ANABASIS 3 (2012)
STUDIA CLASSICA ET ORIENTALIA

Michał Marciak (Rzeszów, Poland)

THE HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF GORDYENE. PART 1: CLASSICAL SOURCES*

Keywords: Karduchoi, Gordyene, Gorduene, Corduena, Xenophon, Strabo

In recent decades it has been easy to notice growing scholarly interest in the history and culture of the frontier area between the Roman Empire and Parthia and their successors, Byzantium and the Sasanians. This interest is not limited only to the two important political players, but also concerns a number of smaller geopolitical and political entities in this area, sometimes labelled as *regna minora*, which existed for centuries, tucked between rival empires from the East and the West, and frequently featured highly interesting local culture. At the same time, while there have recently been a number of publications on countries such as Kommagene, Palmyra, Edessa or Hatra,[1] other *regna minora* still lack proper attention from scholars. One such kingdom is the ancient *Gordyene*,[2] whose his-

* This is the first paper out of five (and the concluding monograph) planned by the author's research project financed by the National Science Centre in Poland and devoted to three *regna minora* of Northern Mesopotamia – Sophene, Gordyene and Adiabene (DEC–2011/03/N/HS3/01159). The project is being conducted at the University of Rzeszów under the supervision of Prof. M.J. Olbrycht. Special thanks are due to Prof. Erich Kettenhofen (Universität Trier) who provided me with meticulous feedback. I also want to thank an anonymous reviewer who suggested valuable bibliographical references. The sole responsibility for this paper is of course mine alone.

[1] Schottky 1989 (Media-Atropatene and Armenia); Hauser 1998 (Hatra); Dirven 1999 (Dura-Europos and Palmyra); Schuol 2000 (Charakene); Kaizer 2002 (Palmyra); Sommer 2005 (Palmyra, Edessa, Dura-Europos and Hatra); Facella 2006 (Kommagene); Gawlikowski 2010 (Palmyra).

[2] The terms Gordyene and Gordyaeans are used throughout the paper as the broadest *English* designations of the country and the people under discussion. However, since there is considerable linguistic variety in the original forms, esp. in Greek and Armenian, such forms are always given in brackets or italicized in the main text. Indeed, some Armenian forms will be rejected in the course of our discussion as relevant to the topic in question.

tory and culture appears to a great extent to be a *terra incognita* of modern scholarship.[3]

One of first questions which naturally comes to one's mind, when tempted to learn about an ancient enigmatic kingdom like Gordyene, is to ask about its location – where was ancient Gordyene located? Therefore, the aim of this paper is to take a look at the historical geography of Gordyene, that is, to determine its territory and regional geopolitical developments over the course of time. To achieve this task, I will examine ancient texts containing geographical and ethnographical information. Fortunately, ancient writers like Strabo, Pliny and Ptolemy left us a number of references to Gordyene in their writings frequently classified as "ethnographies",[4] that is literature focused on "the land, the history, the marvels and the customs of a people".[5] What is more, useful information of a geographical and ethnographical character can sometimes be gleaned from historiographical accounts[6] – here we also possess a few ancient sources which will be relevant to our interests, especially Plutarch and Ammianus Marcellinus. Lastly, Jewish Post-Biblical, Syriac and Armenian sources should also be given proper attention as to the geographical and ethnographical information on Gordyene they might contain.

The task of looking at the historical geography of Gordyene is all the more important as its results will influence the choice of archaeological sites relative to any future study of archaeological data from Gordyene. Furthermore, it is hoped that dealing with ancient geographical and ethnographical texts may

[3] Bearing in mind that there has never been a monographic study on any of these kingdoms, a few publications devoted to at least some aspects of these *regna minora* can still be named. First, one can always consult encyclopedia entries, esp. Weissbach 1927b and Kessler 2001 (Sophene); Baumgartner 1912 and Wiesehöfer 1998 (Gordyene); Sellwood 1985 and Hansman 1987 (Adiabene). Basic information can also be found in "classics" like Kahrstedt 1950, 58–70; Dillemann 1962, 110–112, 116–121 and Syme 1995, 51–57; as well as Sullivan 1990: 105–112. Noteworthy are the publications of Robert Hewsen, who touches on Sophene and Gordyene in the context of Armenia: see Hewsen's remarks on Gordyene in the following publications: Hewsen 1983, esp. 128, 131, 133, n. 21, 138–139; Hewsen 1984, esp. 354–355; Hewsen 1985, 74; Hewsen 1988–1989, 280–295 (being the most important). See also a short paper by Frankfort 1963 about Sophene in the context of Rome's imperial policy. As for Adiabene, there is some, and still growing, literature about this country in the context of its 1st c. CE royal converts to Judaism, including two dissertations: Barish 1983 and Marciak 2012. For the state of research on Adiabene in this respect, see Marciak 2011a, 63–64, nn. 1–3 and Marciak 2011b, 8–10. Considerably less attention has been paid to Adiabene in its material and political environment. Noteworthy exceptions are Delitzsch 1877; Eiland 1998; Reade 1998; Reade 2001; Marciak 2011b. See also the following publications of Jacob Neusner: Neusner 1964a; Neusner 1964b; Neusner 1966; Neusner 1969, 61–73.

[4] For this term see Sterling 1992, 20–102 and Murphy 2004, 77–128 (esp. 77–87).

[5] Sterling 1992, 53.

[6] On the difference between ancient ethnographies on the one hand, and historiographical accounts containing relevant data on the other see Murphy 2004, 79–80; Lerouge 2007, 39.

give us a primary insight into the material and political environment of Gordyene.

Xenophon's Karduchoi

The first important text to take a look at is Xenophon's *Anabasis*, which describes the march of the Greek army of "the Ten Thousand" under Cyrus the Younger to seize the Persian throne from his brother, Artaxerxes II. The part of this march which is most relevant to our interests is the withdrawal of the Greek army of "the Ten Thousand" from Persia to the Black Sea. After the battle at Cunaxa in 401 BCE the Greeks started their march north-west alongside the Tigris. At some point of their route along the Tigris, the Greeks left the open Tigris valley and continued more directly north, marching into the country of the Καρδοῦχοι (*Anabasis* 4.1.1.–4.3.2; see also 3.5.15).

Where exactly did the route of the "Ten Thousand" lead through the land of Karduchoi? The exit point from the land of the Karduchoi (ἡ χώρα τῶν Καρδούχων) is put unequivocally by Xenophon in *Anab*. 4.3.1 – it is the Kentrites River (Κεντρίτης) which Xenophon calls the border between the land of Karduchoi and Armenia. Indeed, the name Κεντρίτης corresponds to the Armenian word *ktrič* (*divider*), from *ktrel* meaning *cut off*,[7] and as such expresses the function of this river as a territorial and cultural border.[8] The Kentrites is widely identified with the modern Bohtan River, a tributary of the Tigris south of the city Siirt in today's south-eastern Turkey.[9] This identification rests on geographical grounds and consequently, like many other toponyms in Xenophon, is dependent on the identification of a preceding reference point on the route of the Greek army, and in this particular case depends on the identification of the entry point into the land of Karduchoi.

[7] Markwart 1930: 340; Hewsen 1983: 128, n. 12.

[8] A. Sagona, C. Sagona 2004: 52.

[9] Eckhardt 1910b: 202–203; Weissbach 1921: 181; Lendle 1995, 207; Syme 1995: 31; Hewsen 2001, 29 who even writes: "all scholars agree on the route as far as the Eastern Tigris (Kentrites, Bohtan Su)"; Waterfield 2006: 135. By contrast, see Sagona 2004: 299–328 (esp. 299–304) and A. Sagona, C. Sagona 2004: 51–52, who identify the Kentrites as the Aras River, much to the north of the Bohtan River. Consequently, the land of the Karduchoi is located directly south of the modern Erzurum. This identification is, however, more assumed than argued. While Sagona's interpretation of the route of the "Ten Thousand" through Armenia could make some sense, his choice to place the crossroads not around Cizre but further to the north is completely arbitrary, since he has not dealt with topographical and geographical evidence from Books 1–3 at all. In other words, we do not learn from Sagona how the "Ten Thousand" got to the crossroads and where e.g. Larisa and Mespila were located.

The identification of the entry point must be based on the context of Xenophon's narrative. The Greeks marched alongside the Tigris until they reached a dead end (see *Anab*. 3.5.7–18).[10] Namely, to the north there was a high mountain range and to the west the Greeks had the Tigris, which was at this point impassable.[11] Moving south or east would mean turning back towards the heartland of the Persian Empire.[12] In this situation, the Greeks decided to head north into the country of the Karduchoi. The last three recognizable landmarks on their route alongside the Tigris before they reached a dead end were the Ζαπάτας, Λάρισα, Μέσπιλα (Anab. 3.4.7–9 and 3.4.10–12).

The Ζαπάτας is widely identified as the Great Zab.[13] This identification can be argued on geographical grounds, but there is also a strong linguistic connection.[14] The core Ζαπ- corresponds very well to the Semitic names of the two rivers called Zab (also frequently mentioned in Greek sources as Λύκος and Κάπρος): *Zabu elu* (*the upper Zab*) and *Zabu shupalu* (*the lower Zab*) in Assyrian texts, Ζάβας or Ζαβᾶς (sometimes with the additions of ὁ μέγας or ὁ μικρός or ὁ ἕτερος) in Byzantine sources, as well as *Zaba* and *Zav* in Syriac and Later Armenian.[15] There can be no doubt that Xenophon's Zapatas is the Great Zab.[16]

The case of Xenophon's Larisa and Mespila is more problematic. Both are widely identified as Nimrud and Nineveh respectively, although there is no fully convincing explanation for Xenophon's names.[17] Barnett suggests that Xenophon misunderstood the Akkadian āl-šarrūti meaning *royal city*,[18] while according to

[10] Waterfield 2006: 124–135, 130.

[11] Waterfield 2006, 130; Lee 2007, 27 and n. 53. It is not clear whether the river was only temporarily impassable, or if the river bed was perhaps naturally too deep at this point. What is more, the Greeks could already see the Persian cavalry expecting them on the west bank of the Tigris. Furthermore, the plain terrain on the west bank would certainly suit the cavalry more than the Greek hoplites, and there was a risk that no stocks of supplies could be found on the west side of the Tigris since the Persians could implement a scorched-earth policy. See Waterfield 2006: 124–135 (esp. 130).

[12] Waterfield 2006: 124–135 (esp. 130).

[13] Weissbach 1919a, 1921; Weissbach 1927a, 2391–2392; Hansman 1987, 277; Lendle 1995, 122–123; Kessler 1999a, 265; Kessler 1999b, 575; Bosworth 2002, 366; Marciak 2011b: 185–186.

[14] Marciak 2011b: 185–186.

[15] Weissbach 1919a, 1921; Weissbach 1927a, 2391–2392; Bosworth 2002, 366.

[16] This does not mean that there are no problems with Xenophon's description of the Zapatas. He recalls the river, but he does not say how a river of such considerable dimensions was crossed by the Greeks (see Tuplin 1991: 45). One of the possible explanations is that the Great Zab hit its annual low in September-October and consequently was easily fordable. For this interpretation, see Lee 2007: 27 and n. 54; and for the geographical data from Iraq, see Beaumont, Blake, Wagstaff 1988, 355–359 (esp. 356–357).

[17] Weissbach 1924, 873; Weissbach 1931, 1164; Hewsen 1988–1989, 278; Reade 1998: 65; Tuplin 2003, 370.

[18] But naming Nimrud as a royal city could only be accepted as an expression of local nostalgia, since technically Nimrud lost this status after ca. 707 BCE (Dalley 1993, 144; Tuplin 2003, 371).

