, the actual state of research may not give credence to the idea that Alyattes, after the capture of Gordion, also gained control of the city of Pteria, thus making this city a part of the Lydian Empire prior to Croesus' reign (Brixhe & Summers 2006: 99). According to a Claude Brixhe' hypothesis, Pteria would have been the new Phrygian capital after Gordion's capture by Alyattes' Lydian troops (Summers 2000: 56; for the Claude Brixhe' hypothesis, see Draycott & Summers 2008: 71).

We can also consider that, after having driven the Cimmerians out of Lydia and taking control of Phrygia, Alyattes may have continued east of Gordion, rebuilding Pteria (Kerkenes Dağ) and placing a Phrygian potentate there and a Phrygian population which was under Lydian control. The Lydian luxury ivory could be a good example of the relations between Sardis and the authorities of Kerkenes (Dusinberre 2002: 17-54 and Dusinberre 2010: 191-200). This fortified city would thus have been a place of defense against the Cimmerian threat, still existent in Anatolia and all the dangers coming from the East (Even after their defeat by Assyria, the Cimmerians remained present in Anatolia. Sulimirski & Taylor 1991: 559). Moreover, given that Pteria is located near the great overland route connecting Sardis to Susa

<sup>7</sup> English translation: "He [Croesus] did not subjugate all of them by himself". Legrand 1932: 46 n. 2.

<sup>8</sup> But these are only deductions made from the Achaemenid government. This is probable, even if it is not formally attested for the organization of the Greek cities under the Mermnad' domination. Indeed, the Persian kings also placed their relatives or members of their close entourage at the head of satrapies (e.g. Artaphernes, the brother of Darius I), the local notables were associated as assistants. Briant 1996: 93-94.

(the later 'Royal Road'), this fortified city would have ensured the security of the Lydian caravans on this road.

In addition, according to the recent excavations, the only destruction level of Kerkenes Dağ is dated to approximately 550 BC.<sup>9</sup> Thus, if the 'Battle of the Eclipse' (the most important event during the Lydo-Median war), as many authors have said, took place near Pteria around 585 BC, this city would probably have shown some damage, even if the destruction of the city had resulted from a siege by both opposing armies vying for its control. An alternative option is that the war between Alyattes and Cyaxares took place further east of Pteria, a zone that was not under Lydian control yet.

In any event, we are not able to assign an accurate location for the 'Battle of the Eclipse' that ended the war between the kingdoms of Lydia and Media.

## II. The protagonists

Croesus' father, the Lydian king Alyattes, waged war against the Median king Cyaxares, Astyages's father. All historical sources agree that Alyattes was the Lydian sovereign during the entirety of the war (Hdt. I, 74; P. Oxy. XXIX 2506 F 98; Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis Historia*, II, 9). For Cyaxares, on the other hand, the sources contradict each other, so it is difficult to determine precisely Median leadership through the period of the war.

Indeed, on the one hand, we have Herodotus' testimony that 'Alyattes [...] waged war against Deioces' descendant Cyaxares and the Medes' (Hdt. I, 16). Moreover, according to the same source, the war broke out because of the Lydian king's refusal to hand over the Scythians to Cyaxares (Hdt. I, 74). Finally, when the historian tells us the story of the Medes, he says that 'This [Cyaxares] was the king who fought against the Lydians when the day turned to night in the battle' (Hdt. I, 103). In the same way, Clement of Alexandria (*Stromata*, VI, 14), referring to Eudemus, also says that Cyaxares reigned over Media during the war against Alyattes's Lydians. On the other hand, Cicero (*De divinatione*, I, 49) writes: 'he [Thales] is said to have been the first man to predict the solar eclipse which took place in the reign of Astyages' and not Cyaxares! In the same way, the Oxyrhynchus Papyrus (P. Oxy. XXIX 2506 F 98), Eusebius (*Chronicon*, II, 1430) and Solinus (*Polyhistor*, XV, 16) all mention Astyages as the king of the Medes when the eclipse happened. Given these irreconcilable testimonies, we must question who was the king at the head of the Median troops throughout the conflict against the Lydians?

We will summarize the problem as follows: on the one hand, according to Herodotus, followed by Clement of Alexandria, the 'Battle of the Eclipse' took place under Cyaxares' reign (a Median king whose dates are unclear); on the other hand, Cicero, Eusebius, Solinus and the Oxyrhynchus Papyrus think that the eclipse took

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<sup>9</sup> Since the totality of the excavated ceramics founded there cover a period equivalent to the first half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. Draycott & Summers 2008, 2-4.

place under the reign of Astyages, which implies that the entire conflict was managed by Astyages on the Median side. However, Herodotus claims that the treaty at the end of the war (which was ignored by the other ancient authors) was concluded between Alyattes and Astyages, Cyaxares' successor.

All the accounts of a war between Alyattes and Astyages lead us to believe that these two kings waged war with each other and that the treaty was concluded at the end of this conflict as described by Herodotus (Huxley 1965: 201-206). Thus, several scenarios are conceivable. In the first, Cyaxares would have begun the war against Alyattes and would have led it until the end, with Astyages fighting against Alyattes during a second Lydo-Median war. In the second scenario, a single war was begun by Cyaxares, but he died during the conflict, passing responsibility to Astyages for its the conclusion and treaty.<sup>10</sup> Finally, we can consider that Astyages led the Median troops during the full length of the war as the commander on his father's behalf (Radet 1893: 204 n. 3).

