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978-1-107-00688-1 - The Maeander Valley: A Historical Geography from Antiquity to Byzantium

Peter Thonemann

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The Maeander Valley

This is a study of the long-term historical geography of Asia Minor, from the fourth century BC to the thirteenth century AD. Using an astonishing breadth of sources, ranging from Byzantine monastic archives to Latin poetic texts, ancient land records to hagiographic biographies, Peter Thonemann reveals the complex and fascinating interplay between the natural environment and human activities in the Maeander valley. Both a large-scale regional history and a profound meditation on the role played by geography in human history, this book is an essential contribution to the history of the Eastern Mediterranean in Graeco-Roman antiquity and the Byzantine Middle Ages.

PETER THONEMANN teaches ancient history at Wadham College, Oxford University. He is co-author of the widely acclaimed first volume of the Penguin History of Europe, *The Birth of Classical Europe: A History From Troy to Augustine* (with Simon Price). *The Maeander Valley* was awarded the Hellenic Foundation's 2006 Award for the best ancient/classical thesis in Hellenic Studies, and Oxford University's Conington Prize for 2009.

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Preface

Men and women make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please. They make it not under circumstances that they have chosen themselves, but under conditions inherited from the past and imposed on them by the material world. The most fundamental of these conditions is the physical environment in which people live. Geology, botany and climate offer possibilities, and impose limits; how people respond to those possibilities depends on a wide range of social factors, including the personalities and choices of individuals. Uncovering this dialectical relationship between men and women and their environment over time is the proper task of historical geography.

This book is a study of the historical geography of the valley of the river Maeander in western Asia Minor. Its main contention is that the economic relationships, social structures, cultural identities, and ritual behaviour of the human communities of the Maeander valley in Graeco-Roman antiquity and the Byzantine middle ages were specifically and contingently affected by the fact that those communities were situated in a particular physical space, a valley fringed by mountains on either side, with a major perennial river running down the middle of it to the sea. After describing the physical space itself (Chapter 1), I focus on six separate aspects of the relationship between the peoples of the Maeander and their local environments: sacred geography (Chapter 2), markets and mobility (Chapter 3), mental maps and conceptual boundaries (Chapter 4), pastoral dynamics (Chapter 5), elite behaviour and interaction (Chapter 6) and the productive rural landscape (Chapter 7). In the course of these six chapters, we shall also travel slowly down the course of the river, from its source at Apamea-Celaenae (Chapters 2–3), through the upper Maeander valley (Chapter 4) to the Çal highlands and the plain of Denizli (Chapters 5–6), and into the lower Maeander floodplain (Chapter 7). The final chapter (Chapter 8) is an extended description of dynamic interaction between men and women and their landscape, focused on the changing responses of the inhabitants of the lower Maeander valley to the advance of the delta front (itself the result of human activity), from the Hellenistic period to the present day.

Simultaneously, I aim to present the human geography of the valley from three different spatial viewpoints. From a vertical perspective, I shall argue that the Maeander valley is a *broad flat* thing: a floodplain enabling maximal internal mobility, which has historically been characterised by highly intensive and socially fragmented agricultural exploitation. This agricultural economy was at all times closely integrated with higher-altitude pastoral zones in the mountain ranges flanking the valley to north and south (Chapters 1, 5, 6 and 7). Second, from a latitudinal (north–south) perspective, I shall argue that the Maeander valley is a *long thin* thing: a space which has historically been characterised by intense horizontal communication and interaction, in which certain distinctive social and economic structures were shared by several different places along the riverine strip (Chapters 2 and 3). Third, from a longitudinal (east–west) perspective, I shall argue that the Maeander valley is a thing *with clearly defined ends*: at its eastern end, it served historically as a boundary point defining the limits of two distinct ecological zones (western Asia Minor and inner Anatolia), and at its western end, it acted as a funnel of transition and exchange between the Asia Minor peninsula and the wider Mediterranean world (Chapters 4, 7 and 8).