Dalley, Larisa corresponds to the Akkadian Kar-Mulissi (modern Keremleis).[19] The problem is that Λάρισα is a Greek name held by many ancient Greek cities,[20] and one would have to assume that Xenophon put a genuine Greek toponym on a local name of Nimrud whose sound seemed to him to be similar, although he did not do the same for Nineveh. Namely, many scholars suggest that Xenophon's Mespila reproduces a local name of Nineveh directly. The first option is that Mespila could come from a Semitic root denoting an area of low-lying terrain:[21] the Akkadian *mušpalu*[22] (used for the description of Nineveh's surroundings in Sennacherib's inscriptions 8.27[23]), or the Aramaic *mšpyl'*,[24] or *mašp^{e}lah* (*the fallen one*).[25] Other scholars point to Semitic names that could express Nineveh's state of destruction after 612 BCE[26] – Kiepert suggests that Xenophon's interpreter misconstrued the Semitic word meaning *Ruine*, e.g. the Hebrew *mappêla*;[27] Gemoll in turn maintains that Xenophon's Mespila may echo the Hebrew *mašpil*, meaning *devastatus*.[28] Other scholars instead see a connection between Nineveh and Mossul[29] – according to Herzfeld, Mespila may be a corrupted form of Mawṣil, a city-name of modern Mossul.[30] Mespila has also been suggested to come from *mušpelu, meaning *Muschelkalk*, *Kalkstein*,[31] to be a malformation of μεσ-πύλαι allegedly meaning *central gates* (that is, being midway between the Persian Gulf, Euxine, Caspian and Mediterranean),[32] or possi-

[19] Dalley 1993, 144: "since the names sound similar".

[20] See the entry *Larisa* in *RE* 23, 840–873 and Zgusta, 1984, 331.

[21] This option is called into question by Tuplin 2003, 372, who points out that it does not really match the topography of Nineveh – first, much of Nineveh can be considered as low-lying, but only with regard to the city walls and two particular hills – Kuyunjik and Nebi Yunus; second, the fact that the city looks low-lying from the perspective of the city walls is not only characteristic of Nineveh.

[22] K.M. Streck 1916, CDXXVI, n.1; Reade 1998, 65.

[23] Luckenbill 1924: 114.

[24] Reade 1998, 65.

[25] Machinist 1997, 190.

[26] It should, however, be noted that neither Xenophon himself (whose text is problematic) nor archaeological data necessarily suggest a total lack of inhabitation in Nineveh in 401 BCE. See Tuplin 2003, 370–371 and 387–389.

[27] Kiepert 1878, 152.

[28] Gemoll 1899, 298. By contrast, Weissbach 1931, 1164 rightly remarks that *mašpil* can mean only *erniedrigend*, *niedrig-machend*, and not *verwüstet* (*devastatus*). Indeed, the hiphil form, *mašpil* is an active form.

[29] The problem with this hypothesis is that Mossul lies on the west bank of the Tigris and not on the east bank, where the ancient Nineveh was located and where the route of "Ten Thousand" led. See Weissbach 1931, 1164 and Tuplin 2003, 372.

[30] Sarre, Herzfeld 1920, 207.

[31] Tuplin 2003, 372, who quotes this explanation but does not name his source of information.

[32] F. Jones 1854, 332. This option is deemed "absurd" by Tuplin 2003: 372.

bly to be connected with the Greek Μεσπίλη, denoting *medlar tree*, that could possibly be planted in this area.[33]

Although there is no fully satisfactory explanation for Xenophon's names, the identification of Larisa and Mespila as Nimrud and Nineveh is very likely on geographical and topographical grounds.[34] Namely, both cities are characterized as neglected[35] but once great and politically important metropolises of the Median kingdom located on the Tigris.[36] Xenophon stresses their massive proportions – Larisa is said to have a wall twenty-five feet in breadth and a hundred in height. The circuit of its wall was two parasangs long. Furthermore, Xenophon writes of a large structure (a plethrum in breadth and two plethra in height) which he himself calls a πυραμίς, located next to Mespila, where nearby villagers took refuge from the oncoming Greek troops. In turn, Mespila is described as once a stronghold (τεῖχος) with foundations fifty feet in breadth and fifty in height. The wall was again fifty feet in breadth and a hundred in height, and its circuit was six parasangs. If we compare Xenophon's descriptions with the available archaeological data from Nimrud and Nineveh, the conclusion emerges that Xenophon's description of Nimrud makes "reasonable sense, with no more than modest allowance for inexactitude of observation and/or report",[37] and his description of Nineveh is "perhaps marginally less satisfactory than that of Nimrud".[38] And yet the fact remains that, except for Nimrud and Nineveh, we do not know of any other cities of such proportions and assumed political significance on the Tigris and north-west of the Great Zab in Xenophon's times.

If Larisa and Mespila can be identified as Nimrud and Nineveh, then we get an additional argument in identifying the entry point of the Greek army into the mountains of the Karduchoi. North of the route alongside the Tigris and past the Great Zab, Nimrud and Nineveh is the Tauros mountain range, and the first point when both the Tigris and the Tauros cross each other is the area around the modern city of Cizre.[39] This is the most likely area where the "Ten Thousand" were

[33] Tuplin 2003, 372. This is an extremely speculative idea.

[34] Tuplin 2003, 370: "beyond doubts".

[35] See Tuplin 2003, 370–371 and 387–389 that Xenophon's use of ἐρήμη (with regard to Larisa itself and Mespila's outer walls) does not necessarily mean that a city lies in ruins and has no population at all. What is more, Mespila is also named by Xenophon a πόλις.

[36] In accordance with Xenophon's peculiar view on the extent of ancient Media. See Tuplin 2003, esp. 364.

[37] Tuplin 2003, 376.

[38] Tuplin 2003, 378.

[39] The terrain north-west of the Great Zab is an "easy country until one reaches the range south of Zakhō". The modern Zakhō is located c. 59 km south-east of Cizre. However, after leaving the defile of Zakhō, one again walks onto an extensive plain until Cizre. See Lendle 1995, 192; Tuplin 2003: 361–362 and n. 25; Lee 2007, 28, n. 58.

really forced to make a decision – either to cross the Tigris to the west or to abandon their route alongside the Tigris and head north into the mountains.[40] In turn, the next major river stream north of the Tigris at Cizre is indeed the modern Bohtan River. To sum up, it is most likely that Xenophon's land of the Karduchoi can be located in the mountains north of the modern Turkish city Cizre and south of the Bohtan River.[41]

Xenophon presents the country of the Karduchoi (ἡ χώρα τῶν Καρδούχων) as a mountainous region (τά Καρδούχεια ὄρη). More precisely, the Karduchoi are said to live in villages (κώμαι) located in small valleys between the mountains and in nooks in the mountains (ἐν τοῖς ἀγκεσί τε καὶ μυχοῖς τῶν ὀρέων) and have moved upwards into the mountains (ἐπὶ τὰ ὄρη) only to find shelter (*Anab*. 4.1.7–8). This description means that the pattern of settlement of the Karduchoi was essentially twofold.[42] First, in the hollows there were villages in clusters (*Anab*. 4.22.2–3; 4.3.1), perhaps numbering one or two hundred houses apiece, if modern comparisons can be any guide to us.[43] To reach these settlements, the Greeks frequently needed to step aside slightly from their route. Second, the folds of the surrounding slopes could house small hamlets of houses, and this settlement could scatter linearly along a road or track (*Anab*. 4.1.7).[44]

The villages were rich in supplies of food,[45] and the Karduchoi used bronze vessels (χάλκωμα) for its storage (*Anab*. 4.1.8).[46] The Karduchoi also cultivated wine (οἶνος), sometimes in large quantities,[47] and stored it in plastered cisterns (ἐν λάκκοις κονιατοῖς, *Anab*. 4.2.22). Given the fact that in Hellas wine was

[40] Lendle 1995, 192.

[41] Lee 2007, 28, n. 58.

[42] By contrast, see Syme 1995, 54 who plays on the contrast between the mountainous land of the Karduchoi and Gordyene of Strabo 16.1.24 as a very rich country. It should, however, be noted that such a contrast is exaggerated – some Karduchoi lived in valleys and their land was rich in food supplies (likewise Eckhardt 1910b, 201, n. 3).

[43] Lee 2007: 32–33.

[44] Lee 2007: 33.

[45] The Greek language does not make it precise what kind of food accounted for the basic diet of the Karduchoi. Wiesehöfer 2012 writes about "Ackerbau, Weinbau und Viehzucht". Agriculture and animal husbandry are of course most likely as indispensable elements of every diet. It seems that the mountains of the land of the Karduchoi could indeed be a good environment for some types of husbandry, and the location of villages in the hollows allowed agriculture. Further, the possession of fine bows by the Karduchoi implies the existence of at least basic crafts among them (see Wiesehöfer 2012: "handwerkliche Tätigkeiten").

[46] Lendle 1995, 192: "die Metallgefässe, die in dieser Gegend auch heute noch vielfach anstatt irdenem Geschirr in Gebrauch sind...".

[47] Note that we have two more detailed descriptions of provisions found by the Greeks in Karduchian villages (*Anab*. 4.1.8 and 4.2.22) – both included food and wine, but their abundance is more accentuated only in the second description (*Anab*. 4.2.22). Apparently, there was some economic diversity in this region.

stored in plastered cisterns only in taverns (see Aristophanes, *Ekklesiazousai* 154), their use in private areas in Karduchia shows the relative wealth of some Karduchian areas.[48]

Xenophon's description of weather conditions the Greeks encountered in Karduchia gives the impression of a rainy and misty country. One should, however, note that if the Greeks left Babylonia in early spring (in February or, less likely, in April), they reached the mountains of the Karduchoi in early autumn (likely in mid-October).[49] This means that their arrival coincided with the beginning of the autumn weather marked by an increasing appearance of rainfalls and mists, as well as by a considerable drop in the daytime temperature in the region.[50]

The Karduchoi, being lightly armed, did not dare to face the Greeks in hand-to-hand combat.[51] They instead evacuated their settlements and conducted guerrilla warfare by attacking the Greeks with arrows, stones and blocked defiles.[52] This tactic was in perfect fitting with the natural conditions of the terrain[53] – the folds of the Karduchia Mountains were precipitous wooded and cut only by narrow gorges and streamlets, and this meant that only narrow paths and canyons were accessible to the Greeks.[54] Consequently, blocking such passages and occupying higher ground along the path by the Karduchoi was a major obstacle to the Greeks.[55] In addition to the simple tactic of rolling boulders at the Greeks,[56] the Karduchoi made their mark as skillful bowmen – their bows were so powerful that they could penetrate the Greek armor.[57] Their efficiency was due to their size – they were much longer than Greek bows (3 cubits for a bow and 2 cubits for an arrow); in fact they were so long that the Greeks, having captured them, recycled them as javelins.[58]

[48] Lendle 1995, 205.

[49] Lee 2007, 19 and 26.

[50] Lee 2007, 30.

[51] Waterfield 2006, 138; Lee 2007, 106.

[52] Lee 2007: 34, 106.

[53] On the topography of this region, see Shiel 1838, 80–82; Pollington 1840, 449–450; Naval Intelligence Division 1942–1943, 174–176; Lee 2007, 28–35.

[54] Naval Intelligence Division 1942–1943, 174; Lee 2007, 28.

[55] This tactic has a very high reputation in modern scholarship: Waterfield 2006, 129: "places so wild that an entire Persian army could vanish without trace, as was rumored to have happened in the Karduchian mountains"; Lee 2007: 26: "nobody got out of this mountainous land alive".

[56] Waterfield 2006, 134; Lendle 2007, 201.

[57] Olbrycht 2004, 82–83; Waterfield 2006, 132; Lendle 2007, 197 and 206–205. See also *Zabdiceni sagittarii* in *Amm. Marc*. 20.7.1. On Zabdicene and its relation to Gordyene see below.

[58] Olbrycht 2004, 82–83; Waterfield 2006, 132; Lendle 2007, 197 and 206–205. Xenophon only stresses the efficiency of the Karduchian bowmen but does not describe the use of their bows in any detail, but one can get some idea of how they may have worked on the basis of other

Xenophon also recalls the intelligence on the Karduchoi the Greeks had received from captured prisoners before they entered their country – the Karduchoi were not subjects of the Persian kings, though they made a treaty with "the satrap in the plain", and had some dealings with Persian authorities (*Anab*. 3.5.16). This statement of Xenophon has been taken literarily by many scholars, who consequently describe the Karduchoi "as independent of Persian control (albeit while living in the very heart of the empire)".[59] At the same time, some scholars see such statements as simplifications, and rightly remark that in the light of our knowledge on the policy of the Persian court towards various mountain peoples in the empire, such a relationship must have been more of a balance between autonomy and oversight.[60] On the one hand, the Karduchoi enjoyed a great deal of autonomy and received occasional gifts from the Persian court; on the other hand, they acknowledged the authority of the Persian king by paying tributes and enlisting in military service.[61]

Strabo, Pliny and Ptolemy

The three most important ancient writings which contribute to our knowledge on the geography and ethnography of Gordyene are Strabo's *Geographika* (created during the last decades of Strabo's life, which ended shortly after 24 CE[62]), Pliny the Elder's *Historia Naturalis* (written by 79 CE[63]), and Ptolemy's *Geographike Hyphegesis* (which is said to reflect the state of Roman knowledge about the geography of the inhabited world from the first decade of the 2nd c. CE).[64]

In Strabo's *Geographika* we can find many brief references to Gordyene (*Geog*. 2.1.26; 11.12.4; 11.14.2; 11.14.8; 16.1.1; 16.1.8; 16.1.21; 16.2.5), as well as one excursus directly focusing on Gordyene which is perhaps the most exten-

Oriental parallels that attracted the attentions of the Greek observers. Most likely, bowmen placed the bows on the ground, set their foot against them and shot by first drawing the bowstring back and then releasing it. See Diodor Sik. 3.8.4 and Arrian, *Ind*. 16.6. A similar bow, though dated only to the 1st–3rd c. CE, was discovered in Baghouz/Yrzi, ca. 40 km south-east of Dura Europos; its longitude is 1.47 m (see Olbrycht 2004, 83).