According to G. Huxley, Cyaxares would have died soon after the solar eclipse of 585 BC, if we accept Herodotus' chronology, with Astyages reigning 35 years and Cyaxares 40. If the fall of Ecbatana is dated to 550 BC, Cyaxares' death could be set to 585 BC (Huxley 1965: 204). But in reality, there are only two events of Cyrus' reign that we can date with certainty: the fall of Babylon in 539 BC and the death of Cyrus in 530 BC (Briant 2002: 34). Thus, it seems too hazardous to reconstruct a chronology of the Median kings.

In summary:

- 1) The Lydo-Median war probably broke out under Cyaxares' reign;
- 2) The date of Cyaxares' death is unknown;
- 3) Which Median king was involved in the 'Battle of the Eclipse' of 585 BC is unknown;
- 4) It is impossible to decide whether there were one or two wars between the kingdoms of Lydia and Media;
- 5) The treaty marking the end of the hostilities was concluded between Alyattes and Astyages.

### III. The eclipse

This paper does not focus on the historicity of Thales' eclipse prediction, as plenty of articles and works have already studied this problem (For example: Hartner 1969: 60-71; Mosshammer 1981: 145-155; Negebauer 1975; Panchenko 1993: 387-414; Roller 1983: 58-59; Stephenson & Fatoohi 1997: 280-282; Summers 1999: "Thales"; Worthen 1997).

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<sup>10</sup> In the commentary of the poet Alcaeus inside the Oxyrhynchus Papyrus, the passage 'διὰ τὸ συνίστασθ[αι πό]λεμον' does not imply that the war ended during the reign of Astyages. Huxley 1965: 203.

On the other hand, the chronology of Babylonian astronomy precludes their prediction of the eclipse (Negebauer 1975: 604; Mosshammer 1981: 147; Summers 1999: "Thales").

Turning again to Herodotus (I, 74), we learn the following about this eclipse:

"[...] there was war between the Lydians and the Medes for five years; each won many victories over the other, and once they fought a battle by night.<sup>11</sup> They were still warring with equal success, when it chanced, at an encounter which happened in the sixth year, that during the battle, the day was turned to night [...]"<sup>12</sup>

According to the calculations made by NASA, this total solar eclipse could have been seen in the heartland of Anatolia in the late afternoon, beginning around 15:00 UT<sup>13</sup> and ended around 17:00 (the total solar eclipse happened around 15:55 UT and would have lasted about 3 minutes and 26 seconds).<sup>14</sup> According to Alden Mosshammer, this eclipse's proximity to sunset<sup>15</sup> would have diminished its emotional impact on the Lydian and Medians troops.<sup>16</sup> Mosshammer goes so far as to impugn Herodotus' understanding of the event (Mosshammer 1981: 148). Geoffrey Summers, on the other hand, having personally experienced the total Anatolian solar eclipse of August 1999, insists that despite the late hour, the eclipse could have made a great impression on the belligerents (Summers 1999: The Battle).

It is important to underscore that every time Herodotus mentions an eclipse in his narrative, he makes chronological mistakes. For example, in IX, 10 he details the eclipse during Cleombrotus' propitiatory sacrifice. Herodotus refers here to an event that took place in 479 BC, while this annular eclipse is dated to 480 BC; moreover, it was probably not visible at the Isthmus where the sacrifice took place. In the same way, in Book VII, the historian describes an eclipse at the time when Xerxes left for Greece, however no known solar phenomenon was observable in Asia Minor in 480 BC. In fact, the only somewhat contemporary visible eclipse for this region would have taken place either in 488 or in 478 BC. Thus, the historian of Halicarnassus (or his source) seems to have conflated Cleombrotus's sacrifice or Xerxes's departure with an astral phenomenon that also would have shocked the

<sup>11</sup> See *infra* for the commentaries about this interpolated clause.

<sup>12</sup> "[...] πόλεμος τοῖσι Λυδοῖσι καὶ τοῖσι Μήδοισι ἐγγέγονε ἐπ' ἕτερα πέντε, ἐν τοῖσι πολλάκις μὲν οἱ Μῆδοι τοὺς Λυδοὺς ἐνίκησαν, πολλάκις δὲ οἱ Λυδοὶ τοὺς Μήδους, ἐν δὲ καὶ νυκτομαχίην τινὰ ἐποιήσαντο· Διαφέρουσι δὲ σφι ἐπὶ ἴσης τὸν πόλεμον τῷ ἔκτῳ ἔτει συμβολῆς γενομένης συνήνεκε ὥστε τῆς μάχης συνεστεώσης τὴν ἡμέρην ἐξαπίνης νύκτα γενέσθαι. [...]."

<sup>13</sup> Time standard based on the rotation of the Earth. It is the modern prolongation of the GMT (Greenwich Mean Time).

<sup>14</sup> National Aeronautics and Space Administration, <http://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/SEsearch/SEsearchmap.php?Ecl=-05840528>.

<sup>15</sup> The sunset happened around 17:01 UT.

<sup>16</sup> 'So when the Lydians and the Medes saw the day turned to night they ceased from fighting, and both were the more zealous to make peace'; Hdt. I, 74.



Greeks and Anatolians as an ominous sign (Mosshammer 1981: 153). These rare celestial events could easily have become reference points vaguely associated with important events in the social memory.

We can make the same observation for the eclipse of 585 BC: the East Greeks, as well as the inhabitants of Anatolia, observed a total solar eclipse in 585 BC, and, at about the same time, a treaty was concluded between two major powers, the Lydians and the Medes (Mosshammer 1981: 152-153; Summers 1999: "The Battle"). The Greeks of Asia Minor may have been directly impacted by this agreement since many of them were employed as mercenaries for the Lydians.<sup>17</sup> Thus, the Greek sources may have come to amalgamate those two events, originally separated in time, into one event whose dissemination under this account became traditional (Mosshammer 1981: 153).

