

# Executive Summary

## State Party

Türkiye

## State, Province or Region

Province of Manisa, District(s) of Salihli, Ahmetli and Saruhanlı and Gölarmara

## Name of Nominated Property

Sardis and the Lydian Tumuli of Bin Tepe

## Geographical co-ordinates to the nearest second

**Table 1-1** Component parts of the nominated property and their locations

ID No.	Name of the component part	Region / District	Coordinate of the central point	
			Latitude	Longitude
1	Sardis	Manisa, Distr. of Salihli	N 38° 28' 55''	E 28° 2' 43''
2	Lydian Tumuli of Bin Tepe	Manisa, Distr. of Salihli, Ahmetli, Gölarmara and Saruhanlı	N 38° 34' 37''	E 27° 59' 36''

## Textual Description of the boundaries of the Nominated Property

In accordance with the UNESCO Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention Parag. 99-102, the boundary of the Nominated Property has been drawn to include all those areas and/or attributes that are a direct and tangible expression of its Outstanding Universal Value: as an outstanding example of a settlement documenting settled life of Lydian civilization from ca. 1000-550 BC.

The property includes the citadel of Sardis (rising 300 m above the plain and surrounded by sheer, undulating cliffs, described by the Greek historian Polybius as "the strongest place in the world"); the Lower City, surrounded by a massive fortification, 20 m thick and still standing up to 10-14 m high in places; the landscape surrounding Sardis, with its Necropolis extending 3.5- 4 km south and west of the citadel; and the tumulus cemetery at Bin Tepe 7-17 km north of Sardis, which includes more than 119 tumuli, the most prominent of which is the Tumulus of Alyattes (ca. 590-580 BC) with a height of 63 m. and a diameter of 340 m.

The nominated property boundary encompass the full extent of Sardis and the Lydian tumuli at Bin Tepe, and their major features together with areas of land relating to important views of and from the key structures.

It corresponds generally to the boundaries of the 1st- 3rd degree archaeological conservation area (= 'site') at Salihli Distr.; Sartmustafa (=Sart) Neighbourhood, Sartmahmut (=North and/or Lower Sart)Neigh., Mersindere, Çaltılı and Başlıoğlu Neigh. designated by the Decision No.9274, 12/01/2018 of the

Izmir No.2 Regional Council for the Protection of Cultural Properties; Salihli Distr. Şirinyer (=Üçtepeler ) Neigh. designated by the Decision No.5132, 07/10/2009 of the Izmir No.2 Regional Council for the Protection of Cultural Properties; Salihli Distr.; Keskinler Neigh. designated by the Decision No.3583, 09/01/2008 and Ahmetli, Salihli, Gölarmara and Saruhanlı Distr. designated by the Decision No.9660, 27/04/2018 by the Izmir No.2 Regional Council for the Conservation of Cultural Properties; and thus is subject to the Protection of Cultural and Natural Properties Law (*Kültür ve Tabiat Varlıklarını Koruma Kanunu*) No.2863, 23/07/1983 as amended by the Law No. 5226, 14/07/2004 and its supplementary regulations.

The Buffer Zone (**Fig.1.4**; p.11) is an extensive area incorporating part of the Marmara (anc. Gygaean) Lake, the Gediz (anc. *Hermus*) River, and the farmlands adjacent farmlands to both component parts of the Nominated Property (=core zone), and includes the 3rd degree archaeological conservation areas (=‘site’) at Kestelli and Kendirlik Neigh., as well as Neigh. of Sartmahmut (=North Sart) and the areas south to the Başlıoğlu and Şirinyer Neigh. Its perimeter follows various prominent topographic features (i.e Gediz River), land-use patterns, modern infrastructure such as roads, railway line and also incorporates all those areas that contribute to the visual setting of the Site and features of related archaeological interest as identified in **section 2.a**.

The area of the Nominated Site is 9,244 ha. The area of the Site together with the Buffer Zone is 15,538 ha.

**A4 or A3 size map(s) of the Nominated Property, showing boundaries and buffer zone**

The map showing the location and the boundaries of the nominated property and its buffer zone is provided at the end of this section and listed below:

**Fig.1.4:** Map at 1:25.000 scale showing the boundaries of the Nominated Site (=core zone) and Buffer Zone (reduced size version of the original copy of 1:25.000 scale map included in Annex 1); p.11

Also see **section 1.e**

**Criteria under which property is nominated**

(ii), (iii), (iv) and (vi)

**Cultural Landscape**

No

**Draft Statement of Outstanding Universal Value**

**a. Brief Synthesis**

Sardis was one of the preeminent cities of the ancient world. During the Iron Age (ca. 1100-547 BC) it was the capital and only city of the Lydians, a native Anatolian people. The Lydians rose to prominence in the eighth through sixth centuries BC, conquering most of western Anatolia and establishing the first empire in the region since the fall of the Bronze Age. They invented coinage, a technology that was quickly adopted by their neighbors, changing the world’s economy forever.