[59] Hewsen 2001, 30. Likewise Hewsen 1983, 131; Syme 1995, 30; A. Sagona, C. Sagona 2004, 52 and many others.

[60] Wiesehöfer 2012: Reziprozitätsverhältnis: "(Geschenke/Gegengeschenke; Anerkennung von Autonomie/Loyalität und Heeresfolge)". Likewise Briant 2002, 730–731.

[61] Briant 2002, 730–731; Wiesehöfer 2012.

[62] Drijvers 1998, 279.

[63] Keyser 1999, 235–242; Murphy 2004, 4.

[64] Berggren, Jones 2000, 23–24.

sive account about this country in all ancient literature – *Geog*. 16.1.24–25 (16.2.5 briefly repeats one aspect of Gordyene's *Siedlungslegende*)[65].

The brief references are made only in the context of very general descriptions of large geographical areas. In such descriptions, the location of Gordyene is given only in relation to other geographical or ethnographical entities. As a result, we rather get only a general impression as to where Gordyene was located. For instance, in *Geog*. 16.1.8 Strabo describes the borders of Babylonia, and does so by enumerating Babylonia's neighbors including Gordyene. To be more precise, the country of the Babylonians is said to be surrounded "on the west by the Arabians called Scenitae, as far as Adiabene and Gordyaea (μέρχι τῆς Ἀδιαβηνῆς καὶ τῆς Γορδυαίας), and on the north by the Armenians and the Medes as far as the Zagros". In turn, in *Geog*. 16.1.1 Strabo refers to the borders of the country of the Assyrians (understood in a very broad sense as much of Mesopotamia[66]) and enumerates many countries around it in a fairly long line, among others – "Dolomene and Kalachene and Chazene and Adiabene, the tribes of Mesopotamia in the neighborhood of the Gordyaeans (περὶ Γοροδυαίους), and the Mygdonians in the neighborhood of Nisibis". Some toponyms recalled by Strabo are easier to identify than others. The northern border of Strabo's Adiabene definitely falls on the Lykos River, unambiguously identified as the Great Zab,[67] and Mygdonia was located on the plain to the south of the mountain region of Ṭūr ʿAbdīn, with its main city, Nisibis on the modern Görgarbonizra Çayi River (the Mygdonios of classical sources).[68] In turn, the Arabian Scenitae and the tribes of Mesopotamia cannot really be ascribed to a particular region – the name *Scenitae* is not an ethnicon, but a designation of a way of life ("one who dwells in a tent").[69] Thus, the Arabian Scenitae and the tribes of Mesopotamia were nomadic tribes that could be found in many places in the Mesopotamian desert living on pasture and booty, but also on tolls taken from travelers.[70]

[65] All citations are taken from the Loeb Classical Library. However, readings of proper names are sometimes corrected in the text of citations by the author, and so can depart from the LCL translation. Strabo's text quoted here is that of Jones 1928 and 1930. See also Radt 2004, 2005, 2008 and 2009.

[66] Note that many ancient sources have two notions of Assyria – as a fairly specific country and in a broad sense as much of the Mesopotamian region – see Nöldeke 1871, 443–468; Herzfeld 1968, 306–308; de Jonge 1980: 263, n. "a"; den Boeft/Drijvers/den Hengst/Teitler 1998, 30–31, n. 2.7 and 148, n. 6.15.

[67] Marciak 2011b, 181–188.

[68] Honigmann, Bosworth 2012. On the two different Nisibis in Mesopotamia, see Sturm 1936, 714–757; Pigulevskaja 1963, 49–59; Kessler 2000, 962–963; Oppenheimer 1983, 319–334 (a basic collection of sources on Nisibis); Oppenheimer 1993, 313–333.

[69] Shahîd 1984, 243–244; Sartre 2007, 239; Myers 2010, 16–17.

[70] Shahîd 1984, 243–244; Sartre 2007, 239; Myers 2010, 16–17.

Generally speaking, in *Geog*. 16.1.1 and 16.1.6 Adiabene clearly stands out as a reference point to Gordyene, but there is also a clear connection between Gordyene and cultural elements (Mygdonia, nomads of Mesopotamia including some Arabian tribes) that belong to the upper Mesopotamian valley marked by the *west* bank of the Tigris and the *east* bank of the Euphrates. In other words, Strabo's Gordyene has clearly passed by the "Armenian Mountains" (see below) and tends towards the Mesopotamian valley.

In *Geog*. 2.1.26, Strabo estimates distances of parallels and meridians passing through the Mesopotamian region and in writing about meridians from Armenia to Babylonia recalls Gordyene twice. More precisely, in drawing the line from Babylon northwards, Strabo says that "the stadia have been measured up to the Armenian Gates and amount to about one thousand one hundred; whereas the stadia through Gordyene (διὰ Γορδυαίων) and Armenia are still unmeasured" (*Geog*. 2.1.26). Likewise, in briefly describing the course of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers in *Geog*. 2.1.26, Strabo reckons that they "flow from Armenia southwards; and then, as soon as they pass the mountains of Gordyene (τὰ τῶν Γορδυαίων ὄρη), they describe a great circle and enclose a considerable territory, Mesopotamia; and then they turn toward the winter rising of the sun and the south, but more so the Euphrates; and the Euphrates, after becoming ever nearer to the Tigris in the neighborhood of the Wall of Semiramis and a village called Opis (from which village the Euphrates was distant only about two hundred stadia), and, after flowing through Babylon, empties into the Persian Gulf" (*Geog*. 2.1.26). *Geog*. 2.1.26 gives us only a general location of Gordyene, but a few interesting details still emerge. On the one hand, Gordyene is a distinctive region; on the other, it is always coupled with Armenia, and since Strabo's Gordyene in *Geog*. 2.1.26 appears to be a mountainous region (τὰ τῶν Γορδυαίων ὄρη) and *Armenian* gates (that is mountain breaches which provide a way through – such passages were of strategic importance and consequently often fortified[71]) open access to *Gordyene* too, the Gordyaean mountains are located within the geographical realm of the Armenian Mountains.[72] Further, the relation between the mountains of Gordyene and the course of the Tigris is also important. In *Geog*. 2.1.26 the Gordyaean mountains are located alongside the Tigris, but before the Tigris makes a bend to form the upper Tigris valley.

In *Geog*. 11.14.2 Strabo again describes the course of the Euphrates, and in doing so, he enumerates mountain ranges and peaks along its course (Tauros, Antitauros, Mt. Μασίον and Mt. Νιφάτης), as well as many countries such

[71] Syme 1995, 42.

[72] Another issue is that Strabo probably mistook the Armenian Gates for the Armenian Mountains. See Syme 1995, 39–45.

as Cappadocia, Kommagene, Sophene, Armenia and Gordyene whose borders are marked by these natural formations. In particular, Gordyene is briefly mentioned with regard to two mountains – Mt. Μασίον and Mt. Νιφάτης: "above Mt. Μασίον, far towards the east opposite Gordyene (κατὰ τὴν Γορδυηνὴν), lies Mt. Νιφάτης. Thus, Gordyene is located between Mt. Masion and Mt. Niphates on the south-west-north-east line. Where can these two mountains be located?

Mt. Masion is mentioned not only by Strabo (*Geog*. 11.5.6, 11.12.4, 11.14.2, 16.1.23) but also by Ptolemy (*Geog*. 5.17.2),[73] but the evidence as to its location is not clear-cut. That is to say, the sources give two different locations – while Strabo 11.12.4, 11.14.2, 16.1.23 and Ptolemy 5.17.2 put it west of the Tigris in Mesopotamia, Strabo 11.5.6 (and this is by far the most extensive description of this mountain) clearly speaks of Mt. Masion as part of the Armenian Mountains, which implies a location east of the Tigris.[74]

This problem could be solved if we accept Syme's observation that Strabo in fact knew only one mountain range between Armenia and Mesopotamia, that is the Tauros.[75] Indeed, there is a world of difference between the Tauros, a huge mountain massif, and the mountains west of the Tigris near Nisibis, the latter being "a series of undulations rather than a mountain chain".[76] Strabo's *Geog*. 11.12.4 clearly shows that even if he locates Mt. Masion close to Nisibis (and so in the mountain region of Ṭūr ʿAbdīn), he considers this mountain to be part of the Tauros (and the Tauros is in fact located east of the Tigris). What is more, Strabo's detailed description of winter conditions on Mt. Masion (regular and heavy snowfalls and the use of skis) does not fit the mountain region of Ṭūr ʿAbdīn at all; it does, however, correspond perfectly to the winter conditions of the Tauros east of the Tigris.[77] Thus, it follows that there could also be a mountain range east of the Tigris which, in some cases, could correspond with Strabo's MasionAs for possible identification of Mt. Masion on the east bank of the Tigris, according to Syme, Mt. Masion could perhaps be identified as the Sasun Dağı, since Strabo points to Mt. Masion as a landmark dividing the territory of Sophene from that of Gordyene, and the Sasun Dağı separates the Muş plain from the Upper Tigris valley.[78] However, it is apparent that in the light of lack of precise clues in ancient sources, all identifications of Mt. Masion must remain tentative.

[73] Weissbach 1930a, 2068–2069.
[74] Weissbach 1930a, 2068–2069; Syme 1995, 29–30, 46–49.
[75] Syme 1995, 47–49.
[76] Syme 1995, 47.
[77] Syme 1995, 48–49; Sinclair 1989, 362.
[78] Markwart 1930, 14.

There is a more serious problem with the identification of the Niphates. The name could perhaps be understood by the Greeks as a malformation of the Greek νιφάς meaning *snow*.[79] However, it has a good parallel in the Armenian *Npat*, which itself could be derived from the Iranian *Apām Napāt* and would mean a dwelling place of a *Wassergenius*.[80] Alternatively, it could go back to the Iranian **ni-pāta* (*beschützt*) or *ni-pātar* (nom. –nipātā, *Beschützer*) and would be an allusion to the snow cover on the mountain.[81] Lastly, Niphates could also be "a by-form of Nibarus" (attested also as Βάρις in Nikolaos Damaskenos apud Josephus, *Ant*. 1.95) and would take its name from the description of Noah's Ark (supposed to have rested on this mountain) as a βάρις, that is, a "cumbrous craft used for inland navigation".[82]

Mt. Niphates is mentioned by many ancient sources,[83] which associate it with either Mt. Masion (and the Gordyaean Mountains (Γορδυαῖα ὄρη)[84], west of the Tigris – Str. 11.12.4) or the Gordyaean Mountains (here apparently east of the Tigris, Plutarch, *Alex*. 31.10), or the Tauros (Pliny *HN*, 5.27; Pomponius Mela 1.15.81; Pisander apud Stephanus Byzantinus, sub verbo) or with Armenia in general (Ptol. *Geog*. 6.1.1; Amm. Marc. 23.6.13; Josephus, *Ant*. 18.51).[85] Thus, while all sources but Str. *Geog*. 11.12.4 clearly put the location of Mt. Niphates east of the Tigris, its location is given only in general terms and varies from more southern locations (Plutarch, *Alex*. 31.10: close to the upper Tigris valley near Gaugamela) to the highest points of the Armenian Tauros (e.g. Pisander apud Stephanus Byzantinus 477). Several identifications have been suggested on geographical grounds – the Ala Dağı (north-west of Lake Van),[86] the Ararat[87] or the Cudi Dağı[88] – but it

[79] Weidner 1936, 706.