This approach, which takes perceived and material space seriously as a field of natural contingency, should not be confused with environmental determinism. Under imposed and inherited circumstances, men and women make their own history; human events within any given environment are not merely surface agitation, froth raised up by deep and determinate natural currents. Just as the behaviour of human communities is necessarily shaped and limited by environment, so the environment itself has been constantly and repeatedly reshaped by human behaviour, most visibly in the case of the malleable and unstable wetlands of the Maeander delta zone (Chapter 8). I shall argue throughout this book that the Maeander valley of antiquity and the middle ages can usefully be treated as a geographic, social and conceptual unit (a ‘region’); but this ‘regionality’ is itself a human construct, not an essential and inherent quality of the landscape, patiently waiting to be mediated through human activity (Chapter 1).

The action of nature on societies, wrote Vidal de la Blache, is best regarded as a kind of imperceptible and complex interference, the results of which accumulate slowly over time. Roughly speaking, the chronological span of this study extends from the Macedonian conquest of Asia in the late fourth century BC to the twilight of Byzantine rule in Asia Minor in the late thirteenth century AD. These chronological boundaries reflect the limits of my historical competence, rather than any informed conviction that the Turkish conquest of western Asia Minor brought such radical structural

changes to the human geography of the Maeander valley that it would no longer be helpful to make systematic comparisons with earlier periods. The adoption of a long time-frame, combined with a synchronic rather than narrative mode of presentation, brings with it the risk (as will already be clear from the summary description of the book's contents) of reducing a highly fluid and contingent environmental dialectic to an unchanging web of geological and social constants. It is all too easy to slip from the dynamic temporality of 'long duration' into the frozen inertia of 'non-time', from which data can then be indiscriminately cherry-picked across the millennia to illustrate the innate characteristics of a hypostasised ecological 'base' (Jameson 2009: 532–45). I regret that the inadequacy of the evidence often makes such cherry-picking unavoidable; in such cases, I have tried to make the procedure explicit.

Needless to say, throughout the period covered by this book, the human communities of the Maeander valley were to a greater or lesser degree integrated into larger productive, ideological and political systems. Their history was not a purely local history. Indeed, in many respects the material and social circumstances of the people of the Maeander were effectively indistinguishable from those of any other part of the ancient and mediaeval east Mediterranean world. The cities of the Maeander valley possessed theatres, public buildings, magistrates and a water-supply, and were conquered from time to time by Hellenistic kings; the rural population cultivated wheat, vines and olives, and concealed as much of their livestock as they could from tax-assessors. The problem is particularly acute during the first three centuries AD, when the Roman empire constituted and perpetuated itself through a normative pan-Mediterranean homogeneity of material culture and cultural artefacts: a 'first globalization', which saw a universal flattening of local distinctions across the whole of western Eurasia. As a result, the greater part of the surviving documentary and archaeological material for the human communities of the ancient and mediaeval Maeander valley, while often of potential cumulative or comparative value to historians of the wider Graeco-Roman or Byzantine world, does little to illuminate the particular spatial dynamics that I have tried to describe in this book.

Endogenous social analysis is necessarily incomplete. But in describing the workings of (say) the Roman empire, we can and should aspire to go beyond the universal terms and categories licensed by the ruling power itself. Historical geography has the potential to offer subaltern perspectives on the history of pre-modern imperial states, asserting as it does the primacy of the lived experiences of particular people in actual places. A meaningful

