1 The valley

> Cratylus used to criticise Heraclitus for saying that it was impossible to step into the same river twice. He thought that it was impossible to step into the same river once.[1]

The fall of Tralles, AD 1284

In the spring of the year AD 1280, the young future emperor Andronicus II Palaeologus led an army south from Constantinople into Asia Minor. Twenty years of Palaeologan rule had not been kind to the old Byzantine heartlands. After the recovery of Constantinople from the Latins in 1261, the emperor Michael VIII Palaeologus had kept his attention firmly trained on the European west. The Anatolian borderlands, the fertile coastal valleys of the Hermos, Cayster and Maeander, had largely been abandoned to their fate at the hands of the nascent Turkish warrior *beyliks*. Only at the very end of his life, between 1280 and 1282, did Michael make any concerted attempt to restore Byzantine authority in western Asia Minor, and by then, as would rapidly become apparent, it was far too late.[2]

Arriving in the valley of the river Maeander, and travelling eastwards along the north bank of the river, Andronicus passed the ruins of the ancient city of Tralles. Struck by the charms of the place, and the natural defensibility of the plateau on which the city stood, Andronicus decided to restore the ruined town as a place of refuge for the local Greek rural population (Fig. 1.1). The new city was to carry his own name: Andronicopolis or Palaeologopolis.[3] Work proceeded at speed, and the city was soon ringed with strong fortifications. Worn down by the constant assaults of the Turks, and all too ready to believe that the arrival of the young emperor-in-waiting marked a new dawn for the embattled Greeks of Asia Minor, as many as 36,000 men, women and children came to settle in the new city. The hopes

[1] Aristotle, *Met.* 1010a12–15. [2] Laiou 1972: 21–6; see also Foss 1979b: 141–4; Ragia 2005: 221–4.
[3] Restoration and fall of Tralles: Pachymeres 6.20–1 (ed. Failler 1984–2000: II 591–9); Gregoras 5.5.8–9 (ed. Schopen 1829–30: I 142–4). Chronology: Failler 1984.

Figure 1.1 The gorge of the Tabakhane Deresi (the ancient river Eudon), looking north towards the plateau of Tralles-Andronicopolis, at top right

of the new settlers were raised still higher by the discovery of a marble stele buried in the ruins of the ancient town, discovered by Andronicus' workmen, on which was inscribed an ancient oracle in hexameter verse.[4]

The beauty of this city of Tralles shall be dimmed in time,
And in the last days, those few that remain
Shall live in fear of a leaderless barbarian tribe;
But the city will never fall.[5]

[4] *I.Tralleis* 2. The oracle survives in four versions: (1) as quoted by Gregoras 5.5.9 (ed. Schopen 1829–30: I 143); (2) as inserted in a marginal note in a single manuscript of Pachymeres (ed. Failler 1984–2000: II 593, *app.crit.*); (3) a copy in a Hamburg manuscript containing inscriptions copied by Cyriac of Ancona (Wegehaupt and Brinkmann 1903); (4) a fragmentary copy in a Laurentine manuscript (Lampros 1904: 266–7, 406–8).

[5] The themes are common in other thirteenth-century inscriptions recording fortification works. For the first two lines of the Tralles oracle, compare e.g. the building inscription of David Comnenus at Heraclea Pontica (1206/7): συνεγείρει καταβληθεῖσαν χρό[νῳ] τὴν Ποντοηρακλείαν ἐντέχνως ὅλην (*I.Heraclea* 38; *TIB Paphlagonien, s.v.* Herakleia), or the building inscription of John Vatatzes at Smyrna (1222/3): τήνδε πόλιν πάροιθεν ἀγακλυτήν περ ἐοῦσαν, κτλ. (*I.Smyrna* 854). See further Trombley 1998: 118–33.

Figure 1.2 The Maeander river near Tralles, in flood

A nobleman, whose name is Victory, shall restore her.
He shall live for seventy-two years in splendour,
And at the age of twenty-one, he will glorify this city of Attalus.[6]
To him, the cities of the west will bow their heads,
And the proud, like children, shall bend their knee to him.