[80] Bartholomae 1904, 1039; Markwart 1930, 3–4; Markwart 1938, 128.

[81] Markwart 1896, 186. By contrast, see Syme 1995, 36, who observes that this etymology is impossible to maintain since Niphates is also attested as a personal name in Arrian, *Anab*. 1.12.8 and 1.16.3. It is likewise rejected by Hübschmann 1904, 457 who instead connects Niphates with the Old Armenian *Niptăt or *Nupăt. See also Garsoïan 1989, 484.

[82] Syme 1995, 36.

[83] The theme of Mt. Niphates made its way into Latin poetry (Horatius, *Carmina* 2.9.20; Vergilius, *Georgica* 3.30), for which see Weidner 1936, 707; Durrett 1930, 503; Syme 1995, 29, 36–38.

[84] See also Lasserre 1975, 107: some codices contain the following readings: Γορδιαῖα ὄρη and Γονδιαῖα ἔθνη.

[85] Weidner 1936, 706–707; Syme 1995, 31–33.

[86] Markwart 1930, 3–4.

[87] Herzfeld 1907, 220.

[88] Syme 1995, 32. But this identification is possible only if Mt. Niphates is identified with the Mt. Nipur known from Assyrian sources. Mt. Nipur is unequivocally identified due to the discovery of an Assyrian commemoration plaque on the Cudi Dağı. For the inscription, see Luckenbill 1924, 63–66 and Luckenbill 1927, 139–140 (no. 296).

may not be possible to pin down its location, since the ancient sources themselves did not have a very clear idea as to its location.[89]

In *Geog*. 11.14.8 and 16.1.21 Gordyene is again mentioned by Strabo in relation to the course of the Tigris. In *Geog*. 16.1.21 it is said that the Tigris "flows through the middle of Lake Thopitis … and, after traversing it to the opposite shore, it sinks underground with upward blasts and a loud noise; and having flowed for a considerable distance invisible, it rises again not far away from Gordyaea (Γορδυαία)…". In turn, in *Geog*. 11.14.8 the Tigris is said to "… flow down towards Opis and the wall of Semiramis, as it is called, leaving the Gordyaeans and the whole of Mesopotamia on the right (τοὺς Γορδυαίους ἐν δεξιᾷ ἀφεὶς …), while the Euphrates, on the contrary, has the same country on the left, having approached one another and formed Mesopotamia, the former flows through Seleukeia to the Persian Gulf and the latter through Babylon…". Thanks to both texts, we not only locate Gordyene *alongside* the course of the Tigris, but we learn that it was located *south* (as Strabo apparently believes that the Tigris flows north-south until its bend, after which the Tigris, together with the Euphrates, marks the Mesopotamian region) of two other landmarks: Lake Θωσπῖτις and the wall of Semiramis. Lake Thospitis has been identified as Lake Van or Lake Gölcük/Hazar, since both lakes had local non-Greek names that could be rendered with the Greek Thospitis.[90] Namely, the ancient Urartian name of Lake Van is Tušpas (and Armenian *Tosp*),[91] while Lake Gölcük was known in Armenian as Covkʻ, which could also yield the Greek θωψία and this sound turn into θωσπία.[92] The first option is more likely for geographical reasons (as other sources indicate the general vicinity of Lake Van). In turn, the Wall of Semiramis (also called the Wall of Media) is known from an-

[89] The identification with the Ala Dağı (north-west of Lake Van) or the Ararat can be maintained only if one focuses on the connection between the Niphates and the sources of the Tigris (Strabo *Geog.* 11.12.4). In turn, Syme's identification with the Cudi Dağı can be maintained only through Strabo's references to the Niphates *and* the Gordyaean Mountains (Str., *Geog.* 11.12.4; Plutarch, *Alex*. 31), but then one has to disregard the connection to the sources of the Tigris. In contrast to Syme (Strabo's texts show that the Niphates was located in the Gordyaean Mountains), we must stress that although such a location can be argued indirectly on the basis of 11.12.4 (Tauros proper can also be called the Gordyaean Mountains, and at some point "the Tauros rises higher and bears the name Niphates", thus the Niphates is located in the Tauros and the Tauros equals the Gordyaean Mountains), further east the Tauros is also said by Strabo to "form the Zagros". All this could simply mean that different parts of Strabo's Tauros have local names, and not that the Niphates is located in Gordyene). In 11.14.2 Strabo does not really locate the Niphates in Gordyene, but rather mentions Gordyene as a reference point to the Niphates, which in fact suggests that they only border each other, but not that one includes the other.

[90] Markwart 1930, 30–31; Hewsen 1982, 136; Hewsen 1985, 74. For a full list of references to this lake and its different spellings, see Weissbach 1936b, 349–350 (and also Weissbach 1936a, 349).

[91] Markwart 1930, 30–31; Hewsen 1982, 136; Hewsen 1985, 74; Syme 1995, 32.

[92] Markwart 1930, 30–31; Hewsen 1982, 136; Hewsen 1985, 74.

cient literature as one of the city walls of Babylon which was believed to have been built by Queen Semiramis.[93] The location of Opis is not exactly known, but the context makes it clear that it should be looked for in Babylonia (see also Strabo 16.1.9, where Opis together with Seleukeia are the limit of navigability on the Tigris).[94] Despite difficulties in suggesting a precise identification for either landmark, the very idea of these two toponyms being located in Babylonia throws up a serious problem for Strabo's location of Gordyene in 11.14.8. Not only does Gordyene lie on the west bank of the Tigris, but it is put in connection with most southern landmarks of the Tigris in Babylonia.[95] This interpretation has been widely considered a mistake on the part of Strabo, and the source of this mistake could be conceivably explained only if we assume that Strabo mistook the Tigris for one of its eastern tributaries (e.g. the Diyala, if so, then Opis could be located in the vicinity of the confluence of the Tigris and the Diyala).[96] What is more, since this passage resembles *Geog*. 2.1.26 in that Opis and the Wall of Semiramis are mentioned in both accounts as landmarks marking the southern course of the Tigris (although Gordyene in *Geog*. 2.1.26 seems to be located a little more to the north, before the bend of the Tigris), where Strabo has explicitly acknowledged his source of information – Eratosthenes – it is precisely Eratosthenes who may be considered to be responsible for the picture of Gordyene located west of the Tigris and close to Babylonia.[97]

Of special importance is Strabo's *Geog*. 16.1.24–25, where Gordyene, with its inhabitants, natural resources and culture, comes directly to the fore:

Near the Tigris (*πρὸς δὲ τῷ Τίγρει*) *lie the places belonging to the Gordyaeans (τὰ τῶν Γορδυαίων χωρία), whom the ancients called Karduchoi (Καρδοῦχοι); and their cities are named Sareisa and Satalka and Pinaka, a very powerful fortress, with three citadels, each enclosed by a separate fortification of its own, so that they constitute, as it were, a triple city. But still it not only was held in subjection by the king of the Armenians, but the Romans took it by force, although the Gordyaeans (οἱ Γορδυαῖοι) had an exceptional repute as master-builders and as experts in the construction of siege engines; and it was for this reason that Tigranes used them in such work. But also the rest of Mesopotamia became subject to the Romans. Pompey assigned to Tigranes most of the places in this country, I mean all that are worth mentioning; for the country is rich in pasturage, and so rich in plants that it also produces the evergreens and a spice-plant called amomum; and it is a feeding-ground for*

[93] Sayce 1888, 104–113 (esp. 111); Barnett 1963, 19.
[94] Luckenbill 1924, 148–151; Barnett 1963, 18–20.
[95] Syme 1995, 33.
[96] Markwart 1930, 6–9; Honigmann 1936, 1011; Syme 1995, 33.
[97] Syme 1995, 33, 44.

lions; and it also produces naphtha and the stone called gangitis, which is avoided by reptiles. Gordys, the son of Triptolemos, is said to have taken up his abode in Gordyene (Γορδυηνή), and later also the Eretrians, who were carried off by the Persians. Of Triptolemos, however, I shall soon give a clear account in my description of the Syrians.

This is one of two ancient texts that make an explicit and direct connection between the Karduchoi (Καρδοῦχοι known to us from Xenophon) and the Gordyaeans (Γορδυαῖοι) and their country (τὰ τῶν Γορδυαίων χωρία); the other will be Pliny, *HN* 6.44 (see below). What is more, there is a long scholarly and non-scholarly tradition which would add another ethnonym into this group and treat it as a synonym – the *Kurds*. Namely, some scholars see the *Karduchoi* as ancestors of the modern Kurds.[98] For instance, some authors of the *Cambridge History of Iran* speak about "the Ten Thousand" marching through the land of the *Kurds* (or *Kurdestan*), and not the land of the Karduchoi.[99] To others, Gordyene was "an apparently Kurdish or proto-Kurdish state".[100] This identification is, however, rejected by many scholars on phonetic and historical grounds.[101] In terms of linguistic connections, it seems that the form *Kurd-* is not akin to *Kardū-*, but to *Kurt-*.[102] Therefore, if any ancient people could be suggested as possible ancestors of the *Kurds,*[103] they are the Κύρτιοι (the Greek Κύρτιοι attested in Polyb. 5.52.5 and Strabo 11.13.3, 15.3.1, and the Latin *Cyrtii* or *Cyrtaei* known from Liv., 37.40.9 and 42.58.13)[104]. The Κύρτιοι were a warlike nomadic people living in the Zagros Mountains who appear in sources as mercenary slingers – in the service of the Median governor, Molon against Antiochos III, but with Antiochos III against the Romans at Magnesia in 190 BC, and again hired by Eumenes, king of Pergamon at Kallinikos (171 BC).[105]

Attempts have also been made to find older attestations of the Karduchoi than Xenophon's *Anabasis* by pointing to the *kardakes* known from Achaemenid

[98] Weissbach 1919b, 1933–1934; Driver 1921, 563–572; Driver 1923, 393–403; Cook 1985, 257, n. 1; and many others.

[99] Burn 1985, 354.

[100] Hewsen 1988–1989, 281.

[101] Hartmann 1897, 90–105; Nöldeke 1898, 78–81; Hübschmann 1904, 334; Minorsky 1940, 143–152; MacKenzie 1961, 68–69; Asatrian 2001, 51; Asatrian 2009, 25–26; Schmitt 2011.

[102] Nöldeke 1898, 78–81; Asatrian 2009, 25–26.

[103] For a good review of all ancient "candidates" for the ancestors of the Kurds, see Nikitine 1956, 1–22.

[104] Nöldeke 1898, 78; Hübschmann 1904, 334; Minorsky 1940, 150; MacKenzie 1961, 68; Asatrian 2009, 26; Schmitt 2011; Wiesehöfer 2012.

[105] Reinach 1909, 115–119; Launey 1949, 581; Bar-Kochva 1976, 48–53; Wiesehöfer 2004, 11–23; Schmitt 2011; Brentjes 2012.

records.[106] It seems, however, that the *kardakes* were an elite corps in the Persian army, and consequently this term does not convey any ethnicity[107] – the *kardakes* cannot be seen as the "ancestors" of the Karduchoi.

Of what origin, then, were the Karduchoi (and consequently the Gordyaeans)?[108] Xenophon's description of the border area between Armenia and the land of the Karduchoi clearly shows that the Kentrites functioned not only as a territorial but also as a cultural border.[109] Therefore, the Karduchoi were not of Armenian origin.[110] Another option is that the Karduchoi could be of Semitic origin.[111] First, the name of the Karduchoi has good Semitic analogies (in Akkadian: *qardu* meaning *strong*, *hero* and *qarādū* meaning *to be strong*),[112] and a great deal of people in Mesopotamia were Aramaic-speakers and, most likely, of Semitic origin. However, there is no direct evidence to definitively prove this hypothesis. For instance, the only two personal names of Gordyaeans known to us are Zarbienos (Plut. *Luc*. 21.2, 29.6: Ζαρβιηνός) and *Iovinianus*, rulers of that country (Amm. Marc. 18.6.20, see below).[113] The first name has been suggested to be Iranian,[114] and the second one of Armenian origin.[115] This evidence is, however, slim, and could rather reflect the Iranization and Armenization of Gordyene's elites as cultural and political processes well known to us from other

[106] Olmstead 1948, 241; Launey 1949, 486.

[107] Briant 2002, 1036–1037; Olbrycht 2004, 82.

[108] See a concise presentation of the problem by Minorsky 1987, 1133.