dialectical historical geography of any given region must, therefore, primarily be driven by internal, not external problematics. Since there is no way of judging *a priori* how the dialectic between environment and culture was played out in a specific geographical space in a particular historical period, the historical geographer necessarily begins by following his or her nose, and proceeds by describing and analysing things that look interesting. This is not to suggest that we should return to a naive historical inductivism. As David Harvey has warned, the geographer's intense concentration on actual spaces and places can all too easily lead to a depoliticised and antiquarian particularism: 'the temptation then exists to abandon theory, retreat into the supposed particularities of place and moment, resort to naive empiricism, and produce as many ad hoc theories as there are instances' (Harvey 2001: 118). The formation of simplifying and generalising models, whether of global economic systems, institutional conditions, or state ideologies, is always a necessary condition for understanding the particular. But the converse is also true. The intensive description and critical analysis of small regions, valleys, plateaux or coastal plains, with the aim of uncovering and mapping the distinctive reciprocal influences of their human communities and their particular environments, is the only possible way of integrating a spatial dimension into the essentially – necessarily – undifferentiated models of the pan-Mediterranean historian. I hope that this study will therefore be of some use as a contribution to the wider historical ecology of western Eurasia during the sixteen centuries covered by this book. The ancient or mediaeval world is said to work like *this*: but what does it look like from *here*?

Peter Thonemann

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Abbreviations

AASS	<i>Acta Sanctorum</i>
AE	<i>Année épigraphique</i>
AvH	C. Humann <i>et al.</i> , <i>Altertümer von Hierapolis</i> ; Berlin, 1898
<i>Bank Leu</i>	<i>Bank Leu</i> (auction catalogues)
BE	<i>Bulletin épigraphique</i> , annually in REG
BM	British Museum: post-BMC accessions
BMC	<i>A Catalogue of the Greek Coins in the British Museum</i> . London, 1873–; individual volumes identified by region, e.g. <i>BMC Phrygia</i>
BMFA Suppl.	<i>Greek Coins, 1950–1963</i> ; supplement to <i>Catalogue of Greek Coins: Museum of Fine Arts, Boston</i> ; Boston, 1964
BMFD	<i>Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents</i> , ed. J. Thomas and A. C. Hero (5 vols.); Washington, 2000
<i>Cat. W. de Molthein</i>	V. Renner, <i>Catalogue de la collection des médailles grecques de M. Walcher de Molthein</i> ; Paris, 1895
CID	<i>Corpus des inscriptions de Delphes</i>
CIG	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum</i>
CIL	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i>
CNG	<i>Classical Numismatic Group</i> (auction catalogues)
<i>Coll. Wadd.</i>	E. Babelon, <i>Inventaire sommaire de la collection Waddington</i> ; Paris, 1898
<i>Coll. Weber</i>	L. Forrer, <i>The Weber Collection: Greek Coins</i> (3 vols. in 4); London, 1922–9
DACL	<i>Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie</i>
Dölger, <i>Regesten</i>	F. Dölger, <i>Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reiches von 565–1453</i> (5 vols.); Munich and Berlin, 1924–65
DOSeals	N. Oikonomides and J. Nesbitt (eds.), <i>Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks and in the Fogg Museum of Art</i> ; Washington, 1991–
FGrHist	<i>Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i>
GM Winterthur	<i>Griechische Münzen in Winterthur</i>