Geoffrey Summers seems to support those who argue that the night battle and the eclipse were in fact one single episode (Summers 1999: "Herodotus"). In contrast, A. Mosshammer sees a secondary assimilation of the Lydo-Median war with the eclipse: a night fight – itself unusual – occurred during the conflict, and around the same time the East Greeks witnessed a solar occultation, later associating the two (Mosshammer 1981: 154). Indeed, if we read Herodotus's passage again (I. 74), it gives the impression that he remembers, with confusion, a time when those two events were not perceived as synchronic yet. First he describes the initial five years of fighting, which included an important unspecified night battle. Second, he separately talks about the sixth year of fighting, which concludes with a battle (νυκτομαχίην) when 'day turned into night'. Perhaps these were two different events.

So if there was a conflation of these two events (the eclipse and the conclusion of the treaty) into a single event, it would follow that the Lydo-Median war did not end just after this eclipse. Furthermore, we do not know the location of the Lydo-Median treaty talks and the negotiations initiated by Syennesis of Cilicia and Labynetus of Babylon. Given the time necessary for the engagement of these two 'facilitators' and for the preliminary mediations towards the treaty's conclusion, it likely happened at some point after, but close to, 585 BC (H. Cobbe suggests a three years delay: see Summers 1999: "The Battle"). On the other hand, if the eclipse had no effect on the end of the war, we can place the conclusion of the treaty at any point in time, including much later than the eclipse.

In summary, only one point seems to be certain: a total solar eclipse occurred in Anatolia on 28 May 585 BC while the Lydians and the Medes were waging war. The hostilities may have extended after the eclipse, so that the astral phenomenon happened within the first five years mentioned by Herodotus for the conflict. Finally, the treaty (ὄρκιον) between Alyattes and Astyages may have been concluded after this war (and after Cyaxares's death) even if Greek tradition later combined this eclipse with the conclusion of the treaty (or the war itself).

<sup>17</sup> As reflected especially in the works of Polyaeus (Polyaeus, VII, 2.) and Nicolaus of Damascus (Nicolaus of Damascus *FGI* 90 F 65).



In terms of absolute chronology, we have this time limit: if the night battle 'νυκτομαχίην' (and thus the eclipse) is to be placed only in the last year of the 'five year war' between the Lydians and the Medes, this war would have begun in 590 BC and would have ended in 585 BC. However, if this eclipse is to be placed in the first year of the conflict, it would have begun only in 585 and would have ended in 580 BC. Moreover, if a delay of three years occurred between the end of hostilities and the treaty's conclusion, the latter can be placed between 582 and 577 BC. In any event, with the current state of the evidence, only the eclipse can be dated with accuracy and we are not able to locate the Lydo-Median war more precisely in time.

## THE LYDO-MEDIAN TREATY

After the end of hostilities between the Medes and the Lydians, they established a treaty (ὄρκιον). I will briefly discuss the resulting royal wedding that linked the Lydian and the Median dynasties, as well as the problems concerning the identification of the Halys border.

### I. The royal wedding

Herodotus (I, 74) writes the following concerning the wedding:

"[...] Those who reconciled them [the Lydians and the Medes] were Syennesis the Cilician and Labynetus the Babylonian; they it was who brought it about that there should be a sworn agreement and an exchange of wedlock between them: they adjudged that Alyattes should give his daughter Aryenis to Astyages, son of Cyaxares; for without a strong bond agreements will not keep their strength. [...]"<sup>18</sup>

As mentioned above, we know little of the identity of the person named Labynetus (See note 3). The presence of one Babylonian emissary (either Nebuchadnezzar himself or one of his representatives) can likely be explained by the fact that Nebuchadnezzar had led military campaigns in Cilicia (Hawkins 1982: 434; Wiseman 1991: 235), but the presence of one high official from Cilicia might be surprising and requires an explanation.

These Babylonian expeditions seem similar to those in the same area conducted around 556 BC<sup>19</sup> by Neriglissar. He campaigned in Cilicia, up to the Lydian border, before returning home to Babylon. Furthermore, in one text, Nebuchadnezzar

<sup>18</sup> "[...] Οἱ δὲ συμβιβάσαντες αὐτοὺς ἦσαν οἶδε, Συέννεσις τε ὁ Κίλιξ καὶ Λαβύνητος ὁ Βαβυλώνιος. οὗτοί σφι καὶ τὸ ὄρκιον οἱ σπεύσαντες γενέσθαι ἦσαν καὶ γάμων ἐπαλλαγὴν ἐποίησαν· Ἀλυάττεα γὰρ ἔγνωσαν δοῦναι τὴν θυγατέρα Ἀρύνην Ἀστυάγει τῷ Κυαζάρει παιδί· ἄνευ γὰρ ἀναγκαίης ἰσχυρῆς συμβάσεις ἰσχυραὶ οὐκ ἐθέλουσι συμμένειν. [...]"

<sup>19</sup> *The Third Year of Neriglissar Chronicle (ABC 6)*, lines 1-27.

declares himself to be the master of Cilicia and Lydia.<sup>20</sup> In reality, the Babylonian king's activities might have been more comparable to Neriglissar's: Nebuchadnezzar would not have been able to control Lydia even if his troops could threaten the Lydian border. As for the Babylonian domination of Cilicia, it should be noted that this was only short-lived (Hawkins 1982: 434). The Babylonian presence in Cilicia (a neighbouring kingdom of Lydia and Media), although ephemeral, could help explain the Babylon king's role at the negotiating table of Alyattes and Astyages.