[109] By contrast, note that according to some scholars (Nöldeke 1898, 74; Minorsky 1940, 143) the suffix -χοι has Armenian character. Yet this could simply mean that the Greeks learned the name of Karduchoi from the Armenians (Minorsky 1987, 1133). All available linguistic data shows that the root of the terms under discussion is Qardū, and therefore the question of what the origin of suffix might be is irrelevant.

[110] Hübschmann 1904, 239; Adontz, Garsoïan 1970, 323; Minorsky 1987, 1133 and many others. Of course, one has to take account of the persistence of Armenian sources to see the prince of *Korduk'* as one of the Armenian nobles (generally speaking, created from the 5th c. CE on), but this attitude can more easily be explained by the influence of the Armenian culture in Gordyene (attested in neighboring countries too) than by the Armenian origin of Gordyene.

[111] Sinclair 1989, 360–361.

[112] Minorsky 1987, 1133.

[113] Some scholars (e.g. Justi 1963, 191; Teixidor 1964) know of another king of Gordyene, Μανίσαρος (Cass. Dio 68.22.1). However, Cass. Dio does not say what country Manisaros was the king of. Indeed, his troops were sent to support the king of Adiabene, and this implies a country neighboring Adiabene, but at that time there were several countries which could belong to this category (e.g. Singara, as suggested by Trimingham 1979, 32). What is more, it seems that at the time of Trajan's invasion of Parthia, the territory of Gordyene belonged to Adiabene, and therefore there was no king of Gordyene (see Kahrstedt 1950, 66; Marciak 2011b, 192–193 on the basis of Jos. *Ant*. 20.24 and 195 concluding from Cass. Dio, 68.26.1–4). See also the doubts raised from the context of Trajan's campaigns by Langdon 1931, 12 n.1 and Lepper 1948, 8 n. 1.

[114] Justi 1963, 381.

[115] Hewsen 1988–1989, 284.

neighboring countries. The last option is that the Karduchoi were remnants of Urartian tribes. Namely, according to Minorsky, there is "a certain consonantal resemblance with the name of a people, Khaldī",[116] and historically speaking, there is indeed some evidence that upon the arrival of the Armenians some Urartian tribes dispersed over the region.[117]

Strabo 16.1.24–25 also conveys two interesting episodes about the Greeks and Gordyene. First, Strabo's remarks on Gordys (the same in 16.2.5) come from a literary tradition about the Argonautic expedition (Jason and his companions (the Argonauts) went to far-away Kolchis to retrieve the Golden Fleece) which Strabo recalls in a few places of his opus. In writing that Jason's companions settled in these lands – Armenos in Armenia, Arbelos in Arbela, and Gordys in Gordyene – Strabo in fact conveys a *Siedlungslegende* for these countries: each of these countries has a mythic Greek ancestor who settled in these lands and apparently started their civilization, or at least brought the first spread of Greek culture.[118] The very existence of such legends implies the Greeks' contact with and knowledge about these lands, perhaps even the Greek presence there, since such interpretations of local places ("interpretatio graeca"[119]) are supposed to come from the Greek inhabitants in the first place.[120] At first glance, the case of the Eretrians seems to be similar to that of the Argonauts.[121] However, the deportation of the Eretrians into Persia is also reported by Herodotus, *Hist*. 6.101–119, and finds many parallels in the policy of the Achaemenids.[122] Thus, although the deportation of the Eretrians later developed into a literary theme (see e.g. *Vita Apol*. 1.23–24),[123] the story may contain a historical kernel and should be treated as historically reliable.[124] Either way, like the story about Gordys, Strabo's remarks on the Eretrians in Gordyene again suggest that the material and intellectual culture of Gordyene included some Greek elements.

Strabo's Gordyaeans in 16.1.24–25, like Xenophon's Karduchoi, still appear to be in demand as mercenaries, but their range of military expertise

[116] Minorsky 1987, 1133.

[117] Minorsky 1987, 1133.

[118] On such Greek *Siedlungsgeschichten*, see Markwart 1928, 213–215; Kahrstedt 1950, 59, n. 7; Syme 1995, 29; Marciak 2011b, 181. By contrast, see Dillemann's critical remarks (Dillemann 1962, 118).

[119] See Tcherikover 1959, 20–36, esp. 24; Hengel 1973, 23–27 and 464–486; Hengel 1976, 73–93.

[120] Marciak 2011b, 181.

[121] For such a critical approach, see Penella 1974, 295–300 (esp. 296–297 and n. 6).

[122] Briant 2002, 505–506; Biffi 2002, 168.

[123] Penella 1974, 295–300; Biffi 2002, 168.

[124] Briant 2002, 505–506, 955–956.

changed or enlarged from being excellent bowmen into being good engineers skilled in the construction of siege engines. This new skill is clearly connected with the fact that Strabo's Gordyene is an urbanized country, and especially the period of the decline of the Seleucid state may be seen as the time when this kind of military ability could be developed. Besides this, the country of the Gordyaeans is presented by Strabo as a resourceful land: on the one hand, pasturage and evergreen plants; on the other, resources of hydrocarbons – naphtha and *gangitis* (the latter perhaps being a kind of bitumen).[125] Above all, Strabo speaks of *amomum*, which is directly associated with Gordyene in ancient literature (Philargyrius apud Sallustius, *Historiae*, 4.72; Josephus, *Ant*. 20.25; and perhaps Dioskurides 1.15 under Armenia), and so perhaps the most characteristic product of this country.[126]

Strabo's Gordyene is clearly located alongside the Tigris, and its main three cities are explicitly said to lie on the bank of this river. However, out of the three main cities of Gordyene mentioned by Strabo, only Pinaka can be safely identified. For a long time, Pinaka (Πίνακα) has been widely identified as the modern Finik (Fenek/Fenik) based exclusively on linguistic terms,[127] but there is nowadays archaeological evidence which may support this identification.[128] Recent excavations near the villages of Eski Yapı (Fenik/Fenek/Finik) on the east bank and Eski Hendek on the west bank of the Tigris, some 13 km north of Cizre, have revealed massive fortifications on both sides of the Tigris that are identified as an usually large 4th c. CE Roman castellum.[129] What is more, there is an abundance of Hellenistic and typically Parthian pottery on the east bank portion of the settlement (at Finik), which shows that the Roman fortress was a continuation of earlier settlements.[130] The Parthian occupation in this area is also confirmed by the presence of two monumental rock reliefs in Parthian style in the nearest proximity of Finik:[131] both are worn-out, but one of them is in a better condition and has been dated variously from the 1st c. CE to the early 3rd c. CE.[132] Furthermore, in the 4th c. CE Ammianus claimed that the ancient name of the fortress Bezabde was *Phaenica*. However, the idea that Ammianus' Phaenica/Bezabde could be identified with Finik was rejected

[125] Biffi 2002, 167; Radt 2009, 280. Γάγγιτις is likely to be emendated into either ἐγγαγίς known from Nikander, *Theriaca* 37 or Γαγάτης known from Isidor, *Origenes*, 16.4.3. The latter is a kind of bitumen.

[126] Note that, among others, this fact helped to identify Josephus' Καρρῶν in Ant. 20.25 as Gordyene (Barish 1983, 69–70 and Marciak 2011b, 192, n. 84).

[127] Weissbach 1920, 2497; Markwart 1930, 9–10; Dillemann 1962, 111.

[128] Algaze 1989, 248–252; Algaze, Breuninger, Lightfoot, Rosenberg 1991, 191–192.

[129] Algaze 1989, 248–252; Algaze, Breuninger, Lightfoot, Rosenberg 1991, 191–192.

[130] Algaze 1989, 248–252; Algaze, Breuninger, Lightfoot, Rosenberg 1991, 191–192.

[131] Mathiesen 1992, 185 (nos. 145–146).

[132] Debevoise 1942, 103; Nogaret 1984, 263; Mathiesen 1992, 185 (no. 145).

by Bell and Dillemann.[133] The excavators at Eski Hendek, however, suggest that the Roman castellum could well match Ammianus' data on Bezabde/Phaenica, and consequently the linguistic form, *Phaenica*, could be a missing link between Strabo's *Pinaka* and the modern *Finik*.[134]

We are much less fortunate with the identification of the two other cities mentioned by Strabo. According to Kiepert's map, Strabo's Σάρεισα could be identified with Šareš (located in the Ṭūr ʿAbdīn region west of the Tigris).[135] Sachau in turn suggests that Strabo's *Sareisa* is identical to Ši-ri-eš-še, mentioned in Assyrian records commemorating Tiglatpileser I's victory over his enemies – Kummuḫ and Kur-ṭi-e[136] – and can perhaps be identified with a small village called Šariš or Šiérš (sic) located on the east bank of the Tigris.[137] Modern assyriologists, however, differ from Sachau in the identification of the toponyms mentioned in Assyrian annals – first, they do distinguish two cities bearing a similar name – Šarišša and Šērišša – both located in Central Anatolia;[138] secondly, they locate Kummuḫ on the west bank of the upper Euphrates and see it as a predecessor of Kommagene.[139] Thus, the geographical context set by the modern interpretation of Assyrian toponyms is remote from Sachau's suggestion – that is, there is no unambiguous evidence for Strabo's *Sareisa* or any of its equivalents in Assyrian texts. Again, according to Sinclair, Strabo's *Sareisa* is the modern Shakh located north-east of Cizre on the southern slopes of the Cudi Dağı.[140] There is, however, no archaeological or epigraphical data from this area to back up this suggestion, and the linguistic similarity does not really seem to be close at all.

As far as Strabo's Σάταλκα is concerned, Dillemann suggests the modern Chattakh, a settlement located on the Bohtan River.[141] The location itself is possible only if we accept Syme's observation – which seems to be likely – that Strabo does not know the west Tigris and to him this river starts as either the

[133] Bell 1911, 299; Dillemann 1962, 84, 111. Consequently, Bezabde was thought to be located not at Eski Hendek but under Cizre in the Turkish–Syrian border area. For a concise overview of possible locations of Bezabde, see Lightfoot 1983: 189–204.

[134] Algaze 1989, 248–252. Also already Hartmann 1897, 98 with some caution.

[135] This is accepted by Hübschmann 1904, 334, n. 2; Dillemann 1962, 111. Weissbach 1920, 2497 also speaks of Šāriš, "das freilich nich am Tigris, sondern an einem von rechts kommenden Nebenfluß liegt".

[136] Sachau 1897, 51–52. This identification was already called into question by Langdon, Gardiner 1920, 196.

[137] Sachau 1883, 416. Markwart 1930, 9–10 also prefers the east bank of the Tigris as the location of Sareisa, but considers the west bank "nicht unwahrscheinlich".

[138] Del Monte, Tischler 1978, 360–361; Forlanini 1998, 221; Wilhelm 2009, 61–62.

[139] Hawkins 1980–83, 338–340.

[140] Sinclair 1989, 359.

[141] Dillemann 1962, 111.

Bitilis or the Bohtan River.[142] Lastly, Sinclair suggested the modern Eskieruh (formerly called Sedukh) as Strabo's *Satalka*.[143] Eskieruh is located north-east of Cizre on the southern slopes of the Cudi Dağı.[144] In either case, the identification rests on the *alleged* similarity of names, and there is no archaeological data like in Finik to reinforce these suggestions.

We hear of Gordyene twice in Book 6 of Pliny's *Historia Naturalis*[145]. Like in Strabo's long enumeration of geographical and ethnographical entities, Gordyene is only mentioned briefly. In *HN* 6.43–44, while sketching the map of Asia, Pliny's look at this part of the world moves from Media to the Caspian Sea. At some point, he states that "joining on to the Adiabeni are the people formerly called the Carduchi (*Carduchi*) and now the Cordueni (*Cordueni*), past whom flows the river Tigris, and adjoining these are the 'Roadside' *Pratitae*, as they are called, who hold the Caspian Gates". In turn, in *HN* 6.129 Gordyene appears in the context of the course of the Tigris, which after receiving as tributaries from Armenia the *Parthenias* and the *Nikephorion*, "makes a frontier between the Arab tribes of the Orroei and Adiabeni and forms the region of Mesopotamia mentioned above; it then traverses the mountains of the Gurdiaei (*montes Gurdiaeorum*), flowing round Apamea, a town belonging to Mesene, and 125 miles short of Babylonian Seleucia splits into two channels …".