<i>Helios</i>	<i>Helios Numismatik</i> (auction catalogues)
Holleaux, <i>Études</i>	M. Holleaux, <i>Études d'épigraphie et d'histoire grecques</i> (6 vols.); Paris, 1938–68
<i>I.Alexandria Troas</i>	M. Riel, <i>Die Inschriften von Alexandria Troas</i> ; IGSK 43; Bonn, 1997
<i>I.Asklepieion</i>	Chr. Habicht, <i>Die Inschriften des Asklepieions. Altertümer von Pergamon VIII.3</i> ; Berlin, 1969
<i>I.Assos</i>	R. Merkelbach, <i>Die Inschriften von Assos</i> ; IGSK 4; Bonn, 1976
<i>I.Délos</i>	<i>Inscriptions de Délos</i>
<i>I.Denizli</i>	E. Miranda and F. Guizzi, <i>Museo Archaeologico di Denizli-Hierapolis. Catalogo delle iscrizioni greche e latine: Distretto di Denizli</i> ; Naples, 2008
<i>I.Didyma</i>	A. Rehm, <i>Didyma II. Die Inschriften</i> ; Berlin, 1958
<i>I.Ephesos</i>	H. Wankel, R. Merkelbach <i>et al.</i> , <i>Die Inschriften von Ephesos</i> (7 vols.); IGSK 11–17; Bonn, 1979–81
<i>I.Erythrai</i>	H. Engelmann and R. Merkelbach, <i>Die Inschriften von Erythrai und Klazomenai</i> (2 vols.); IGSK 1–2; Bonn, 1972–3
<i>I.Heraclea</i>	L. Jonnes, <i>The Inscriptions of Heraclea Pontica</i> ; IGSK 47; Bonn, 1994
<i>I.Ilion</i>	P. Frisch, <i>Die Inschriften von Ilion</i> ; IGSK 3; Bonn, 1975
<i>I.Isole Milesie</i>	G. Manganaro, 'Le iscrizioni delle isole milesie', <i>ASAA n.s.</i> 25–6, 1963–4: 293–349
<i>I.Kibyra</i>	T. Corsten, <i>Die Inschriften von Kibyra. I</i> ; IGSK 60; Bonn, 2002
<i>I.Laodikeia</i>	T. Corsten, <i>Die Inschriften von Laodikeia am Lykos. I</i> ; IGSK 49; Bonn, 1997
<i>I.Magnesia</i>	O. Kern, <i>Die Inschriften von Magnesia am Maeander</i> ; Berlin, 1900
<i>I.Metropolis</i>	B. Dreyer and H. Engelmann, <i>Die Inschriften von Metropolis. I: Die Dekrete für Apollonios</i> ; IGSK 63; Bonn, 2003
<i>I.Milet</i>	<i>Milet. Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen und Untersuchungen seit dem Jahr 1899; Band 6: Inschriften von Milet</i> (3 vols.), ed. P. Herrmann <i>et al.</i> ; Berlin, 1997–2006
<i>I.Mylasa</i>	W. Blümel, <i>Die Inschriften von Mylasa</i> (2 vols.); IGSK 34–5; Bonn, 1987–8
<i>I.Oropos</i>	B. Petrakos, <i>Οἱ Ἐπιγραφές τοῦ Ὠρωποῦ</i> ; Athens, 1997