Their location at a crossroads between the Greek world and contemporary Near Eastern cultures led the Lydians to establish close cultural, economic, military, and diplomatic ties to both the Greeks to their west and the great empires to the east and south, the Assyrians, Babylonians, Egyptians, Phrygians, and others.

The Lydians developed their capital city in a unique system of monumental terraces, creating a scheme of urban planning unlike those of the Greeks, Egyptians, or other peoples of the Near East. They protected the city with a fortification wall 20 meters thick, unique in the cultures of Anatolia and the Eastern Mediterranean. The three large tumuli of the elite cemetery at Bin Tepe are wider at the base than the Great Pyramid at Giza, and are among the largest tumulus tombs in the world, and among the first to establish features such as the crepis wall and marker stones on top.

The Lydians played important roles in Greek and Roman histories and literature, and in the literature of later European and other cultures. Greek and Roman poets, philosophers, and historians such as Sappho, Herodotus, Archilochus, Plato, and Ovid wrote about the Lydians and especially their kings Gyges and Croesus, whose riches and final misfortune made them almost proverbial.

#### **b. Justification for Criteria**

**Criterion (ii): exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design.**

Sardis and the Lydians were central players in cultural and technological exchanges between peoples in the eastern Mediterranean, especially the Greeks, and the cultures of the Near East and Egypt. With close connections to both east and west, they were intermediaries between the Greeks and cultures of the Near East, just at the time when the distinction between "East" and "West" was developing in Greece. These strong international connections are visible in the architecture, urban planning, and other aspects of their capital city.

**Criterion (iii): bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared.**

As the only city of the Lydians, a native Anatolian people in western Asia Minor during the first millennium BC, Sardis bears unique testimony to a vanished culture that had a profound impact on the history of the ancient world. The Lydians invented the world's first coinage and spread this new technology to their neighbors; they conquered most of western Anatolia and founded the first Iron Age empire in the region; their unique language was only distantly related to other Anatolian tongues; they worshipped a unique pantheon of gods; and their architecture and urban organization differ significantly from those of their neighbors and contemporaries.

**Criterion (iv): be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history.**

Sardis and Bin Tepe include significant structures in the development of architecture and urbanism in the Iron Age eastern Mediterranean and western Asia. The Lydian fortification at the city site represents a unique example of a Near Eastern type of fortification in a distant context. Their terracing system was a prototype for terraced cities such as Pasargadae and Persepolis in Iran, or Halicarnassus and Pergamon in Türkiye. The tumulus of Alyattes is the largest tumulus in the world, specifically admired by Herodotus as one of the greatest structures ever built.

**Criterion (vi): be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance.**

Sardis is directly connected with important historical people and events, and with turning points in the history of relations between East and West. The unexpected fall of the Lydians and of king Croesus, considered the richest, most powerful, and most generous king in the world, to a relative newcomer, Cyrus of Persia, was explained by Croesus' *hubris* and his misunderstanding of the ambiguous Delphic oracle, that if he attacked Cyrus he would destroy a great empire, and of Solon's wise advice to count no man truly happy until he had successfully reached the end of his life. The story was most famously told by Herodotus, and became a paradigm for a sudden and unexpected fall from fortune. As such, the Lydians were remembered and treated in works of poetry through Greek and Latin literature, were popular in late antiquity and the Middle Ages, and into the modern era.

#### **c. Statement of Integrity**

The Nominated Property fully includes all the attributes that reflect its Outstanding Universal Value and is large enough for the context of these to be properly appreciated and understood. Strict regimes of maintenance and control, derived from extensive statutory protection and management measures ensure the maintenance of the Site, and will continue to protect it and its wider setting from adverse development.

#### **d. Statement of Authenticity**

Sardis and the Lydian Tumuli of Bin Tepe is a well- preserved archaeological site that retains a high level of authenticity. More than 70 years of excavation and research have revealed a remarkable quality, quantity and variety of archaeological remains with a high level of preservation. There has been in situ consolidation work on excavated structures throughout the site. The substantial amount of data recovered from the archaeological investigations has ensured that the restoration work has a high level of authenticity in material and design. All restoration work has been based on complete and detailed documentation.

#### **e. Requirements for protection and management**

All necessary measures for the protection of the archaeological

site and its setting are in place.

The citadel of Sardis and its surrounding landscape that includes the necropolis with the tumuli on the ridges and rock-cut tombs carved on the cliffs up to 3.5- 4 km south and west of the citadel was designated as a 1st and 3rd degree archaeological conservation area (=‘site’) by Decision No.9274, 12/01/2018 of the Izmir No.2 Regional Council for Conservation of Cultural Properties (initially designated in Mar. 1978 by the Decision No.A-1017; 10/03/1978 of the High Council for the Real Estate Antiquities and Monuments) and thus under protection by the Protection of Cultural and Natural Properties Law (*Kültür ve Tabiat Varlıklarını Koruma Kanunu*) No. 2863, 23/07/1983 as amended by Law No. 5226, 14/07/2004.