Concerning the person named Syennesis, Ph. Legrand, and others following him, suggests that we should interpret this name rather more as a royal title than a real sovereign anthroponym.<sup>21</sup> As Olivier Casabonne has indicated, this title could mean in Luwian 'Dog's son' describing the Cilician king as the 'archetypal warrior' (in the Indo-European ideology warriors are sometimes called 'dogs' or 'wolves', see Casabonne 2004: 61-63). If that is the case, one could venture the hypothesis that Nebuchadnezzar, having invaded Cilicia (even if for a short time), deposed the local king and took his royal title of Syennesis. If this is true, Nebuchadnezzar and Syennesis would be the same person, the famous Babylonian king himself.

The marriage between Aryenis, Alyattes's daughter, and Astyages, son of Kyaxare, that took place upon conclusion of the treaty, has great historic interest. Indeed, it was common practice in this period to make inter-dynastic marriages (Briant 2002: 24). It is also possible that a second wedding took place at the conclusion of the treaty. As G. Huxley notes (Huxley 1997-1998: 9-11), there is a breach in Herodotus' text,<sup>22</sup> and one could interpret that the Median king Astyages may have offered a Median princess to Alyattes or Croesus (Huxley 1997-1998: 9-10). Although this wedding between a Median princess and a Lydian prince is likely to have happened, we do not know exactly who the marriage partners were. Alyattes might have been the one who married this princess because we know (Hdt. I, 92) that he had already married an Ionian (Pantaleon's mother) and a Carian (Croesus' mother), potentially making a third wife of little marginal impact.

The treaty seems to have served its main purpose, as we have no evidence for further conflict between the Medians and the Lydians afterwards. Therefore, this agreement, sealed by the double marriages, seems to have been a reciprocal non-aggression treaty, similar to the one concluded between Cyaxares and Nabopolassar before the fall of Nineveh. In this way, the treaty likely did not imply an actual alliance between the two kingdoms. And this may explain why Croesus did not help Astyages when he was threatened by the Persian king Cyrus.

<sup>20</sup> See the text *BM 45690* edited, translated and commented in Lambert 1965: 1-11.

<sup>21</sup> Legrand 1932: 77, n. 3; Laroche 1950: 274; Albright 1950: 22-25; Petit 1990: 42. It should be noted that Xenophon also mentions a Syennesis as the king of Cilicia in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC in *Anabasis*, I, 2, 12-27. The different Syennesis were in fact represented on Cilician coins. Casabonne 1995: 156-159.

<sup>22</sup> Ph. Legrand already made this point: 'Post παίδι, aliquid intercidisse Cobet coniciebat, ubi alterum conubium (Lydi viri et Medae mulieris) Herodotus referret'. See Legrand 1932: 77 critic note of the chapter 74 line 19.

## II. The Halys border

Modern scholars assume that the Lydians and the Medes would have fixed their shared border on the Halys River at the end of the war (it's an old tradition as early as Radet 1893: 203-204). However, Herodotus never declares that the River was chosen as a boundary line between the Lydian and the Median kingdoms as part of the Lydo-Median agreement of ca. 585 BC. Here, I hope to augment Robert Rollinger's opinions on the issue of the Halys border (Rollinger 2003: 305-313). First, let's return to the different mentions of the Halys border in Herodotus' account.

The first comes from Chapter I, 6:

"[...] Croesus was by birth a Lydian, son of Alyattes, and monarch of all the nations west of the river Halys (τῶν ἐντὸς Ἄλως ποταμοῦ), which flows from the south between Syria and Paphlagonia, and issues northward into the sea called Euxinus. [...]"<sup>23</sup>

The river is here only a simple geographical limit: it provides the readers with a sense of the extent of Croesus' Empire, comprehensible to a Greek audience on the western side. The river is also here an ethnic border: Herodotus notes that the Halys separated, on one hand, the Syrians of Cappadocia,<sup>24</sup> and, on the other, the Paphlagonians.

A second mention of the river follows in Chapter I, 28:

"[...] As the time went on, Croesus subdued well-nigh all the nations west of the Halys and he held them in subjection, except only the Cilicians and the Lycians: the rest, Lydians, Phrygians, Mysians, Mariandynians, Chalybes, Paphlagonians, Thymians and Bithynians (who are Thracians), Carians, Ionians, Dorians, Aeolians, Pamphylians, were subdued and became subjects of Croesus like the Lydians, and Sardis was at the height of its wealth. [...]"<sup>25</sup>

A third mention of the Halys is located in Chapter I, 72, before Croesus' departure for the Cappadocian heartland:

"[...] For the boundary (οὄρος) of the Median and Lydian empires was the river Halys; which flows from the Armenian mountains first through Cilicia and afterwards between the Matieni on the right and the Phrygians on the other hand; then passing these and flowing still northwards it separates the Cappadocian

<sup>23</sup> "Κροῖσος ἦν Λυδοῦ μὲν γένος, παῖς δὲ Ἀλυάττεω, τύραννος δὲ ἐθνέων τῶν ἐντὸς Ἄλως ποταμοῦ, ὃς ῥέων ἀπὸ μεσαμβρίας μεταξὺ Συρίων τε καὶ Παφλαγόνων ἐξεῖ πρὸς βορρῆν ἄνεμον ἐς τὸν Εὐξείνιον καλεόμενον πόντον."

