

Elspeth R.M. Dusinberre. "The Collapse of Empire at Gordion in the Transition from the Achaemenid to the Hellenistic World"

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REFERENCES

Elspeth R.M. Dusingberre. "The Collapse of Empire at Gordion in the Transition from the Achaemenid to the Hellenistic World", *Anatolian Studies* 69, 2019, p. 109-132.

- 1 The article is an expanded version of a paper that the Author had presented at a symposium on Sardis in the Hellenistic period in 2017. Thanks to this re-working of the original (and already published) paper, the Author can trace an extremely rich portrait of Gordion *within* and *between* the Achaemenid and Hellenistic periods, summarizing published and unpublished archaeological, historical and environmental evidence on interconnected social, economic, religious aspects of this city's life. The Author immediately points out that the city was not a satrapal capital – nevertheless, the material remains of Achaemenid period demonstrate how active the society was in pursuing a specific (in some cases of local origin) life-style. Additionally, the city participated in the Achaemenid web of traveling people, goods, images and meanings— a web which is mirrored in the rich material and intellectual culture of Gordion's inhabitants. The collapse of the Achaemenid administrative system is reflected at Gordion in the slow and deep changes that affected every aspect of the city life and of its population. Both progressively impoverished by the inclusion of Gordion in a new network (the Hellenistic one), which isolated Gordion's region from Mesopotamia, Iran and Egypt, in contrast with the Achaemenid network which had secured a wide range of commercial and cultural contacts within these regions.

- 2 The Author describes the settlement in detail, including the occupation of the different sectors of the site, the architectural remains with extensive references to the pre-Achaemenid levels. These descriptions include all their planimetric and functional changes over the course of the time, thus giving a very clear image of what the city looked like in both periods as well as over the long period of decline and transformation in between. The Author devotes great attention also to the description of the artistic and material culture of the city, which the Author always analyzes in clear and diachronic perspective, ranging from frescos to cooking pots, from seals to terracotta figurines. Botanical and zoological remains are also used in support of the Author's reasoning, in order to explain the role of Gordion in the political economy of the Empire as well as the almost modest life-style of its inhabitants during the subsequent the Hellenistic period. In all of the Author's references to the relationship between material culture and social identity, there isn't any predetermined assumption of foreign or Persian elites present at the site, which is clearly not the main point of the Author's argument. Much poorer material evidence from other contemporary sites has often been used to propose hasty conclusions on ethnic identities. Not only for the argumentation presented but also for this approach the article should be serve as example for the scholars dealing with Achaemenid period settlements outside Persia.
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