This talismanic invocation of the city's ancient past was, says the historian George Pachymeres, 'no more than a dream'.[7] The new inhabitants of Tralles failed to build effective cisterns, and there was no underground water which

[6] At this point, copies (2) and (3) add an extra clause 'and the neighbouring fortress (*polichnion*) of Heraclius'. The identification of the *polichnion* of Heraclius is uncertain. The nearby city of Nysa was also captured by the Turks between 1280 and 1284 (Pachymeres 6.21, ed. Failler 1984–2000: II 599), but we have no evidence either that it was restored by Andronicus, or that it had any connection with Heraclius. A more plausible candidate is Magnesia on the Maeander, whose Byzantine circuit wall is probably to be attributed to Heraclius (Foss 1977: 483). Building inscriptions show that Heraclius repaired the walls of Smyrna at an unknown date after AD 629 (*I.Smyrna* 851, 851A); similar building inscriptions could still have been visible at Magnesia in the thirteenth century.

[7] For the fortuitous rediscovery of prophetic inscriptions, compare (1) a sarcophagus discovered at the land-walls of Constantinople in 781, predicting the resurrection of Christ during the reign of Constantine VI and Irene: Theophanes (ed. de Boor 1883–5) 455, with Reinach 1900 and (independently) Mango 1963; (2) a Delphic oracle of the early fifth century BC, discovered at the Isthmus between 1423 and 1436, predicting the destruction of Manuel II Palaeologus' Hexamilion by the Turks and urging its reconstruction: Bodnar 1960.

they could tap for wells. The cause of this, in Pachymeres' view, was the proximity of the Maeander river. In the humid and sweltering plain of the Maeander, the river was constantly spreading its waters through the porous top-soil. Since this surface moisture rapidly evaporated in the heat of the sun, the water was prevented from sinking deep into the earth to form underground reservoirs. At any rate, in the height of summer the new city was entirely dependent on access to the Maeander for water. Four years later, in 1284, the city was besieged by a huge Turkish force under the emir Menteşe. Driven to desperation by the lack of water, the inhabitants were reduced to drinking the blood of their own horses. The end, when it came, was brutal and swift. And so it was that the city of Tralles was emptied of its inhabitants.

Winter in the land of Rûm

İndik Rûm'a kışladuk	We wintered in the land of Rûm
Çok hayr ü ser işledük	Both well and ill we laboured there
Uş bahâr oldı girü	Then came the Spring, and to our lands
Göçdük elhâmdü lillâh	We turned again, praise be to God.

(Yunus Emre, AD *c.* 1300)[8]

The refoundation of Tralles in AD 1280 was the last serious attempt by the Byzantine imperial state to reassert its authority over the middle and lower Maeander valley (the region extending from Laodicea, near modern Denizli, to the delta plain south-west of modern Söke).[9] Since the mid-1070s, the Greek inhabitants of the lowland Aegean valleys had become accustomed to the annual influx of ever-increasing numbers of transhumant Turkmen pastoralists, who – like the Sufi poet Yunus Emre, at the turn of the fourteenth century – 'wintered in the land of the Romans (Rûm)', before returning in the spring to their summer pastures in the Phrygian and Pisidian highlands, on the fringe of the Anatolian plateau.[10] The status of the Maeander valley as a border marchland (Gk *akrai*, Tk *uç*) between Greek and Turkish zones of settlement, won and lost season by season with the annual east–west migrations of the Turkmen borderers, had received institutional recognition from the Byzantine state some time in the late twelfth century AD, when

[8] De Planhol 1968: 224; Bryer 1993: 101.

[9] For the campaign of Alexios Philanthropenos in the Maeander delta region in AD 1294/5, see below, Chapter 7, pp. 277–8.