Pliny's *Pratitae* are hard to identify. Solinus, Pliny's 3rd or 4th c. CE interpreter,[146] calls the *Pratitae* a Median tribe.[147] Pliny's nickname, παρ' ὁδὸν, indicates that they were a nomadic tribe and as such could frequently change the place of settlement. In Pliny's *HN* 6.43–44, their location is connected with the access to a travel and trade route whose control (tolls taken from travelers) enabled them to make a living. In turn, the interpretation of the *Caspian Gates* constitutes a notorious problem as ancient sources do not use this term with much consistency – at least three passes could be called by this name: first, the *Caspian Gates* proper, a set of defiles between Media and Parthia (east of Tehran); second, the pass of Darial through the central Caucasus; third and lastly, the pass of Darband between the Caucasus and the Caspian Sea.[148] It seems that the most tangible clue given by Pliny in *HN* 6.43–44 is his reference to the Adiabeni, located along the western frontier of the Zagros. This connection could suggest that the Caspian Gates in *HN* 6.43–44 are confused

[142] Syme 1995, 28–29.
[143] Sinclair 1989, 359.
[144] Sinclair 1989, 359.
[145] Pliny's text used here is that of Rackham 1942.
[146] Brodersen 2011, 64–65, 70.
[147] Brodersen 2011, 81.
[148] See Anderson 1928, 130–163 (esp. 130–131); Kettenhofen 1994, 13–19 (esp. 13–14).

with the Median Gates that open access to Media (especially Ecbatana) across the Zagros.[149]

As for *HN* 6.129, Pliny's Orroei (see also *HN* 6.117) are widely acknowledged as the people of Osrhoene (later Edessa),[150] but the fact that he puts them next to the Adiabeni is seen as an exaggeration, since such a territorial extent of Osrhoene to the east would ignore other ethno-geographical entities between Osrhoene and Adiabeni – e.g. Rhesaina, Nisibis, Singara.[151] As for the Parthenias River, the Greek Παρθενίας (clearly corresponding to the Greek παρθένος, but, like all river names in Greek, being masculine[152]) has been suggested to correspond to the Syriac Kallþa meaning *a bride*, the latter also being called νυμφίος (*a bridegroom*) in Latin sources,[153] and is widely identified as the modern Batman River.[154] The identification of the *Nikephorion* is not clear at all. This river is also mentioned by Tacitus, *Ann*. 15.4 in his description of Tigranokerta (a part of its walls is said to be encircled by the *Nicephorius*), and as the identification of this city is a notorious problem, the more so is Tacitus' reference to the *Nikephorion*/*Nicephorius* whose identification depends on that of the site of Tigranokerta.[155] The most frequently suggested identification is either the Garzan River or one of the tributaries of the Batman River.[156] Lastly, the fact that Pliny puts the mountains of Gordyene after the Mesopotamia region and next to Apamea in Babylonia reminds us of some traditions present in Strabo which are apparently derived from Eratosthenes and indeed located Gordyene in the most southern areas of the Fertile Crescent.

In Ptolemy's *Geographika* we find two brief references to Gordyene.[157] Chapter 13 of Book 5 is devoted to the description of Greater Armenia, and in this context, in *Geog*. 5.13.5 Ptolemy mentions the mountains of Gordyene (τὰ

[149] Syme 1995, 45. By contrast, Anderson 1928, 130–131 considers Pliny's Caspian Gates in *HN* 6.43–44 to be the Caspian Gates proper.

[150] H.J.W. Drijvers 1977, 866; Millar 1993, 456–457; Ross 2001, 22–23; Sartre 2005, 239; Edwell 2008, 11.

[151] Ross 2001, 22–23.

[152] Different translations have been suggested for the masculine παρθενίας – *der Jungfräuliche* (Suerbaum 1981, 1245, n. 176 with caution) or *a son of a concubine* (*LSJ* 1339b).

[153] Brockelmann 1928, 326–327: *Kallþa*; Markwart 1930, 82: *Kallaþ*; Sokoloff 2009, 628: *Kallþa*. For the etymology of Parthenias and Nymphios and their use as a cognomen in ancient literature and Latin inscriptions, see Suerbaum 1981, 1244–1245 and nn. 175–176; Kittel, Friedrich, Bromiley 1985, 657; Noy 1993, 203.

[154] Lehmann-Haupt 1926, 400; Markwart 1930, 82, 121; Honigmann 1935, 5; Dillemann 1962, 48–49, 253–254; Blockley 1984, 31–32; Wheeler 1991, 506; Talbert 2000, 1277; Kaegi 2003, 131.

[155] Markwart 1930, 82–83; Sinclair 1994–95, 203.

[156] See Eckhardt 1909, 409; Lehmann-Haupt 1926, 400; Markwart 1930, 120–121; Dillemann 1962, 48–49, 253–254; Talbert 2000, 1277; Kaegi 2003, 131.

[157] The translation used here is that of Hewsen 1982, 148–150. The Greek text is that of Stückelberger, Graßhoff 2006, 548 and 554.

Γορδυαῖα ὄρη) and categorizes them as one of the ranges belonging to the mountains of Armenia (notably, the same in Ptolemy refers to the Zagros Mountains). Ptolemy locates the middle of the Gordyene Mountains at 75° 39° 40'. Likewise in *Geog*. 5.13.20 Ptolemy states that "towards the East extending from the sources of the Tigris River is Bagrauandene and, below it, Gordyene (Γορδυηνή), east of which is Kotaia and, below it, the Mardoi.[158]

Ptolemy's ethnonyms are not easy to identify. His *Bagrauandēnē* may correspond to the name of a province known from Armenian sources: *Bagrewand*, located on the modern Ağri plain.[159] It has been suggested that this name derives from either the Old Iranian **bāγa.raivanta*, meaning *rhubarb garden*[160], or the Iranian, *baga-raēvanta-* meaning *des reichen Spenders (Mithra)*.[161] In Russell's opinion, only the second etymology is correct, but should be translated as *of the bounteous God (Ahura Mazdā)* as the epithet *raēvant-* is characteristic of *Ahura Mazdā* in Zoroastrian texts.[162] Kotaia has likewise been suggested to correspond to Armenian toponyms, that is to *Kortaia preserved in the Armenian as Korčaykʻ, and consequently to match the Armenian territory of Korčaykʻ or one of its subdivisions.[163] The identification of the *Mardoi* is problematic, since ancient sources mention *Mardoi* (and *Amardoi)* in different locations of the Middle East (the eastern shore of the Black Sea, Armenia, Media, and Persia).[164] As Pliny's general description takes the sources of the Tigris as a starting point and then moves east and south-east, the Mardi in Armenia are most likely meant in *Geog.* 5.12.9.[165] The Armenian *Mardoi* also appear in Xen., *Anab*. 4.3.4, Str. *Geog*. 11.13.3, Plutarch, *Ant*. 41–48, Tac. *Ann*. 14.23.[166] Especially Plutarch, *Ant*. 41–48 and Tac. *Ann*. 14.23 give more precise clues as to the location of the Armenian *Mardoi* – in Plutarch, *Ant*. 41–48 the *Mardoi* are described as harassing Mark Antony's troops during their withdrawal after the unsuccessful siege of Phraaspa; in Tac. *Ann*. 14.23 we hear of Corbulo's troops marching from Artaxata down to Tigranokerta and being attacked by the *Mardoi*. Generally speaking, both actions can be located in the modern region of Vaspurakan, north-east of Lake Van.[167] This location could be enhanced by the fact that the name of a later Armenian province, *Mardastan*, is derived from the Greek ethnonym

[158] Hewsen 1982, 150.
[159] Markwart 1930, *11; Russell 1985, 452–453; Howard-Johnston 2006, X.
[160] Minorsky 1965, 149.
[161] Markwart 1930, *11.
[162] Russell 1985, 453.
[163] Minorsky 1940, 150; Hewsen 1982, 115.
[164] Andreas 1894, 1729–1733; Weissbach 1930b, 1648–1651.
[165] Weissbach 1930b, 1648–1651.
[166] Weissbach 1930b, 1648–1651; Syme 1995, 31, n. 25.
[167] Syme 1995, 31.

Μάρδοι, and this province was located east of Lake Van.[168] To conclude, Ptolemy's Gordyene lies south of the sources of the Tigris and south of Lake Van.

Sketch map of the Upper Tigris region.

Data gleaned from the geographical and ethnographical accounts of Strabo, Pliny and Ptolemy allows us to approximately sketch the location of ancient Gordyene. In the most general terms, the Gordyaeans were settled alongside the Tigris and south of Lake Van (Str. 11.14.8, 16.1.21; Pliny *HN* 6.43–44, 6.129; Ptolemy 5.12.19). To be more precise, the mountains inhabited by the Gordyaeans were located alongside the Tigris and before its bend marking the beginning of the Upper Mesopotamia valley (Str. 2.1.26). This means that the mountains north of modern Cizre suit this data best (Str. 2.1.26 and Xen. *Anab*. 3.4.10–12; 3.5.13–16; 4.1.1–9). Although the mountains inhabited by the Gordyaeans were located south of Armenia proper, they could also be categorized as belonging to the massif of the Armenian Mountains in general (Str 2.1.26 and Ptol. 5.12.2). The country of the Gordyaeans (not exclusively the mountains) can also be located alongside the course of the Tigris (Str. *Geog*. 16.1.24), but more down the river course, so that the Gordyaeans were neighbored by the Adiabeni (Str. *Geog*. 16.1.1 and 16.1.8; Pliny, *HN* 6.43–44, 6.129) and exposed to the nomadic tribes of the Upper Mesopotamian valley (Str. *Geog*. 16.1.1 and 16.1.8; Pliny *HN* 6.43–44, 6.129). Especially because of the fact the Gordyaeans had contact with Mes-

[168] Hübschmann 1904, 207, 239, n.2 and 343–344.

opotamian nomadic tribes, which would apparently cross the Tigris seasonally into the Gordyaeans territory for pasture, some ancient writers (Eratosthenes and Strabo, see Str. 11.14.8, 2.1.26) associated Gordyene, exaggeratedly and wrongly, with territories far to the south of the Fertile Crescent.

Historiographical accounts

Some data concerning the territory of Gordyene can also be obtained through a critical reading of historiographical accounts. First and foremost, the topic of Gordyene appears prominently in ancient accounts in the context of the Mithridatic Wars (Plutarch, *Luc.* 21–36, *Pomp.* 30–36; Diodorus 40.1; Appian, *Mithr*. 105; Dio Cass. 37.5.3–4), especially with regard to Lucullus' and Pompey's campaigns during the 3rd Mithidatic War (74 or 73–63 BCE) against Tigranes the Great, who conquered Gordyene and killed its king, Zarbienos (after Zarbienos attempted to switch the sides by aligning himself with Rome).[169] Of special importance here for the historical geography of Gordyene is Plutarch's *Lucullus* 29–30, which describes the wintering of Roman legions in the region. Specifically, after the capture of Tigranokerta Lucullus let his troops winter in Gordyene before they set out for the campaign in the heart of the Armenian kingdom. Two details are particularly revealing in Plutarch's text. First, he stresses that the Roman soldiers found an abundance of supplies in Gordyene. This tallies perfectly with Strabo's general tendency to praise Gordyene's natural wealth. Secondly, the Romans came to Gordyene from Tigranokerta, and after the winter camp made their way to the Armenian capital, Artashat.[170] Provided that Tigranokerta can be located east of the Batman River, perhaps in Arzan,[171] which seems to be the most likely option in the present state of research,[172] the nearest area where Lucullus' troops could find rest is located east of the Garzan River and on the east bank of the Tigris (note that at this point Nisibis still had an Armenian garrison).[173] This in turn raises the question as to whether we should not see the territory of Gordyene as expanded east over the Bohtan River into the territory of what later became known as Arzanene (for Arzanene, see below). If this is the case, we can also attempt to determine Lucullus' route to the Armenian

[169] For the historical context, see Holmes 1923, 192–200, 204–212; Magie 1950, 321–365, 1203–1231; Olbrycht 2009, 168–175 (and nn. 63 and 66 on p. 183), Olbrycht 2011: 276.

[170] Syme 1995, 55.

[171] On Lucullus' route from the Euphrates crossing at Tomisa to Tigranocerta, see Eckhardt 1910a, 82–89. On the Upper Euphrates frontier in general, see also Mitford 1989 and Wheeler 1991.

[172] Hewsen 2001, 56; Plontke-Lüning 2012.

