

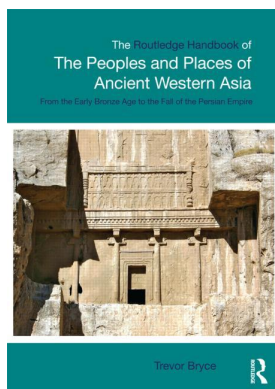
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Xanthus (Lycian *Arīna*, *Kımlık*) (map 15) M1 BCE–M1 CE city in Lycia in southwestern Anatolia, the largest and most important city in its region. It is located on the Xanthus r. 12 km north of the river's mouth. Remains on its walled 'Lycian' acropolis, which lies at the southwestern end of the site (there is another acropolis, of Hellenistic and Roman date, at the site's northern end), date the city's origins back to late C8 (though a Chalcolithic axe discovered in a recent sounding may indicate much earlier settlement). Xanthus continued to be occupied through the Persian, Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine periods, until the Arab invasion in C7 CE. The English explorer Charles Fellows first investigated and described the site in 1838. From 1950 onwards it was excavated by French archaeological teams, whose first two directors, successively, were P. Demargne and H. Metzger. French excavations continue on the site, currently under the direction of J. des Couils (see his annual reports in *An Ant*, the most recent of which is indicated below).

The most impressive remains of the indigenous Lycian civilization at Xanthus are the city's sepulchral monuments, which date to the period C6–4. They include a number of house-type and pillar-tombs. The latter, no doubt intended for the families of elite members of Lycian society, were surmounted by small grave chambers (or perhaps spirit-houses?). One of the oldest of these tombs is the 'Lion Pillar', which dates to the second quarter of C6. It was originally topped by a sarcophagus, decorated with a frieze depicting a reclining lion and a warrior-horseman. The sarcophagus is now in the British Museum. Two of the most conspicuous pillar-tombs are situated in the area that later became the Roman agora. They are the so-called Harpy Tomb (early C5) and Inscribed Pillar (late C5–early C4). The former is so named because the winged females who are depicted on it carrying off diminutive human figures were once thought to be harpies. They are now generally believed to be sirens conveying the spirits of the dead to their afterlife. The Inscribed Pillar is so called because it has a 255-line inscription carved on it – 243 lines in the Lycian language (in two dialects), and a twelve-line Greek epigram (*TAM I: 44). It is the longest surviving inscription in the Lycian language. Though only a few words and phrases of the Lycian text can be understood (the Lycian language is still largely undeciphered), we can deduce from these as well as from information contained in the Greek epigram that the inscription belongs to a man called Kheriga, member of a ruling Lycian dynasty based in Xanthus. The inscription contains (among other things) a record of the dynasty's exploits, and two genealogical lists of its leading members. The upper part of the pillar is much damaged, though the many fragments of it which the French have recovered indicate that its funerary chamber was decorated with a relief depicting the dynast's victory over his enemies. There is also evidence that a statue, probably of the dynast himself, once stood atop the tomb. Another sepulchral monument lying close to the Harpy Tomb consists of a sarcophagus with ogival roof set upon a chamber formed of upright slabs. A burial found intact in this chamber can be dated by its accompanying pottery

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Figure 132 Xanthus river.

to C3. However, it once contained a relief slab reused from a C6 monument (and now in the Istanbul Archaeological Museum) depicting, apparently, funeral games. (For recently discovered tombs in Xanthus, see Cavalier, 2003).

Just by the entrance to the city, where the arch of the C1 Roman emperor Vespasian still stands, are the remains of another of the important monuments dating to the period of Lycia's indigenous inscriptions (late C6–C4). This is the so-called Nereid monument, most of which was taken in sections to London by Charles Fellows, where it was reassembled (probably inaccurately), and is still on display in the British Museum. Built in early C4 entirely of marble, it is the most magnificent and elaborate of all Lycian tombs, and was probably the burial place of a man called Erbbina, the last known member of the Xanthian dynasty. The monument is in the form of a Greek Ionic temple, and derives its mod. name from the statues of female figures (who may or may not be Nereids) placed between its columns. Recent finds from the city's pre-Classical phase include 'a large wall of Lesbian masonry at least 10 m in length and two blocks with reliefs featuring bulls in an orientalizing Neo-Hittite and Phrygian style, similar to reliefs found a decade earlier in the same area' (thus reported by Yıldırım and Gates, 2007: 314, from des Courtils, 2005: 454–7).

Xanthus was destroyed c. 540 by the Persian commander Harpagus during his campaign of conquest along the southern Anatolian coast. Herodotus (1.176) records the city's last defiant but futile stand against the Persians. Subsequently it became subject, with the rest of Lycia, to Persian overlordship, when Lycia was included in the states which formed the first Persian satrapy (see glossary under *satrapy*). It was probably at this time that a local dynasty emerged in Xanthus which was to hold sway

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Figure 133 Xanthus, pillar-tomb and house-tombs.

over much of Lycia, on behalf of the Persians, until early C4, except during the middle decades of C5 when Lycia became part of the Athenian Confederacy. By the 420s, Persia had re-established control over Lycia, and the Xanthian dynasty continued to rule the country on its behalf, as attested in the many coin issues of the period, which depict the Xanthian dynasts wearing Persian-type tiaras. But the dynasty came to an end in early C4, and Xanthus may have participated with other Lycian cities in the satrap rebellion which broke out in the 360s against the Persian king Artaxerxes II. The rebel forces were defeated some years later (c. 360?). Xanthus, along with the rest of Lycia, once more reverted to Persian control, until 334/333, when the country was invaded and conquered by Alexander the Great.

Xanthus continued to exercise a dominant role in Lycia through the Hellenistic and Roman periods. It was destroyed by the Roman Brutus in 42 during the civil war which followed the assassination of Julius Caesar. But it was rebuilt and flourished

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Figure 134 Xanthus, 'Harpy Tomb' relief.



Figure 135 Xanthus, Nereid monument.

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under Roman rule. One of the more substantial remains of the Roman period is a relatively well-preserved 2 CE theatre. During the Byzantine period, Xanthus' walls were repaired, and the city became the seat of a bishop. A Byzantine basilica was built on the site of the Hellenistic and Roman acropolis.

Bean (*PECS* 996; 1978: 49–60), Toksöz (1986: 31–73), des Courtils (2005; 2006a; 2006b: these are the most recent reports to hand of the current excavations).