[10] On the seasonal nature of the Turkish presence in the Aegean lowlands in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, see Hendy 1985: 114–17, 129–30 (correcting Vryonis 1971: 184–94; Vryonis 1975).

a separate administrative district (*thema*) of 'Maeander' was carved out of the old *thema* of Thrakesion (the successor of the late Roman province of Asia).[11] The Maeander *thema* is first attested in 1198, in the chrysobull of Alexius III Angelus granting the Venetians commercial rights throughout the Byzantine empire; its original capital was apparently at Laodicea, if we may judge from the *partitio Romaniae* of 1204, which records a province of 'Laodicea and Maeander'.[12] With the cession of Laodicea and Chonae to the rebel Manuel Maurozomes in 1205, the capital of the Maeander *thema* shifted downstream to Antioch on the Maeander.[13] The Maeander *thema* probably continued to exist as a Byzantine military circumscription until the 1250s or early 1260s, under the overall authority of the *doux* of Thrakesion.[14]

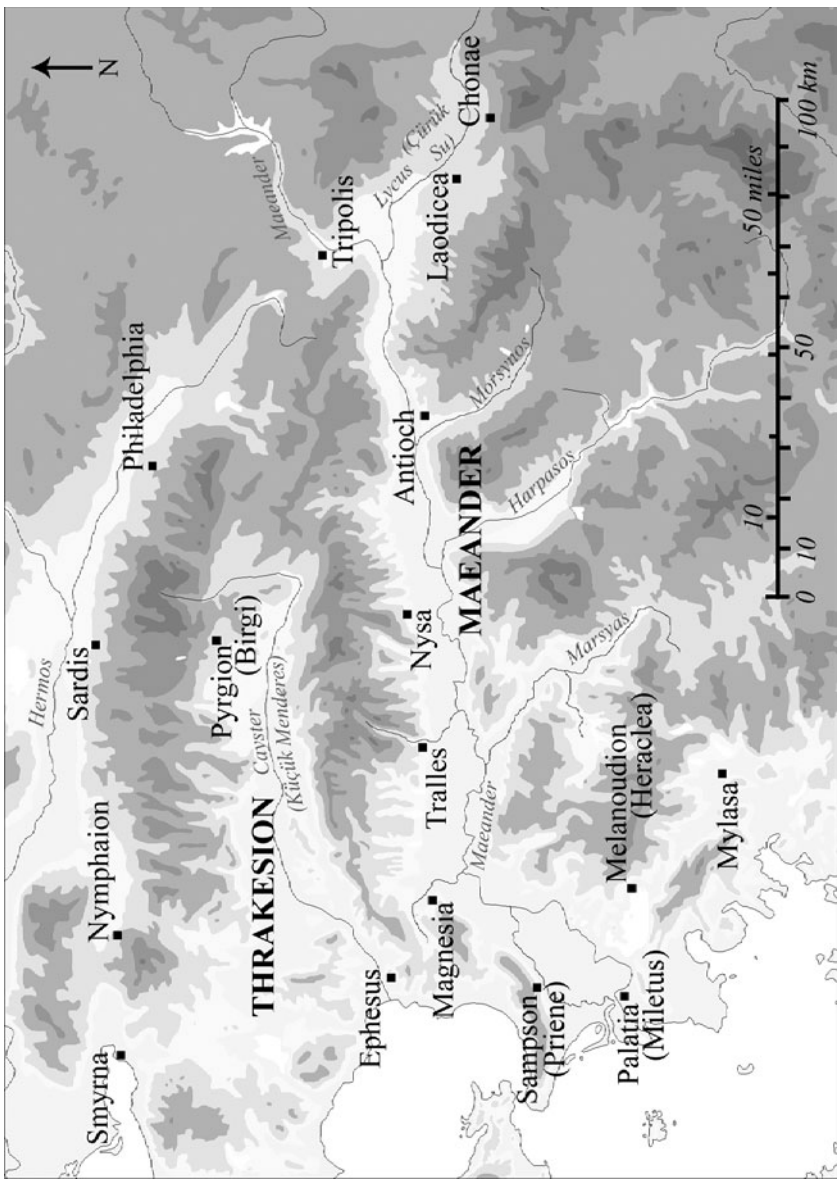
To the best of my knowledge, this is the only period in history in which a state has chosen to demarcate the Maeander river valley as an administrative unit in its own right. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the open alluvial plains between Laodicea-Denizli and the sea posed highly localised and unusual problems of military administration for the Byzantine state; the lower Maeander valley was correctly perceived, both by its inhabitants and by outside observers, as possessing its own distinctive regional character. A contemporary Arabic source, the *Geography* of Ibn Sa'īd (mid-thirteenth century), gives a vivid picture of this fluid frontier zone between the Turkish and Byzantine realms:

[11] For the *thema* system, see Haldon 1993; Vlysidou *et al.* 1998; Brandes 2002: 118–36, 153–65.