<i>I.Priene</i>	F. Frhr. Hiller von Gaertringen, <i>Die Inschriften von Priene</i> ; Berlin, 1906
<i>I.Sestos</i>	J. Krauss, <i>Die Inschriften von Sestos und der thrakischen Chersones</i> ; IGSK 19; Bonn, 1980
<i>I.Smyrna</i>	G. Petzl, <i>Die Inschriften von Smyrna</i> (2 vols. in 3); IGSK 23–4; Bonn, 1982–90
<i>I.Strat.</i>	M. Ç. Şahin, <i>Die Inschriften von Stratonikeia</i> (2 vols. in 3); IGSK 21–2; Bonn, 1981–90
<i>I.Sultan Dağı</i>	L. Jonnes, <i>The Inscriptions of the Sultan Dağı. I</i> ; IGSK 62; Bonn, 2002
<i>I.Thr. Aeg.</i>	L. Loukopoulou <i>et al.</i> , <i>Inscriptiones antiquae partis Thraciae quae ad ora maris Aegaei sita est</i> ; Athens, 2005
<i>I.Trall.</i>	F. B. Poljakov, <i>Die Inschriften von Tralleis und Nysa. I</i> ; IGSK 36.1; Bonn, 1989
<i>I.Varsovie</i>	A. Lajtar and A. Twardecki, <i>Catalogue des inscriptions grecques du Musée National de Varsovie</i> ; Warsaw, 2003
<i>IAph2007</i>	J. Reynolds, C. Roueché and G. Bodard, <i>Inscriptions of Aphrodisias</i> (2007); http://insaph.kcl.ac.uk/iaph2007
<i>IG</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae</i>
<i>IGBulg.</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae in Bulgaria repertae</i>
<i>IGCAM</i>	H. Grégoire, <i>Recueil des inscriptions grecques-chrétiennes d'Asie Mineure</i> ; Paris, 1922
<i>IGCH</i>	M. Thompson, O. Mørkholm and C. M. Kraay, <i>An Inventory of Greek Coin Hoards</i> ; New York, 1973
<i>IGLS</i>	<i>Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie</i>
<i>IGR</i>	R. Cagnat, <i>Inscriptiones Graecae ad Res Romanas Pertinentes</i> (3 vols.); Paris, 1906–27
<i>IGUR</i>	L. Moretti, <i>Inscriptiones Graecae Urbis Romae</i> (4 vols.); Rome, 1968–90
<i>IJO</i>	D. Noy <i>et al.</i> , <i>Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis</i> (3 vols.); Tübingen, 2004
<i>ILS</i>	H. Dessau, <i>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae</i> (3 vols. in 5); Berlin, 1892–1916
Imhoof-Blumer, <i>GM</i>	F. Imhoof-Blumer, <i>Griechische Münzen. Neue Beiträge und Untersuchungen</i> ; Munich, 1890
Imhoof-Blumer, <i>KM</i>	F. Imhoof-Blumer, <i>Kleinasiatische Münzen</i> (2 vols.); Vienna, 1901–2
Imhoof-Blumer, <i>LS</i>	F. Imhoof-Blumer, <i>Lydische Stadtmünzen</i> ; Genf and Leipzig, 1897
Imhoof-Blumer, <i>MG</i>	F. Imhoof-Blumer, <i>Monnaies grecques</i> ; Paris, 1883

ISE	<i>Iscrizioni storiche ellenistiche</i>
Künker	Fritz Rudolf Künker GmbH & Co. (auction catalogues)
<i>La Carie II</i>	L. Robert and J. Robert, <i>La Carie. Histoire et géographie antique</i> . II. <i>Le plateau de Tabai et ses environs</i> ; Paris, 1954
Lanz	<i>Numismatik Lanz München</i> (auction catalogues)
Laurent, <i>Corpus</i>	V. Laurent, <i>Le corpus des sceaux de l'Empire byzantin</i> (2 vols. in 5); Paris, 1963–81
LBG	<i>Lexikon zur byzantinischen Gräzität</i>
LGPN	<i>A Lexicon of Greek Personal Names</i>
LIMC	<i>Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae</i>
LSAM	F. Sokolowski, <i>Lois sacrées de l'Asie Mineure</i> ; Paris, 1955
LSJ	H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, <i>A Greek–English Lexicon</i> , revised by H. Stuart Jones and R. McKenzie
MAMA	<i>Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua</i>
Masson, OGS	O. Masson, <i>Onomastica Graeca Selecta</i> (3 vols.); I–II: Paris, 1990; III: Geneva, 2000
Michel, <i>Recueil</i>	Ch. Michel, <i>Recueil d'inscriptions grecques</i> ; Brussels, 1900
<i>Milet</i>	<i>Milet. Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen und Untersuchungen seit dem Jahr 1899</i> ; Berlin, 1906–
MM	F. Miklosich and J. Müller, <i>Acta et diplomata graeca medii aevi sacra et profana</i> (6 vols.); Vienna, 1860–90
<i>Münzen und Medaillen</i>	<i>Münzen und Medaillen Deutschland</i> (auction catalogues)
<i>Neue Pauly</i>	<i>Der Neue Pauly</i>
<i>Nouveau Choix</i>	<i>Nouveau choix d'inscriptions grecques</i> ; Paris, 1971
NZ	<i>Numismatische Zeitschrift</i>
OGIS	W. Dittenberger, <i>Orientalis Graecae Inscriptiones Selectae</i> (2 vols.); Leipzig, 1903–5
Patmos	<i>Βυζαντινὰ Ἐγγραφα τῆς Μονῆς Πάτμου</i> (2 vols.); Athens, 1980; A' – <i>Αὐτοκρατορικά</i> , ed. E. Vranousi; B' – <i>Δημοσίων Λειτουργῶν</i> , ed. M. Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou
PIR ²	<i>Prosopographia Imperii Romani</i> , 2nd edn
PLRE	<i>A Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire</i>
PME	<i>Prosopographia Militiarum Equestrium quae fuerunt ab Augusto ad Gallienum</i>