<sup>24</sup> The same as those who are in the region of Pteria. Hdt. I, 76.

<sup>25</sup> "Χρόνου δὲ ἐπιγινόμενον καὶ κατεστραμμένων σχεδὸν πάντων τῶν ἐντὸς Ἄλως ποταμοῦ οἰκημένων· πλὴν γὰρ Κιλικίων καὶ Λυκίων τοὺς ἄλλους πάντας ὑπ' ἐαυτῷ εἶχε καταστρεψάμενος ὁ Κροῖσος. Εἰσὶ δὲ οἶδε, Λυδοί, Φρύγες, Μυσοί, Μαριανδυνοί, Χάλυβες, Παφλαγόνες, Θρήκες οἱ Θυνοί τε καὶ Βιθνοί, Κᾶρες, Ἴωνες, Ἰωρῖες, Αἰολέες, Πάμφυλοι κατεστραμμένων δὲ τούτων καὶ προσεπικτωμένου Κροῖσου Λυδοῖσι."

Syrians on the right from the Paphlagonians on the left. Thus the Halys river cuts off wellnigh the whole of the lower part of Asia, from the Cyprian to the Euxine sea. Here is the narrowest neck (αὐχλὴν) of all this land; the length of the journey across is five days, for a man going unburdened [...]"<sup>26</sup>

Here is the only mention of the Halys River as the boundary between the Median and the Lydian empires, thus, this passage requires closer attention. If the course of the Halys described by Herodotus is compared with the course of the actual Kizilirmak (its modern name), we observe that this historian's description is quite problematic (Fig. 1).



Figure 1. Current course of the Halys/Kizilirmak River (Map of the author)

<sup>26</sup> "[...] Ὁ γὰρ οὖρος ἦν τῆς τε Μηδικῆς ἀρχῆς καὶ τῆς Λυδικῆς ὁ Ἄλυς ποταμός, ὃς ῥέει ἐξ Ἀρμενίου ὄρεος διὰ Κιλικῶν, μετὰ δὲ Ματιηνοῦς μὲν ἐν δεξιῇ ἔχει ῥέων, ἐκ δὲ τοῦ ἐτέρου Φρύγας· παραμειβόμενος δὲ τούτους καὶ ῥέων ἄνω πρὸς βορρῆν ἄνεμον ἔνθεν μὲν Συρίους Καππαδόκας ἀπέργει, ἐξ εὐωνόμου δὲ Παφλαγόνας, οὕτω ὁ Ἄλυς ποταμός ἀποτάμνει σχεδὸν πάντα τῆς Ἀσίας τὰ κάτω ἐκ θαλάσσης τῆς ἀντίον Κύπρου ἐς τὸν Εὐξείνιον πόντον. Ἔστι δὲ αὐχλὴν οὗτος τῆς χώρας ταύτης ἀπάσης· μῆκος ὁδοῦ εὐζώνῳ ἀνδρὶ πέντε ἡμέραι ἀναισιμοῦνται."

Herodotus gives the impression that the river is dividing the entire Anatolian peninsula into two parts from the north to the south, delimiting at the same time a Lower Asia and an Upper Asia (“[...] ὁ Ἁλυσ ποταμὸς ἀποτάμνει σχεδὸν πάντα τῆς Ἀσίας τὰ κάτω [...]” Hdt. I, 72) (Fig. 2). But if we refer to a modern map, the Kizilirmak’s course is confined to the northern half of the Anatolian peninsula, skipping the Anatolian south, contrary to Herodotus’ description. The historian immediately demonstrates the problems with his understanding of the Halys River with his insistence that it flows through Cilicia (διὰ Κιλικίων). Ph. Legrand’s interpretation is that Cilicia as a political region at this time expanded beyond the modern Mersin plain. I believe, on the other hand, that Herodotus simply imagined the Anatolian peninsula to be narrower than it is. This is evidenced by the use of the word ‘ἀγχήν’ (literally the ‘neck’, the ‘throat’), which he uses to describe the land between Sinope and the Eastern Mediterranean Sea around Cyprus.



Figure 2. Course of the Halys River according to Herodotus (Map of the author)

With this representation of a narrow peninsula for Asia Minor, we can easily understand that for Herodotus ‘the length of the journey across is five days, for a man

going unburdened'.<sup>27</sup> So the opinion of Legrand, who rather imagined this distance covered in five days by relaying walking messengers, has to be rejected.<sup>28, 29</sup>

This distorted view of the Asiatic peninsula is reflected in Strabo's work who is himself influenced by Herodotus (Rollinger 2003: 312 n. 116). The geographer describes the land between Sinope and the Issian Gulf as an 'isthmus'.<sup>30</sup> So these precisions allow us to notice that the ancients considered Cappadocia a peninsula.

Following these findings, let us go back to Herodotus's description of the course of the Halys. The historian stipulates that the river "flows from the Armenian mountains first through Cilicia". But if the historian sees Cappadocia as a peninsula with a bottleneck at the level of Sinope and Issus, Cilicia would be placed further north than it was in reality. One should not consider that the course of the Halys flowed further south than it does now (which is difficult) nor that Herodotus has completely wrong.<sup>31</sup>

Indeed, if we follow the path of the river such as described by Herodotus, bearing in mind his view of the peninsula, we easily understand that for him, the Halys River separated Asia into two parts: a Lower Asia (τῆς Ἀσίας τὰ κάτω) and an Upper Asia (τῆς Ἀσίας τὰ ἄνω) (Fig. 3). Therefore, according to Herodotus, the river acted as a natural border separating two different geographical areas. It was at the same time "a border to cross" if we wanted to get from one zone to the other (Rollinger 2003: 311-313). **In any case, these considerations prove that Herodotus's knowledge of Anatolia's inland topography and especially the course of the Halys was very rudimentary** (Rollinger 2003: 307).