(see **Table 5-1** A summary of the chronology of consent cases and/or other Decisions of the Ankara Regional Council for Conservation of Cultural Properties for the Nominated Property). 9 tumuli (included within the wider setting of the citadel of Sardis) in Salihli Distr. Keskinler Neigh. were also registered separately as ‘cultural properties’ by the Decision No.3583, 09/01/2008 of the Izmir No.2 Regional Council for Conservation of Cultural Properties.

Further associated ‘sites’ within the nominated property were also designated separately including:

The 1st degree archaeological ‘site’ in Salihli Distr. Başlıoğlu Neigh. (Karadut/ Mağara Deresi ) by the Decision No.3583, 09/01/2008 of the Izmir No.2 Regional Council for the Conservation of Cultural Properties;

The 3rd degree archaeological ‘site’ in Keskinler Neigh. designated by the Decision No.3583, 09/01/2008 of the Izmir No.2 Regional Council for Conservation of Cultural Properties; and the 1st and 3rd degree archaeological ‘site’ in Şirinyer (=Üçtepeler) Neigh. designated by Decision No.5132, 07/10/2009 of the Izmir No.2 Regional Council for Conservation of Cultural Properties.

The necropolis of Bin Tepe, located 7-17 km north of the citadel of Sardis, which includes more than 119 tumuli, was designated as a 1st and 3rd degree archaeological conservation area (=‘site’) by the Decision No.9660, 27/04/2018 of the Izmir No.2 Regional Council for Conservation of Cultural Properties.

The 1st degree archaeological conservation area (=‘site’) which the boundaries of the Nominated Property follow is one of the largest designated protected archaeological ‘sites’ in Türkiye, extending 14 km from east- west and 5 km from south- north and covering an area of 7,543 ha.

The boundary also encompasses the 3rd degree archaeological ‘site’ at Tekelioğlu and Dibekdere Neigh. due to their location (**Fig.1.6- 7; p.19- 20**) and covers a further area of 45 ha.

In addition, the status of 3rd degree archaeological conservation area designation (Decision No.3583, 09/01/2008 of the Izmir No.2 Regional Council for Conservation of Cultural Properties) ensures that the immediate environs of the citadel of Sardis at the west and north peripheries is protected from adverse development.

Development and/or renewal within the 3rd degree archaeological conservation area (=‘site’) in Salihli Distr., Şirinyer (=Üçtepeler ) Neigh. at the south part of the citadel of Sardis

is subject to protection and use conditions defined in the Decision No. 5132, 07/10/2009 of the Izmir No.2 Regional Council for Conservation of Cultural Properties.

There are also similar protection and use conditions defined for the 3rd degree archaeological 'site' in Salihli Distr. Tekelioğlu Neigh; Ahmetli Distr. Dibekdere, Kendirlik and Kestelli Neigh. (Decision No. 9719, 11.05.2018 of the Izmir No.2 Regional Council for Conservation of Cultural Properties).

And protection of the wider setting (=Buffer Zone) is achieved through other strategic national and regional plans, and also through plans related to specific locations and /or parts of the nominated property and its buffer zone (including 1:1.000 scale Salihli Distr., Sartmahmut Neigh.(North Sart)Development Implementation Plan; 1:1.000 scale Salihli Distr. Çaltılı Neigh., Mersindere Neigh, and Kargın Neigh. Rural Settlement Development Implementation Plan), and is thus subject to other planning and environmental laws and their supplementary regulations.

Regular maintenance of archaeological features is planned, implemented and monitored through the Sardis Expedition (Harvard Art Museums) conservation programme.

Processes are in place for controlling change and/or development (through the Izmir No.2 Regional Council for Conservation of Cultural Properties) within the boundaries of the proposed Site that effects its special interest, and also for development affecting its setting.

The management and protection arrangements are therefore sufficiently robust to sustain the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

A Management Plan has been developed to meet the future management needs of the Nominated Site and its Buffer Zone and to co-ordinate efforts from many bodies, groups and individuals. The process of developing the Plan has been led by the General Directorate of Cultural Properties and Museums (through its Department of World Heritage Sites and its local representatives including the Izmir No.2 Conservation Council and the Manisa Museum) in joint cooperation of the Sardis Excavation Team as the main stakeholders with the responsibility for the archaeological Site and its immediate surrounding landscape.

The Sardis and the Lydian Tumuli of Bin Tepe Management Plan was approved by the Coordination and Audit Board in Jan. 2024 as a legal document in line with the Regulation on the Substance and Procedures of the Establishment and Duties of the Site Management and the Monument Council and Identification of Management Sites' (Alan Yönetimi ile Anıt Eser Kurulus ve Görevleri ile Yönetim Alanlarının Belirlenmesine İlişkin Usul ve Esaslar Hakkında Yönetmelik) No.26006, 27/11/2005.

**Name and contact information of official local institution/  
agency/organisation**

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**Executive  
Summary**

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**Figure 1.4.** Map at 1:25.000 scale showing the boundaries of the Nominated Property (=core zone) and Buffer Zone (reduced size version of the original copy of 1:25.000 scale map included in Annex 1)