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- RC C. B. Welles, *Royal Correspondence in the Hellenistic Period*; New Haven, 1934
- RDGE R. K. Sherck, *Roman Documents from the Greek East*; Baltimore, 1969
- RE *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*
- Rhodes and Osborne, *GHI* P. J. Rhodes and R. Osborne, *Greek Historical Inscriptions 404–323 BC*; Oxford, 2003
- RIB *The Roman Inscriptions of Britain*
- RMD *Roman Military Diplomas*
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- RPC A. Burnett and M. Amandry (eds.), *Roman Provincial Coinage*; London and Paris, 1992–; I: *From the Death of Caesar to the Death of Vitellius (44 BC–AD 69)*; II: *From Vespasian to Domitian (AD 69–96)*; VII: *De Gordien Ier à Gordien III (238–244 après J.-C.) 1. Province d'Asie*
- Sardis* VII 1 W. H. Buckler and D. M. Robinson, *Sardis VII*, Part 1: *Greek and Latin Inscriptions*; Leiden, 1932
- SEG *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*
- SGDI F. Bechtel, H. Collitz *et al.*, *Sammlung der griechischen Dialekt-Inschriften* (4 vols.); Göttingen, 1884–1915
- SNG *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum*
- Steinepigramme* R. Merkelbach and F. Stauber, *Steinepigramme aus dem griechischen Osten* (5 vols.); Munich and Leipzig, 1998–2004
- Syll.*³ W. Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*, 3rd edn (4 vols.); Leipzig, 1915–24
- Syme, *RP* R. Syme, *Roman Papers* (7 vols.); Oxford, 1979–91

TAM	<i>Tituli Asiae Minoris</i>
TGF	R. Kannicht, S. Radt and B. Snell, <i>Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta</i> (5 vols.); Göttingen, 1971–2004
TIB Galatien	K. Belke, <i>Tabula Imperii Byzantini 4. Galatien und Lykaonien</i> ; Vienna, 1984
TIB Paphlagonien	K. Belke, <i>Tabula Imperii Byzantini 9. Paphlagonien und Honorias</i> ; Vienna, 1996
TIB Phrygien	K. Belke and N. Mersich, <i>Tabula Imperii Byzantini 7. Phrygien und Pisidien</i> ; Vienna, 1990
TLL	<i>Thesaurus Linguae Latinae</i>
TT	G. L. F. Tafel and G. M. Thomas, <i>Urkunden zur älteren Handels- und Staatsgeschichte der Republik Venedig</i> (3 vols.); Vienna, 1856–7
Vatopédi	J. Bompaire, J. Lefort, V. Kravari and C. Giros, <i>Archives de l'Athos</i> xx1. <i>Actes de Vatopédi 1: des origines à 1329</i> ; Paris, 2001
Wilhelm, <i>Inchriftenkunde</i>	A. Wilhelm, <i>Abhandlungen und Beiträge zur griechischen Inschriftenkunde</i> (5 vols.); I–II: Leipzig, 1984; III–V: Vienna, 2000–3
Xénophon	D. Papachryssanthou, <i>Archives de l'Athos</i> xv. <i>Actes de Xénophon</i> ; Paris, 1986
ZfN	<i>Zeitschrift für Numismatik</i>

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