<sup>27</sup> This information is also in Hdt. II, 34.

<sup>28</sup> Legrand 1932: 75 n. 5. It should be mentioned that the actual distance from Sinope to Mesrin is 850 kilometres by road and 580 kilometres as the crow flies. If 6 km/h is chosen as an average walking speed, a man on foot could cover 144 kilometres per day and so 720 kilometres after 5 days. Those simple calculations do not take into account the topography and the road conditions.

<sup>29</sup> Here, Herodotus does not use the word ημεροδρόμος for the "man going unburdened". The historian uses this word to designate Phidippides, professional walking messenger. Phidippides had run the distance between Sparta and Athens (about 240 kilometers) in less than forty-eight hours. – Hdt. VI, 105-106. In this case, the distance between Tarsus and Sinope should have been run by five relaying hemerodromes. However, Herodotus merely mentions εὐζώνῳ ἀνδρῖ.

<sup>30</sup> "[...] Cappadocia constitutes the isthmus (σφιγγόμενος), as it were, of a large peninsula bounded by two seas, by that of the Issian Gulf as far as Cilicia Tracheia and by that of the Euxine as far as Sinopê and the coast of the Tibareni. I mean by 'peninsula' all the country which is west of Cappadocia this side of the isthmus, which by Herodotus is called 'the country this side of the Halys River'; for this is the country which was entirely ruled by Croesus, whom Herodotus calls the tyrant of the tribes this side the Halys River [...]." – Strabo, *Geographika*, XII, 1, 3 (Loeb edition).

<sup>31</sup> As already said above, it is better to reject the hypothesis of an ancient great Cilicia.



Figure 3. The Anatolian Peninsula and the Halys in Herodotus' mind (Map of the author)

This conclusion is also relevant for the ethnic separation that the river symbolized. Indeed, under the assumption that the Phrygians lived to the left of the Halys River, as Herodotus states, why would Pteria (Kerkenes Dağ), which is located to the right of the river, be Phrygian culture (Summers 1997; 2000; 2014: 41-51)? We have here another clue of the Father of History's little knowledge of Anatolia. With these indications, Herodotus probably just wanted to give to his Greek readers (and audience) a vague reference point so that they can roughly place the main barbarian peoples involved.<sup>32</sup> This point echoes what we observe elsewhere: Herodotus gives the Halys River a significant role in his world's understanding by making the river

<sup>32</sup> We can compare this idea with the translation of 'κατὰ Σινώπην' used by Herodotus to locate the city of Pteria. (Herodotus, I, 76.). Indeed, 'κατὰ Σινώπην' has to be translated not as 'nearest the city of Sinope' but as 'in a line with the city of Sinope', and with a touch of anachronism 'on the same meridian as Sinope' (translation already proposed by Stefan Przeworski (1929: 312-315), repeated afterwards by Bittel 1970: 156, and Summers 1997: 88). That tends to prove that Herodotus used reference points known by the Greeks in order to locate some places inland.



a portion of the axis of symmetry that, through Cilicia and Sinope, links the Istros' mouth with the Nile Delta (in his description in his Book II (Hdt. II, 34). Gondicas & Boëldieu-Trévet 2005: 144-146).

If we admit that this river, which is often considered an ethnic and geographic dividing line, is probably in *The Histories* nothing more than a reference point given to the Greeks, what do we make of the Halys River as a political border?

First, it is important to note that Herodotus does not give any explanations about the choice of this river as the border between the Median and Lydian empires (ἄρχησις). When he talks about the Lydo-Median war and when he says 'the boundary of the Median and Lydian empires was the river Halys' at the same time (Hdt. I, 72), it is in order to remind us how Astyages became Croesus' brother-in-law and to explain that if the rich Lydian king had marched against Cyrus in Cappadocia, it would have been to avenge his dethroned brother-in-law. Herodotus' account is therefore far from a geopolitical speech!

According to Robert Rollinger, this Lydo-Median border fixed by Herodotus would be an anachronism. In fact, the Father of History would have pushed back in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, the borders of the satrapies of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC (Rollinger 2003: 309 and 312. That is quite perturbing, because the Halys border is the only accurate border of the Median Empire given by Herodotus). On the other hand, according to Christopher Tuplin, in reaction to R. Rollinger, the Halys River could nevertheless be a "border" to cross: penetrating Anatolia from Urartu along the Erzican-Sivaz road (that the Medes could have followed), this river must be crossed to go into Lydia, even by those going to the west from the Urartian road from Van to Elazığ after having crossed the mountains around Kayseri, and travellers would have been able to hear about a river flowing northwards and would have considered it a stage in the trip to Lydia (Tuplin 2004: 238. But that does not make the river a political border, at best a obstacle to cross, what we can do nowadays near the city of Kırıkkale).

For my part, I think that Herodotus here felt himself authorized to make his geographical border coincide, separating Lower and Upper Asia with the political border.<sup>33</sup> However, as the geographical border is totally distorted by his incorrect view of Cappadocia's geography, it seems that the Halys as a political border separating Media and Lydia was a hasty conclusion made by Herodotus, whose words did not have a geopolitical purpose.