[12] Chrysobull of 1198: TT I 271. *Partitio Romaniae*: Carile 1965: 218. Lascarids: Angold 1975: 100, 248. See further *TIB Phrygien* 333, *s.v.* Maiandros. There is no direct evidence for the status of Laodicea in the 1198 chrysobull. The *prouincia Attalie, Seleukie, Antiochiae, Laudikie, et usque ipsam Antiochiam* (TT I 271–2) consists of Antalya, Silifke, Antioch ad Cragum, Latakia, and the territory as far as Antakya. Oikonomides (1976: 20–1) glosses this *Laudikia* as Denizli, thereby importing great confusion.

[13] Laodicea and Chonae: *TIB Phrygien* 325, *s.v.* Laodikeia. Maurozomes: Métivier 2009. Antioch: Savvides 1981: 91–111. The ancient settlement of Laodicea, on a low hill on the southern fringe of the Lycus plain, seems to have been abandoned at some point in the twelfth century in favour of a smaller, fortified centre further up in the foothills of Mt Cadmus (perhaps the fortified site of Hisar, near modern Bereketli): de Planhol 1969a: 403–8; *TIB Phrygien* 273–4, *s.v.* Hisar; Arthur 2006: 169–78. For a plan of Hisar, see Şimşek 2007: 70.

[14] Wilson and Darrouzès 1968: 13–14 doc.1 (AD 1213: *doux* of Thrakesion *thema* protects properties lying in Maeander *thema*). In the *partitio Romaniae*, the *thema* of Laodicea and Maeander explicitly includes a series of estates in the Maeander delta region: *prouintia Laodikie et Meandri, cum pertinentia Sampson et Samakii, cum Contostephanitis, cum Camiçatis et ceteris atque Chio* (Carile 1965: 218, 245–7). For Sampson and Samakion, see below, Chapter 7, p. 275, Chapter 8, p. 304; the estates of the Kontostephanoi and Kamytzai were also located in the delta region. In 1262, however, these delta estates form part of the *thema* of Mylasa and Melanoudion (Patmos II 67), strongly implying that the Maeander *thema* had ceased to exist by that point.



Map 2 The lower Maeander valley in the thirteenth century AD

To the east of this region [the Aegean coastlands] extend the mountains of the Turkmen and their country. They are a numerous people, descended from the Turks who conquered the land of Rūm at the time of the Seljuqs. They are perpetually raiding the coastal populations of *akritai*, whose children they carry off to sell to the Muslims . . . North of Antalya are located the mountains of Tughurla, which are said to contain around 200,000 Turkmen tents; this is the region called the *uç*. In this district is the town of Tunghuzlu (Denizli), two parasangs from the fortress of Khunās (Chonae) . . . The mountains of the Turkmen run continuously from the gate of Denizli to the frontiers of the kingdom of Lascaris, ruler of Constantinople.[15]

In Ibn Sa'īd's view, the *uç* was not a fixed political unit with linear borders, but a distinctive cultural zone ('the mountains of the Turkmen and their country') characterised by certain kinds of social and economic behaviour.[16] This is an insight to which we shall return.