[173] Eckhardt 1910a, 113–114; Eckhardt 1910b, 202–203.

capital the following spring. Namely, Lucullus could choose between three possible routes from Gordyene to reach Artashat – through the pass of Bitlis or another route around the southern rim of Lake Van into the Bayazid valley.[174] It seems that the Bitlis route is shorter and perhaps more convenient for larger groups; what is more, it offered more off-branches along the course, which could be vital if the Armenians tried to block any canyon.[175] If so, then the most probable location of the winter camp of the Roman legion under Lucullus is the territory of Gordyene, understood as the valley on the east bank of the Tigris marked by the Batman or the Garzan River to the west.[176] It is not entirely clear where the eastern frontier of this valley could be located, the first candidate as a natural border is the Assyrian Khabur River in the south-east.[177]

Another important topic concerning the historical geography of Gordyene which features predominantly in historiographical accounts is that of the Gordyaean Mountains. In view of the above-mentioned Greek and Latin ethnographies (Str. 2.1.26; Ptol. 5.12.2, as well as Xen. *Anab*. 3.4.10–12; 3.5.13–16; 4.1.1–9), the mountains inhabited by the Gordyaeans can most likely be identified as a mountain range north of modern Cizre (stretching till the Bohtan River). In turn, in historiographical accounts the Gordyaean Mountains are recalled on the occasion of the crossing of the Tigris by foreign armies – Alexander the Great against Dareios III of Persia in 331 BCE and Trajan against Parthia in 115 CE. According to Arrian (*Anab*. 3.7.7), when Alexander's troops crossed the Tigris and marched into Assyria, they had the mountains of the Gordyaeans (τὰ Γορδυηνῶν ὄρη) on their left hand. In turn, Trajan's troops advanced from Nisibis towards the Tigris and crossed the "stream opposite the Gordyaean Mountains" (κατὰ τὸ Καρδύηνον ὄρος in Dio 68.26.1–2)[178]. Both historical accounts are of great importance for identifying the mountains of Gordyene. Taking a route in ancient times was not only a matter of personal preference, but depended on the natural environment, and the Mesopotamian region allowed only a limited number of routes which were accessible to merchants, travelers and ancient armies. In the case of the upper Tigris, there seem to be two major crossings in the

[174] Eckhardt 1910b, 202–203.

[175] Eckhardt 1910b, 202–206; Syme 1995, 55. The route located east of Lake Van could have been taken by the Romans on their way back from Armenia to Nisibis, see Eckhardt 1910b, 227–231.

[176] The question is whether the territory between the Batman River and the Bohtan River (which later became known as Arzanene) can be seen as a scion of Sophene or that of Gordyene. On the one hand, ethnographical and geographical texts rather locate the core of Gordyene east and south of the Bohtan River. On the other hand, Plutarch's description could speak in favor of Gordyene as stretching further west over the Bohtan River at the time of the Third Mithridatic War.

[177] This is the eastern border of the territory of Gordyene according to Hartmann 1897, 91; Nöldeke 1898, 73.

[178] The text and translation used here is that of Cary 1925.

region in the Hellenistic and early Roman period – one in the neighborhood of Eski Yapı (Finik)/Eski Hendek and/or Cizre and another further to the south-east – at Nimrud.[179] The first crossing point was closer to Nisibis, and so it must have been used by Trajan's troops. This must also have been the same place where "the Ten Thousand" decided not to cross the river, but to head north into the mountains of Karduchoi (as they passed by the first crossing at Larisa/Nimrud). It is less clear, however, whether Alexander the Great used either the first or the second crossing.[180] All in all, given the fact that the Gordyaean Mountains are frequently recalled in historical accounts with regard to invading armies taking convenient routes of trade and war, their location can be taken as a fixed point – they stood "in full sight" of the crossing of Tigris at Bezabde (modern Eski Yapı/Eski Hendek or, less likely, Cizre).[181]

Gordyene again appears in the context of the Roman-Persian wars in the late 3rd and 4th c. CE, when the territory of Northern Mesopotamia changed hands several times between the two empires. To be precise, it appears in the 4th c. CE Ammianus' *Historia Romana*, where we can find three references to *Corduena* – 18.6.20, 23.3.5 and 25.7.8–9 – all made by Ammianus as an eye-witness to Roman-Persian military campaigns in the 360s; the people of *Karduene* are also mentioned by Petros Patrikios, who retrospectively wrote in the 6th c. CE about the main points of the 298 CE Roman-Persian peace treaty.

The backdrop of Ammianus' report in 18.6.20 is connected with Ammianus' scouting mission, which took place on the eve of the Persian invasion in 359 CE which reached the Roman fortress Amida.[182] As Roman commanders wanted to know the route of the Persian invasion, and the intelligence they had received was not clear-cut, they sent Ammianus on a scouting mission to the satrapy of Corduena, gained by the Romans in 298 but lost to the Persians during the first stage of the war.[183] In 18.6.20 we read that Ammianus went to *Iovinianus,* the satrap in "…*Corduena*, which was subject to the Persian power…". Ammianus says that he reached *Iovinianus* "over pathless mountains and through steep defiles". After the first meeting *Iovinianus* supplied Ammianus with an attendant who knew the country and sent them to "some lofty cliffs a long distance from there, from which, unless one's eyesight was impaired, even the smallest object was visible at a distance of fifty miles". From this location Ammianus was able to secretly observe the march of the Persian army which crossed the *Anzaba* (Great Zab) and went past Nineveh (18.7.1).

[179] Syme 1995, 30–31.
[180] Syme 1995, 30–31. See also Reade 1999 and Fig. 5.
[181] Syme 1995, 30–31.
[182] Matthews 1989, 42–44. Ammianus' text used here is that of Rolfe 1935.
[183] De Jonge 1980, 206; Matthews 1989, 42–44.

Where exactly could Ammianus have been located to offer such a good and informative view? On the one hand, we must observe that "we cannot expect to know exactly where Ammianus stood to get his view", as "a glance a relief map will show that in every sector of their northern and eastern limits these wide plains are overlooked by such commanding vantage points".[184] On the other, some mountain ridges are located closer to Nineveh and the Great Zab than others – especially the mountains of the Zakhō north-east of Nineveh could be a vantage point from where one could easily survey the valley around Nineveh and the Great Zab.[185]

In turn, in 23.3.5 Ammianus recalls *Corduena* while reporting on the early days of Caesar Julian's invasion of the Sasanian territory in 363 CE. Namely, Julian decided to divide his forces and to send part of his troops under the generals Procopius and Sebastianus to join the Armenian king, Arsaces in engaging the Persians in northern Mesopotamia.[186] The forces were expected to march through *Corduena*, *Moxoena* and Median *Chiliocomum* before meeting Julian's troops in Assyria. The opinions on the identification of *Chiliocomum* (meaning *thousand villages*[187]) differ considerably among scholars[188]: not in Media but south of Corduena in Assyria[189]; north of Corduena[190]; in Armenia[191]; in the upper Zab basin,[192] in the plain of Salmas north of the Lake Urmia.[193] If Moxoena is to be located north(east) of Corduena (which can also be argued on other grounds – see below), then the area between Lake Van and Lake Urmia, especially the plain of Salmas, could be a likely option.[194] If this identification is correct, *Chiliocomum* would indeed be located in Media Atropatene (as Ammianus calls it, unlike scholars who correct his expression as "Assyria") and on the outskirts of the two other regions: Armenia and Assyria, which would make some sense in terms of the Roman strategy in 363 CE.[195]

[184] Matthews 1989, 48.

[185] Matthews 1989, 50.

[186] Den Boeft, Drijvers, den Hengst, Teitler 1998, 41–42.

[187] See Dillemann's suggestion (Dillemann 1962, 301 relying on Markwart 1930, 396–397) for the Iranian origin of *chiliocomum.*

[188] See Tomaschek 1899, 2278; Hübschmann 1904, 250, 338; Dillemann 1962, 300–301; den Boeft, Drijvers, den Hengst, Teitler 1998, 44; den Boeft, Drijvers, den Hengst, Teitler 2002, 221–222, 229–231; Mosig-Walburg 2009, 130, n. 563.

[189] Rolfe 1956, 322, n. 3; Brok 1959, 59.

[190] Seyfarth 1970, 222, n. 23; Dignas, Winter, 132, n. 66.

[191] Thesaurus Linguae Latinae ad locum.

[192] Fontaine 1977b, 29, n. 58.

[193] Dillemann 1962, 301.

[194] Dillemann 1962, 301; Fontaine 1977b, 29, n. 58; Den Boeft, Drijvers, den Hengst, Teitler 1998, 44.

[195] Fontaine 1977b, 29, n. 58; Den Boeft, Drijvers, den Hengst, Teitler 1998, 44.

Lastly, in 25.7.9 Ammianus describes territorial negotiations in 363 CE between Emperor Jovian and the Persians after the death of the Roman Emperor Julian[196]. Ammianus recalls that the Persians demanded that the Romans hand over five Roman *Transtigritane* ("on the far side of the Tigris") regions: *Arzanena*, *Moxoena*, *Zabdicena*, *Rehimena* and *Corduena* with fifteen fortresses,[197] as well as *Nisibis*, *Singara*, and *Castra Maurorum*. What is more, Ammianus bitterly remarks that instead of dispatching envoys to the king of Persia, Iovianus could have reached the protection of Corduena (*praesidia Corduenae*), a rich region (*uber regio*) which would have given him ground in opposing the Persian advance. Ammianus' list of regions lost by Rome to the Persians is partly parallel to Petros Patrikios' list that names territories gained by the Romans from the Persians in 298 CE: Intelene, Sophene, Arzanene, [the territories] of the *Karduenon* and Zabdikene (τὴν Ἰντηληνὴν μετὰ Σοφηνῆς καὶ Ἀρζανηνὴν μετὰ Καρδουηνῶν καὶ Ζαβδικηνῆς).[198] What is more, another parallel list appears in the acts of the council of the Assyrian Church at Seleukeia-Ktesiphon in 410 CE (Canon XXI) where the bishops of *Arzanene*, *Karduene*, *Zabdikene*, *Rehimene* and *Moxoene* were subjected to the church metropolis of Nisibis.[199]

The connection between the list handed down by Ammianus and that of Petros Patrikios is problematic. Some scholars assume that the lists should match up, that is, the territories gained by the Romans in 298 should again be listed among Roman losses in 363 CE.[200] This does not have to be the case, however, as the Romans apparently kept Ingilene and Sophene after 363 CE.[201] Thus, the parallel material in both lists in fact starts (looking from north-west to south-east down the Tigris) after Sophene, that is, most likely east of the Batman River (see below). However, there is still another problem: the territories that do appear in both lists and were apparently located east of Sophene are different – in Ammianus and in the Acts of the Seleukeia-Ktesiphon Council we find *Moxoena*/*Moxoene* and *Rehimena*/*Rehimene*, which are not listed in Petros Patrikios. The appearance of new entities east of the Batman River in the 363 CE peace treaty, Moxoena and Rehimena (and later in the council acts), could perhaps be

[196] Ammianus' text used here is that of Rolfe 1940.

[197] It is not entirely clear whether these fortresses were located in all five provinces (Blockley 1984, 44, n. 41) or only in Corduene (Toumanoff 1963, 181).

[198] *Intelene* must be emendated into *Ingilene*. In turn, the preposition μετά has been interpreted by some scholars as an indication of a higher status of *Ingilene* towards *Sophene* and *Arzanene* towards *Karduene* with *Zabdikene* (Toumanoff 1963, 175; Winter 1989, 556). However, μετά functions in this context rather as a geographically orientated link (Blockley 1984, 32; Mosig-Walburg 2009, 138).

[199] Mosig-Walburg 2009, 128.

[200] Hübschmann 1904, 220, n. 3; Winter 1989, 555–557.

