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Greek and Lydian

Lydian, an Indo-European language from the Anatolian subgroup, is attested in more than a hundred texts, mostly from Sardis, but only a score of these are of significant length and well-preserved. Aside from coins and graffiti, the texts date from the fifth and fourth centuries BCE. Several features set Lydian apart from the other Indo-European Anatolian languages, including a combination of both massive syncope and apocope that sometimes leads to formidable consonant clusters (*dcdtid, kśbλtaλkś*). In the absence of a substantial Lydian-Greek bilingual monument, our understanding of the texts and the lexicon remains limited – the two very short Lydian-Greek bilinguals (Gusmani 1964, numbers 20 and 40) are not very informative. The gist of the shorter funerary inscriptions is clear, but much of the content of other texts that appear to be decrees of some sort eludes us. Even more obscure are the handful of texts apparently in verse. For a sketch of Lydian grammar see Melchert 2004, but for some important correctives also Gérard 2005.

Demonstrable contact effects between Greek and Lydian in either direction are sparse. The most plausible grammatical effect of Lydian on the local Greek is that of → psilosis in eastern Ionic and the Aeolic of Lesbos: Oettinger (2002) has argued that the loss of initial *h-* precisely there reflects the matching loss of initial "laryngeal" (probably [x]) in Lydian, versus preservation elsewhere in Anatolian. Loanwords are few: the Lydian word *qaλmλu-* 'king' appears in Ionian

Greek as *pálmus*. As properly emphasized by Gusmani (1964:277), the word's relatively robust attestation and the treatment of the Lydian labiovelar stop as Greek *p* (and simplification of the complex Lydian sequence of [lʲmlʲ] to [lm]) make it likely that this is a genuine old loanword rather than a foreign word. Since it likewise refers to an important social role, the word *kaúes* (acc. sg. *kauein*) 'priest(ess)' is probably also an Ionian adaptation of Lydian *kave-* 'priest', with [aw] for the Lydian [av] (see Gusmani 1964:150 and 278). Far more speculative is the suggestion by Melchert (2008) that Greek *mólubdos* 'lead' is a borrowing of Lydian *marivda-* 'dark, black' via a transferred epithet.

Most discussion of Lydian contact effects on Greek focuses on Lydianisms in the works of Hipponax, the sixth-century lyric poet from Ephesus. For a thorough critical discussion of this material see Hawkins (2013:121–157). Since a meaning of 'to steal' makes excellent sense for the Lydian verb *kabrdokid* in context, it remains tempting to see it as the source for the infinitive *skaperdeûsai* 'to pilfer' of Hipponax (see Oettinger 1995:39 and 45 with references to Weiss and Melchert), but the details of the adaptation are irrecoverable, and proof unachievable. Less likely is Oettinger's suggestion (1995:39–42) that Hipponax' gloss of 'Maeonian' *Kandaúlēs* as *kunánkhēs* 'dog throttler' for an epithet of Hermes is accurate. One should suppose rather with Schürr (2000:167–168) that the true Lydian source word **kan-dav-la-* had reinforcing *kan-* as its first member (cf. Latin *con-*) and the rather more fitting meaning 'overpowering', and that Hipponax exploited the resemblance to 'dog' in Lydian for satiric effect. The implication remains that Hipponax had more than a passing knowledge of Lydian and expected at least some of his listeners to also have enough to appreciate the word play. See further the suggestion of Watkins (2007:119–120) that Hipponax' derogatory term *nikúrta* is Lydian for 'a nobody', that of Weiss (2007:261) that the Hesychian gloss *arphútnon*: *ho dískos hupò Ludôn* reflects a genuine Lydian word for a discus, and that of Schürr (2011:75–78) that *bask(e)-* and *zakrolea* in two glosses of Hesychius also reflect Lydian of Hipponax and can be identified with attested Lydian *(fa)śq-* and *caqrla-* (likely divine epithets).

There are no evident influences of Greek on Lydian grammar, and loanwords are thus far limited to a few divine names such as *lev/fś* <

Deús, *lamẽtruś* < *Dāmātēr*. Since there is no such usage in the Luvian personal seals of the second millennium, there is a good chance that the convention of 'talking inscriptions' on seals and other objects in Lydian reflects Greek influence: *manelim* 'I am of Manes', *sivãmlim* 'I am of Sivãms', *artymalim* 'I am of Artymas' (see Gusmani 1986:153–4 and 158). The syntax, however, is native Lydian, with a possessive adjective in *-l(i)-* and the use of a reflexive pronoun in a nominal sentence involving the first person, as in Luvian. As suggested by Svenbro (1988:30), it is hard to imagine 'speaking objects' without writing, and Agostiniani (1982:270–271) likewise regards the appearance of this convention in Italy as merely part and parcel of the spread of the Greek alphabet. While there are some instances of first-person usage on inscribed statues in ancient Mesopotamia, Birzachechi (1962:47–51) argues that these are hardly the source of the convention in Ionia, which is derived from Greece. Since the Lydian alphabet is almost entirely derived from that of Greek (Heubeck 1969, Gusmani 1978), it is reasonable to suppose that Lydian adopted 'talking inscriptions' along with writing.

As noted above, a few Lydian texts appear to be in verse, showing line-final vowel assonance (examples with *a*, *i*, and *o* are attested). Since the lines in the better-preserved texts are also roughly isosyllabic (10–12 syllables), they have been widely assumed to be metrical. West (1972 and 1973) attempted to scan the lines in a quantitative syllable-counting meter. Since what evidence we have for verse in second-millennium Anatolia points to a strophic, accent-counting meter (McNeil 1963, refined by Durnford 1971 and Melchert 1998), West's scansion for the Lydian would strongly suggest Greek influence. However, a truly regular 12-syllable verse line cannot be achieved for the Lydian 'poetic' texts, nor is there any recognizable alternation of heavy and light syllables even in the lines that are dodecasyllabic. The alternative of Eichner (1986) by which the texts are to be scanned in a syllabo-tonic meter also fails to produce convincing results (see Mercado 2007:148–151 with references to these and still other analyses). Mercado (2007:151–158), objecting to the degree of 'violent' enjambment produced by reading the lines as inscribed, suggests that their arrangement is merely for visual appeal and that the apparent vowel assonance is thus a mirage. However, his own colometry also leads to some

violent enjambment, and it is hard to believe that the line-end vowel assonance on five different inscriptions is merely a visual decoration. Whatever the real solution to the problem of Lydian verse may be, there seems little chance that it shows Greek influence.

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