In certain seasons, the extent of Turkmen dominance over the Maeander borderlands in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries could horrify those who were not natives to the region. In the winter of AD 1147–8, at the turn of the year, Louis VII and the French army of the Second Crusade marched east along the ancient highway from Ephesus towards Laodicea.[17] The Maeander was swollen with winter rains, and the army's cumbersome passage along the exposed north bank of the river laid them open to constant Turkish assault. One group of Turks had occupied the foothills of the Messogis range to the north; a second band of mobile horse-archers harrassed the Crusaders at close range as they proceeded slowly along the valley floor; and a third group shadowed the Crusaders along the south bank of the Maeander, to prevent them from fording the river. Finally, on New Year's Day 1148, the French forced their way across the river under a hail of arrows, 'sowing the fields with corpses as far as the Turks' mountain hide-outs'. The chronicler Odo of Deuil, an eyewitness to the campaign, records that the river-crossing lay close to a small Byzantine town by the name of Antioch, which received the fleeing Turks (Fig. 1.3).[18] 'Thus', says Odo, 'the emperor

[15] Wittek 1934: 1–14; Cahen 1968: 42–3.

[16] It is telling that when the Turks wished to express the idea of a linear frontier, they were reduced to using a transliterated Greek term, *sınır* = σύνορον: Balivet 1994: 43 n. 84. On the artificial creation of a linear frontier in the upper Maeander region by the Roman state, see Chapter 4 below.

[17] Odo of Deuil (ed. Waquet 1949) 64–6; see also William of Tyre 16.24; Nicetas Choniates (ed. van Dieten 1975) 67–71 (conflating the campaigns of Louis and Konrad). On Odo's account of the Second Crusade, see Phillips 2003.

[18] *Antiochiae nomen habens diminutiuum*, i.e. Ἀντιόχεια ἡ μικρά, to distinguish it from Ἀντιόχεια ἡ μεγάλη, Syrian Antioch (cf. Const. Porph. *de them.* 14.26). For the situation of Antioch, on a

Figure 1.3 The site of Antioch on the Maeander from the south, with the Dandalas river (the ancient Morsynos) in the foreground; beyond the site, the Maeander valley and the Messogis mountain range

[Manuel I Comnenus] showed himself not merely a deceitful traitor, but an acknowledged enemy.'[19] Louis would have stormed the city, were he not so short of supplies, and were the town not so visibly impoverished that no spoils could be expected. So the Crusaders proceeded eastwards towards Laodicea, through a region where 'the Turks had fixed territorial boundaries with the Greeks, and we could see that both peoples were equally hostile towards us'.[20]

In the Crusaders' eyes, the Maeander valley in the mid-twelfth century appeared to lie entirely in the hands of the Turks, abetted by a miserable residue of Greek collaborators. However, things were not quite as they

low hill at the south flank of the Maeander plain, commanding the confluence of the Dandalas river (the ancient Morsynos) with the Maeander, see Smith and Ratté 1996: 21–4; Barnes and Whittow 1998.

[19] Similar claims are made by Nicetas (ed. van Dieten 1975) 66–7. However, whether Manuel actually had any authority over the Greek population of the Maeander valley at this point is very doubtful: Magdalino 1993: 51–2.

[20] Odo (ed. Waquet 1949) 66; compare 54, 'where the Greeks still hold fortresses [in western Asia Minor], they divide their revenues with the Turks'.

seemed. In the depths of winter, the lower Maeander valley floor was indeed largely occupied by transhumant Turkmen pastoralists. But along the flanks of the Maeander valley, Greek fortified towns such as Antioch on the Maeander survived, and even, despite the scorn of Louis VII, flourished. It is evident from Odo's narrative that their relationship with the Turkish pastoralists was not hostile, but symbiotic. The Aegean lowlands were Turkish territory for the winter alone; in summer, the Turks returned upcountry to the plateau, and the Greeks of Antioch tended their figs and cucumbers, just as they had done every year since the third century BC.[21] In AD 1161, a treaty between Manuel and Kılıç Arslan determined that Turks pasturing their flocks in the lowland valleys were to pay for their pasturage; whatever Manuel's panegyrists may have claimed, this clause was little more than a belated recognition of a stable and – within limits – beneficial ecological status quo.[22]