Indeed, in *The Histories*, Herodotus mentions the crossing of the Halys River by armed troops two times: the first one is made by Croesus during his expedition to the region of Pteria (Hdt. I, 75-76. After, the Halys was crossed by the Persian troops when Cyrus pursued Croesus in his retreat to Sardis), the second one is made by Xerxes's troops in his march to Greece (Hdt. VII, 26).

However, Herodotus seems to know by tradition that each of these two crossings of the Halys had brought to the Greeks their own misfortune. The first one by

<sup>33</sup> When Herodotus treats of the Median history, he says that Cyaxares had 'united under his dominion all Asia that is beyond the river Halys (Hdt. I, 103.), that tends to prove that the historian made from the geographic border a politic border.

Croesus foreshadowed his defeat in Pteria, that itself announced his fall, resulting from the annexation campaign of the Greek cities by Harpagus, the general of Cyrus (These campaigns caused a lot of dead in the Greek side: Hdt. I, 162-176). The second refers to Xerxes' campaign in Greece during the Second Persian War. In other words, in Herodotus's account, every time the Halys was crossed by armed troops, the instigator of the expedition suffered from a cruel defeat: Croesus in Pteria (foreshadowing the fall of Sardis), and Xerxes in Salamis and Plataea. Then, we see that in *The Histories*, crossing the Halys with armed troops is a fateful act to the one who undertakes such an action.

Furthermore, in Herodotus's narrative, crossing the natural borders between two empires or two continents is like an act of moral transgression (ὑβρις); it is an offence towards nature, and it is thwarting the will of the gods.<sup>34</sup> Already in 478 BC, we find this idea of ὑβρις act in *The Persians* of Aeschylus: Darius' phantom blames Xerxes who has 'closed' the Hellespont by building a bridge in order to pass through to Europe (*The Persians*, v. 720 sq. The quotations from Aeschylus come from the Loeb edition). Furthermore, Darius' phantom continues to say that the gods avenge themselves on Xerxes' hubristic act by causing his defeat in Salamis (*The Persians*, v. 739-752). Moreover, Aeschylus himself mentions (*The Persians*, v. 864-870) the crossing of the Halys when the chorus declaims all the territorial annexations of Darius I, singing: "[...] And how many cities he took, without crossing the stream of the river Halys, or stirring from his heart! Such were the freshwater dwellings of the Thracians that neighbour the Strymonian gulf [...]." <sup>35</sup> This quotation by Aeschylus illustrates that in *The Persians*, crossing sea and river borders is like an act of ὑβρις. Here the tragedian wanted to mention that Darius managed to conquer plenty of cities without crossing the Halys himself, meaning that the Persian king stayed within the limits of his kingdom. Therefore, to seize territories without leaving his palace made Darius a very mighty sovereign (Broadhead 1960: 216-217; Rosenbloom 2006: 117). Thus, this sentence is of huge significance: Darius managed to extend his kingdom without committing a sacrilege in person, an outrage towards the gods, in crossing the Halys.

However, we know from Herodotus (IV, 87-89) that Darius had himself also crossed the Hellespont thanks to a bridge of boats built by Mandrocles of Samos in order to get to Europe during his campaign against the Scythians; moreover, the Persian king also crossed the Ister River by using a bridge constructed by the Ionians.

<sup>34</sup> "[...] Il passaggio di un confine tra due imperi o continenti è considerato da Erodoto come un atto di trasgressione morale (ὑβρις), in quanto prevarica i limiti della μοῖρα assegnata all'uomo dalla divinità. Creso prefigura quindi Ciro (passaggio dell'Arasse : I, 205, 2 sgg.), Dario (il Danubio), Serse (l'Ellesponto), Mardonio (l'Asopo. [...])." Asheri 1988: 316.

<sup>35</sup> "Ὅσας δ' εἴλε πόλεις πόρον  
οὐ διαβάς Ἄλως ποταμοῖο,  
οὐδ' ἀφ' ἐστίας σθεῖς,  
οἶαι Στρυμονίου πελά-  
γους Ἀχελωίδες εἰσι πάροικοι  
Θρηκίων ἐπαύλων."

Therefore, when Darius blames Xerxes' deeds in *The Persians*, he disapproves of him because of the actions he committed in person. Thus, on one hand, Aeschylus' audience can ignore its knowledge and accept Darius' condemnations as the message of the tragedian (with the public comparing Darius to Aeschylus); on the other hand, the audience should notice that the story of Darius' family connections and of Persian imperialism, acting a father and his son, tries to deny a tragedy of succession. However, Darius let the audience realise the extent of the Persian Empire during the Xerxes's expedition in Greece (Rosenbloom 2006: 102-103). In any case, Darius has been punished because of his hubristic act of crossing the Hellespont and the Istros River, since he had to withdraw in Asia, having been unable to beat the Scythians (Hdt. IV, 134-140). So here again we have another good example of a defeat after an act of ὑβρις during a river-crossing in Herodotus's account.

Furthermore, it appears that according to the Father of History (I, 75), when the Lydian troops began to dig a canal in order to divert the course of the Halys on the advice of Thales, this action would also have been a hubristic act, being an offence towards nature.<sup>36</sup>

Based on these considerations, we can maintain that in crossing the Halys River, Croesus carried out a 'mad act' that drove the gods to punish him by hastening his defeat. Herodotus had to bring in the idea of the hubristic act, beloved by the tragedians unless it still belonged in his time to the common knowledge.<sup>37</sup> An action able to provoke the gods who would decide his fall can be found in the conduct of Croesus. Therefore, the crossing of the Halys is the confirmed motive: Herodotus would have admitted that the river was the border between the Lydian and the Median empires; and so, the last Mermnad would have crossed the river in order to go into Cappadocia to face Cyrus and to avenge his brother-in-law.