[201] Blockley 1984, 28–49; Mosig-Walburg 2009, 135–136.

explained by the fact that they were subsumed in 298 CE under a larger ethnogeographical or/and political entity, especially under Corduena.[202] Indeed, Petros Patrikios uses the plural Καρδουηνῶν, which can be seen as the plural genitive and consequently translated as "of the *Karduenoi*". Thus, Petros literally speaks of [the territories] inhabited (or politically dependent on) by the *Karduenoi*, which could include a number of various territories (under different names), e.g. Moxoena and Rehimena.[203]

Remarkable is the terminology used by the sources for the aforementioned territories. Ammianus speaks about *Transtigritanae regiones* (*regions beyond the Tigris*) but not *provinciae* (likewise Festus 25.3); he (Amm. Marc. 18.9.2) and some later commentators (Festus 14.5; Zosimos 3.31.1) also use the terms *gentes* and ἔθνη for the *Transtigritanae*. Furthermore, *Iovinianus*, the ruler of Corduena is called a satrap by Ammianus,[204] and he is also said to have lived in Rome as a hostage. Since it was customary to send only members of local elites and royal families to Rome as hostages, *Iovinianus* can at least be seen as a member of local elites,[205] but it is very likely that he indeed inherited his post from his ancestors. All this suggests that the upper Tigris territories contested between Rome and Persia were distinctive regions with local elites which were highly autonomous (not subsumed into Roman provinces[206]) and the local population could also be ethnically distinctive.[207]

What can be said about the locations of Ammianus' and Petros Patrikios' toponyms and ethnonyms east of the Batman River? Precisely in Amm. Marc. 25.7.9 the toponym *Arzanena* appears for the first time in ancient sources.[208] However, it

[202] Syme 1995, 56, n. 42; Mosig-Walburg 2009, 136–137.

[203] Blockley 1984, 41, n. 19; Mosig-Walburg 2009, 125. Note that Blockley 1984, 41, n. 19 proposes that Moxoene could indeed be included under Petros' Karduenoi, but also be later incorporated into it as the Armenian frontier started to fall apart.

[204] Accordingly, Adontz, Garsoïan 1970, 25 (likewise Winter 1989, 560) call all Transtigritanae regions "satrapies" (esp. based on Prokopios, *Aed*. 3.1.24). This is possible, although we do not know if all Transtigritanae regions had the same status; the only satrapy which is explicitly attested (Ammianus 18.6.20) is Corduene (similarly Blockley 1984, 40, n. 7; Mosig-Walburg 2009, 141–142).

[205] On sending sons of local elites to Rome as hostages see Dąbrowa 1987, 63–71 (for the Parthians); Lee 1991, 366–374, esp. 371–372 (for the Sasanian period).

[206] See Mosig-Walburg 2009, 141–147, esp. 145: "Rechtlich dem römischen Reich zugerechnet, jedoch nicht als unmittelbares Reichsgebiet betrachtet, standen sie außerhalb der römischen Provinzialverwaltung und organisierten eigenständig ihre zivile wie auch ihre Militärverwaltung".

[207] Likewise (to some extent) Winter 1989, 561; Mosig-Walburg 2009, 141–148.

[208] Dillemann 1962, 121. Unless Pliny's *Archene* (*HN* 6.128) or the Assyrian *Alzi* (Chaldean *Alzis*) can be associated with Arzanene. However, both identifications are not very likely (see Baumgartner 1896, 1948; Hübschmann 1904, 248–249).

is later mentioned in Byzantine and Armenian sources;[209] for instance, according to Prokopios of Caesarea, Arzanena was located east of the *Nymphios* River, which accounted for the border between Rome and Persia in the 6th c. CE.[210] In turn, Armenian sources know both the province *Ałdznikh* (the Greek Ἀρζανηνή and Latin *Arzanena*) and the smaller district *Arzn* (within *Ałdznikh*) with its main city, *Arzen*.[211] If the *Nymphios* can be identified, as frequently suggested, with the Batman River,[212] then Arzanene can be located east of this river.[213] Like Arzanene, Moxoena does not appear for the first time until Ammianus (Amm. Marc. 23.3.5 and 25.7.9), but it is well-known to Armenian sources as the province *Mokkh* located east of Arzanene in the Tauros Mountains.[214] Hübschmann suggests that the name of the ancient *Mokkh* is preserved in the name of a modern village, Möks on the Möks River, a northern tributary of the Bohtan River.[215] This would suggest the location of Moxoena in the mountainous region north of the Bohtan River.[216]

The location of Zabdikene in general can be deduced due to Ammianus' references to its main city, Bezabde, located on the Tigris. This is because Ammianus (20.7.1–16) tells us that this city was called *Phaenica* in the past. This 'double' identity could suggest that the 4th c. CE Bezabde was a continuation of Strabo's Pinaka,[217] which can most likely be identified as the modern Finik on the east side of the Tigris (see also above).[218] Thus, generally speaking, the province of Zabdikene could be located at least around the modern Eski Yapı and Eski Hendek. Lastly, it has been noted that the name Zabdikene is of Semitic origin,[219] and since ancient sources also used the ethnonym *Zabdiceni* (Amm. Marc. 20.7.1); this could suggest that the local population was largely Semitic in

[209] Baumgartner 1896, 1498; Dillemann 1962, 121–123.

[210] For Arzanene in the late sixth century, see Whitby 1983, 205–218.

[211] Hübschmann 1904, 248–251 (esp. 250), 305–306, 310–312.

[212] Lehmann-Haupt 1926, 400; Markwart 1930, 82; Honigmann 1935, 5; Dillemann 1962, 48–49, 253–254; Blockley 1984, 31–32; Wheeler 1991, 506; Talbert 2000, 1277; Kaegi 2003, 131.

[213] Dillemann 1962, 121–123; Syme 1995, 56.

[214] Hübschmann 1904, 254–255.

[215] Hübschmann 1904, 255.

[216] Hübschmann 1904, 255.

[217] Although the relation between Eski Yapı (on the east side of the Tigris) and Eski Hendek (on the west side) is not entirely clear. It could be the case that Ammianus' "references to Bezabde as Phaenica were influenced by the existence of the larger and older settlement of Pinaka on the other side of the river" – Söylemez, Lightfoot 1991, 319. If so, Eski Yapı can be identified with Strabo's Pinaka and Eski Hendek with Ammianus' Bezabde, but Bezabde would not necessarily be a continuation of Pinaka.

[218] Algaze 1989, 251–252. Otherwise, Bezabde has frequently been identified with the modern Cizre (see Fraenkel 1897, 378–379; M. Streck 1903, 250; Lightfoot 1983; Dignas, Winter 2007, 127, map 8).

[219] Hartmann 1897, 101–102; Dillemann 1962, 110.

character.[220] The location of Rehimena remains an enigma.[221] It is attested elsewhere only in Zosimos (3.31.1 as Ῥημηνῶν), but his text does not provide any new clues. It has been suggested that it must have been part of Corduene[222] or Zabdikene;[223] the former option is more likely, since the expression Petros Patrikios uses, Καρδουηνῶν, allows such an interpretation. Lastly, *Corduena* is the Latin equivalent of the Greek Γορδυηνή, used most frequently for the country under discussion. However, the question arises as to exactly which territory east of the Tigris is meant by Corduena by both Petros Patrikios and Ammianus. As noted, Petros Patrikios's use of Καρδουηνῶν may include a number of principalities, e.g. Moxoena and Rehimena, and as such may be a large territorial entity. In this light, Ammianus' Corduena can be understood in a similar way – a large entity including *Moxoene* and *Rehimene*. Yet in both lists (Petros Patrikios and Ammianus), Corduena functions next to Zabdikene, and the question arises as to which of these two principalities was located on the easternmost border of the Roman Empire. Was it *Zabdikene*, as Petros Patrikios' list suggests, or was this role played by *Corduena*, as Ammianus indicates? Many scholars put Zabdikene as the easternmost region of the Transtigritanae under Roman auspices.[224] However, Ammianus' report on his scouting mission to *Corduena* suggests that it was *Corduena* that directly bordered on Adiabene.[225] Namely, Ammianus was hosted within the satrapy of *Corduena* as he went up to a vantage point from which we could see Nineveh described as one of the main cities of Adiabene.[226] Attempts to locate *Zabdikene* on the west bank of the Tigris[227] and so apparently

[220] Likewise Dillemann 1962, 110.

[221] Hewsen 1988–1989, 295 n. 56 writes "Mygdonia-Rehimēnē (the district of Nisibis)". In turn, Hewsen 1992, 344 reports Sinclair's private communication - noting that the Armenian sound for the English 'j' and the French 'dj' "causes a problem in Classical languages, he suggests that the River Jerm, which gave its name to the district of Jermajor, and which gave Pliny (VI.30.118) his *Zerbis and Agathias* (IV.29.8) his Zirma, might also have produced a basic form 'ERM' upon which Syrian Beth Rehime and GK Rehim-ene (both for the district) might have been based". According to Hewsen 1992, 344, if Sinclair's suggestion is correct, Rehimene could be located not in the valley of the Jerm (see also Hübschmann 1994, 931) but in the valley of the Zerva which includes a village called *Rehina*. Either way, the idea of placing Rehimene to the north corresponds well with the identification of Moxoena as located north of the Bohtan River, that is, they are two neighboring districts located on the northern frontier of Gordyene.

[222] Dillemann 1962, 210–211.

[223] Toumanoff 1963, 166, n. 63.

[224] Dodgeon, Lieu 1991, 58, 377 nn. 48–49; Dignas, Winter 2007, 31, map. 3; Hauser 2012.

[225] Mosig-Walburg 2009, 139.

[226] Dillemann 1962, 110 attempts to elevate the problem by suggesting that Zabdikene was a canton located in the interior of the satrapy of Gordyene. Both regions, though, are recalled as separate entities by Petros Patrikios and Ammianus alike.

[227] Hübschmann 1904, 321.

"make enough space" for *Corduena* on the east bank are not fully satisfactory either, as, first, *Zabdikene* is explicitly counted among *Transtigritanae* regions (that is, east of the Tigris).[228] All in all, there seems to be no fully satisfactory answer to the problem of the location of *Zabdikene* in relation to *Corduena*.[229]

To summarize, historiographical accounts confirm or supplement our data gained from geographical and ethnographical sources. First, the mountains inhabited by the Gordyaeans were indeed located in the area north of Cizre. Secondly, Plutarch's report on the Roman army under Lucullus shows that not only did the territory of Gordyene include the valley on the east bank of the Tigris marked by the Bohtan River to the west and perhaps by the Assyrian Khabur River to the south-east (as in Xenophon, Strabo, Pliny and Ptolemy), but the Gordyaeans also expanded west of the Bohtan River. Thirdly, especially Petros Patrikios and Ammianus, are of paramount importance in highlighting geopolitical developments in the region in the late 3rd and 4th century CE. First and foremost, Corduena stands out among other *Transtigritanae* regions in that it had its own hereditary ruler and could subdue other neighboring *Transtigritanae* regions politically, or influence them by way of migration of its population. It was also distinctive culturally and ethnically. However, its territorial extent is not entirely clear. On the one hand, the Bohtan River was its western border (Arzanene seems to be distinctive from Corduena or [the territories] of "of the *Karduenoi*" in the 3rd and 4th c. CE) and the mountainous region of Moxoena bordered Corduena in the north, setting the Bohtan River as Corduena's northern border. However, Moxoena could at times be politically dependent on Corduena, and subject to the colonization of the people of Corduena. The issue of the eastern frontier of Corduena is not clear, due to uncertainties as to the location of Zabdikene. Based on other sources like Strabo and Plutarch, the Assyrian Khabur River could be suggested as a dividing line, but the border could also be more fluid and depend on the political constellation.

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[228] Perhaps this problem could be alleviated if we assume that Zabdikene straddled the Tigris (see Blockley 1984, 35).

[229] Likewise Nogaret 1984, 259 and n. 10. But see Blockley's idea in the footnote above.

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Abstract

Ancient Gordyene originated as the country of the Karduchoi who lived in the mountains north of modern Cizre and south of the Bohtan River (see Xenophon's description of the march of the Greek army of "the Ten Thousand"). The origin of the Karduchoi is not entirely certain: they were either remnants of Urartian tribes or of Semitic origin. It is most likely due to the migration that after Xenophon's times (401 BCE) the Karduchoi expanded into the Upper Tigris valley as marked by the Assyrian Khabur to the east. To the west, Gordyene likely expanded beyond the Bohtan River into the territory later known as that of Arzanene (before the time of the 3rd Mithidatic War – 74 or 73–63 BCE). Likewise, Gordyene expanded north of the Bohtan River – in the sources from the late 3rd and 4th c. CE one can see traces of the political influence of Corduena (and/or of the human migration of its people) over the Bohtan into Moxoena and Rehimena. Gordyene was an urbanized and wealthy country throughout its history due to natural resources such as naphtha, bitumen, amomum, wine and corn. What is more, ancient Gordyene owed its political importance to its strategic location on the course of the upper Tigris. Not surprisingly, the most important cities in Gordyene were located on the Tigris, and apparently their primary function was to guard important river crossings and access points to mountain passes.