We do not know the exact nature of the deal that had been struck between the Greeks of Antioch and the Turkish pastoralists wintering in the Maeander floodplain, but similar seasonal arrangements between town-dwelling Greek farmers and transhumant Turks are attested elsewhere in the lowland Aegean valleys of western Asia Minor at a slightly later date. In AD 1303, the citadel of Sardis in the Hermos valley was under siege by a Turkish raiding-band under a certain Alaïs. After unsuccessful attempts to storm the town, Alaïs offered the inhabitants of Sardis a very remarkable deal. He and his men would move in and occupy half of the citadel of Sardis, with a wall separating the Turkish raiders from the Greek inhabitants of the city. 'The defenders could then go out from the citadel freely to their own [agricultural] work, by which they could maintain themselves; the Turks would carry on their own affairs, not, of course, bothering the defenders, but continuing their lucrative raids against others, according to their normal piratical habits.' The defenders of Sardis accepted the offer, 'in order to have access to water and to be able to sow their fields'.[23] Likewise, in the early fourteenth century, the inhabitants of the city of Tripolis in the middle Maeander valley, overlooking the confluence of the Maeander and Lycus rivers, struck a deal with the local Turkish population of the valley floor,

[21] Figs: Strabo 13.4.15, with Robert 1937: 416 n. 7. Cucumbers: Diocles of Carystus (ed. van der Eijk 2000) F201. Diocles' cucumbers are evidently from Antioch on the Maeander, not Antioch in Syria; the Maeander valley is still one of the main areas of production for Turkish cucumbers.

[22] Eustathius, *Or.* 13 (ed. Wirth 2000) 205.22–3: ὅσοι τὰς ἐκ τῶν πεδιαδῶν ὠνοῦνται νομὰς τοῖς ζῴοις ὑπόσπονδοι, 'those who are bound by the treaty to buy pasturage for their animals from the plain-dwellers'. See Magdalino 1993: 126; Stone 2004: 137–8.

[23] Pachymeres 11.16 (ed. Failler 1984–2000, IV 441–3); Foss 1976: 81–3; Failler 1994: 81.

according to which the Turks would keep the city's Greek defenders supplied with grain.[24] Arrangements of this kind were not merely a matter of mutual benefit; they were a reflection of the unequal human division of the valley into two altitudinal zones, each dependent on the resources of the other.

Altitude, sediment and status

The twelfth- and thirteenth-century negotiations between urban Greeks and pastoral Turkmen along the middle and lower course of the Maeander river illustrate in a vivid manner some of the permanent conditions of human settlement in the Maeander valley. As one travels down the lower Maeander valley in daylight, one cannot fail to be struck by the chromatic contrast between the valley floor and the hills to north and south. While the plain itself is a deep and luscious green, studded in spring with the pale pink of almond trees in blossom, the hillsides are a sullen brown, and the only green to be seen comes from occasional patches of dark maquis. But as the sun sets and the hills turn from brown to purple, the valley presents a different face to the traveller. After dark, only the lights of the villages are visible, forming two glittering strings running east to west, strung across the waist of the hills on either side of the valley. Here and there, one can make out the lights of a rare village high up in the hills; a few seem to lie almost at the very foot of the slope. But the valley floor itself is impenetrably black. Permanent settlement in the Maeander valley has always been 'perched' settlement, on spurs, hillocks and narrow plateaux overlooking the plain, even on fantastic man-made platforms raised on stilts above a gorge, such as at the ancient city of Nysa (Fig. 1.4).[25] For all the apparent fertility of the valley floor, no one has ever chosen to live in the Maeander plain.

The natural resources of any drainage basin are organised with a certain predictability.[26] For sedentary agrarian societies, the most important natural resource is *sediment*, the alluvial soil deposited by a river as its flow velocity

[24] Pachymeres 11.25 (ed. Failler 1984–2000, IV 475–9). Tripolis had been refounded in the mid-thirteenth century by the emperor John III Vatatzes on the summit of a steep hill overlooking the ancient settlement: Foss 1979a: 299–302.

[25] On Mediterranean 'perched' settlement, see Flatrès and de Planhol 1983; Kaplan 1992: 106–10. Nysa was a 'double city' (Strabo 14.1.43), built over the gorge of the Tekkecik deresi: von Diest 1913: 30–3. For the persistence of this settlement pattern in the post-Byzantine Maeander, see de Planhol 1969b: 259–61.

[26] Hence, in part, its appeal to the historical geographer: Baker 2003: 80–1.