This mention of the Halys as a "border" in *The Histories* could be a historicizing reading of the author highly influenced by the Attic tragedies; or even a borrowing from the supposed trilogy, now lost, dealing with the Mermnad (Laurot 1995: 95-103; Saïd 2002: 117-147; Segal 1971: 39-51; Taplin 1997: 71).

In conclusion, it has to be agreed that to grasp the Halys as a border or as a geographic, ethnic and political dividing line – those being linked with each other – raises many issues. Indeed, the river as a geographical border is not really conceivable since Herodotus' view of Anatolia was distorted. In ethnic terms, the Halys was not a border for the population; at best, it could give a reference point to the Greeks who were misinformed about the people who lived deeper in the Anatolian peninsula; finally, as a political border, we have noticed that this mention is probably an interpretation that must be attributed to Herodotus who would have recorded

<sup>36</sup> Asheri et al. 2007: 136. We can compare this with the passage where the Cnidians wanted to dig a canal to make their land a peninsula. When a lot of people died during the work, the Cnidians consulted the Pythia who said that they had to stop because 'long ago, your land had been an isle if Zeus had willed so' (Hdt. I, 174.).

<sup>37</sup> Since we notice that in Herodotus's account, all those who crossed a river suffered the consequences: Croesus, Cyrus, Darius, Xerxes and Mardonios.

in geopolitical terms the explanations of Croesus' tragic end that Attican tragedians staged for an Athenian audience.

Thus, we think that the Halys River was not technically the political 'border' between the Lydian kingdom and Media when Croesus crossed the river. This border area must have been further east, where the Phrygian territory ended. Anyway, we do not know the precise location of this disputed area between Media and Lydia, and neither do we know when this 'border' was made concrete, for Herodotus stays mute on this subject. In fact, it might have been set during the conclusion of the Lydo-Median treaty between 582 and 577 BC; this, however, is merely a hypothesis.

Concerning the location where Croesus's troops crossed the Halys during his march to Cappadocia to fight against Cyrus in Pteria (Hdt. I, 75), it seems that, in spite of the different assumptions about the itinerary followed by the future Persian Royal Road that the Lydian king would have taken,<sup>38</sup> the Halys River would have been crossed near Kırıkkale where the modern highway linking Ankara to Sivas runs. The Persian Royal Road, after crossing the river, continued towards Susa passing through Pteria.<sup>39</sup> However, this issue deserves to be considered in an ample study about the Persian Royal Road.

## CONCLUSIONS

Finally, it's impossible to know exactly the location and the conduct of the "Battle of the Eclipse". It's also impossible to know with certainty the identity of the king (or the kings) who led the Median troops against the Lydian army. Only the treaty concluded between Astyages and Alyattes is common to all the ancient sources. Concerning the eclipse, we have seen that this could have been a way, for the Greeks, to date the Lydo-Median war: they assimilated this eclipse to the signature of the treaty in order to make two concomitant events. It's likely that the pact between Alyattes and Astyages was concluded in the presence of Nebuchadnezzar only, and an intermarriage took place. By the end of the conflict, the border between the Lydian Kingdom and the Median Empire would also have been set, but this was probably further east than the Halys River mentioned by Herodotus.

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<sup>38</sup> David French, submitting another translation of the words 'διεκπερᾶν' and 'διαβάντες' in Herodotus's description of the Royal Road (Hdt. V, 52 et VII, 26), proposes an itinerary where the Road does not cross the Halys but runs alongside the river; French 1998, 15-43. But in reality, it turns out that the itinerary' view of David French about the Royal Road is based on a wrong translation and that the Road actually crossed the Halys; Tuplin 2004: 245-246.

<sup>39</sup> Dusinberre 2003: 15-16. A recent discovery of a French karstologist give new unexpected clue: an artificial cavity would have allowed the Croesus' troops to cross the Kizilirmak. Gilli 2013: 276-282.

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# BITKA ZA POMRČINE SUNCA (28. SVIBNJA 585. g. pr. Kr.): RAZMATRANJA O LIDIJSKO-MEDIJSKOM MIROVNOM SPORAZUMU I GRANICI NA RIJECI HALIS

Kevin Leloux

## SAŽETAK

U svojoj prvoj knjizi Herodot spominje rat između Alijatove Lidije i Kijaksarove Medije. Ovaj rat završio je dobro poznatom potpunom pomrčinom Sunca koju je moguće datirati u 585. g. pr. Kr. Nakon ovog sukoba, potpisan je sporazum između dva kraljevstva koji je zapečaćen kraljevskim brakom. Ovaj rad analizira spomenuti događaj poznat i kao „bitka pomrčine“. Rad se ponovno dotiče problema lokacije same bitke te problema identiteta lidijskog i medijskog vladara uključenih u sukob. Rad se bavi i ulogom koju je pomrčina odigrala u zaključenju neprijateljstava i njezinim kasnijim utjecajem na umove Grčke. Ispitat će se i priroda mirovnog ugovora između Lidije i Medije te, naposljetku, problem granice između Lidijskog i Medijskog kraljevstva postavljene na rijeci Halis, za koju moderni istraživači kažu da je postavljena Lidijsko-medijskim sporazumom. Ova studija omogućuje da se prouči uloga rijeke Halis u formiranju Herodotovih pogleda na etnički, geografski i politički prostor.

Ključne riječi: Lidijsko kraljevstvo, Alijat, rijeka Halis, Medijsko carstvo, Kijaksar, pomrčina.