



FIG. 1.

A lone Valonia Oak observed in Manisa, Türkiye (photo by Hakan Hatay, courtesy of Gygaia Projects).

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION: A NEW JOURNAL FROM ANAMED

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This inaugural issue of the new, international, peer-reviewed journal of Koç University's Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations (ANAMED) appears as a long overdue component of ANAMED contributions to the scholarly investigation of Anatolia's varied pasts. Although an ANAMED journal was first proposed at least by 2015, the idea did not progress nor achieve approval until 2020. Only then did the full concept of *Valonia: A Journal of Anatolian Pasts* begin to come into focus, and only now has the first issue come to fruition.

Building on ANAMED's previous record of hardcopy publications of symposium proceedings, exhibition catalogues, Turkish translations of works deemed essential to ANAMED fields, and edited volumes—both as an independent publisher under Koç University and more recently as a dedicated series under Koç University Press—ANAMED will now publish *Valonia* in open-access format online and with limited print runs. The journal aims to bring forth selections of the latest innovative, critical, and synthetic scientific research on the broad range of subjects that fall within ANAMED's mission: the archaeology, architectural and art history, heritage, and history of Anatolia and its affiliated geographies, from deep prehistory through Late Ottoman times. As is clear from the content of this first issue, *Valonia* aims to include special issues, with guest editors bringing together colleagues offering timely contributions on a specific theme. The selection of themes for special issues as well as articles for open issues will aim for chronological and disciplinary balance. In all issues, the journal will encourage synthetic, longitudinal, and diachronic as well as digitally innovative research that examines long-term trends and themes specific to ANAMED's fields, geographies, and chronologies of focus.

Without getting too Shakespearean, the question will undoubtedly arise: what's in a name?¹ While the subtitle of ANAMED's new journal needs no explanation, the title is something else. We sought a title that needs no translation, draws from Anatolian geographies, and is non-specific to particular pasts, and thus can stand for all pasts. Our selection refers neither to the region of Belgium, nor to the well-known chocolatier of Istanbul, and not even to the green intertidal algae, all of which bear the same name. The *Valonia* chosen to represent this journal stems from the *Valonia* Oak (Fig. 1).

¹ “What’s in a name? That which we call a rose | By any other word would smell as sweet” (2.2.46). William Shakespeare. *Romeo and Juliet*. Barbara Mowat, Paul Werstine, Michael Poston, Rebecca Niles, eds. Folger Shakespeare Library, accessed 27 February 2024. Washington, DC: Folger Shakespeare Library. <https://folger.edu/explore/shakespeares-works/romeo-and-juliet/>

A relative of the national tree of Türkiye, the wise and mighty “Turkey Oak” (*Quercus cerris*), the Valonia Oak (*Quercus ithaburens* ssp. *macrolepis* and related species, or “Anadolu Palamut Meşesi” in Turkish) is native to Türkiye and the region stretching from southern Europe and the Balkans to the eastern Mediterranean littoral.² It is only one of at least 18 species and nine subspecies of oak whose adaptability have enabled their spread across the varied terrains of Türkiye.³



FIG. 2.

The “hairy” scales of a Valonia Oak acorn cup and leaves, observed in Muğlu, Türkiye (photo 219096323, ©fmunoz CC BY-NC license).

The Valonia of the tree name derives from the diminutive of the Greek βάλανος, or acorn, no doubt because it is so distinctive, marked by the “hairy” scales of the cupule or cup (the valonia or vallonea itself) that is associated with several closely related subspecies (Fig. 2). While the acorns have nutritional value and can be ground into flour, pressed for oil, and eaten raw or boiled,⁴ and are both scavenged by and collected to fodder cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, and even horses,⁵ the cupules are rich in tannins and have been used in long traditions of tanning leather and producing black dye since at least Late Ottoman times and probably much earlier.⁶

Aside from its acorns, the Valonia Oak also provides diverse habitats for beetles, birds, and bats, as well as fungi and lichens.⁷ Its leaves are sometimes browsed by goats and sheep, as well as mulched for fertilizer,⁸ and its branches and trunks are used for fuel and timber. Anthracological (wood charcoal) analysis of oaks demonstrate their part in broader woodland management practices stretching over more than 11,000 years, from the early Holocene through the present day.⁹ The entanglement and utility of the Valo-

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² Ian Charleson Hedge and Faik Yaltirik, “*Quercus ithaburens* subsp. *macrolepis*,” in *Flora of Turkey and the East Aegean Islands*, ed. Peter H. Davis, Vol. 7 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1982), 676; Anastasia Pantera et al., “Distribution and Phytogeographical Analysis of *Quercus ithaburens* ssp. *macrolepis* in Greece,” *Ecologia mediterranea* 34 (2008): 73–82, <https://doi.org/10.3406/ecmed.2008.1400>; Michael Avishai, “Vallonea or Aegilops Oaks, a Short Review,” *International Oak Society* (2016), accessed July 18, 2023, <https://www.internationaloaksociety.org/content/vallonea-or-aegilops-oaks-short-review>; “*Quercus ithaburens* subsp. *macrolepis*,” *Plants of the World Online*, facilitated by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, accessed February 25, 2024, <https://powo.science.kew.org/taxon/urn:lsid:ipni.org:names:920259-1/general-information#source-LCD>.

³ Hedge and Yaltirik, “*Quercus ithaburens*,” 676; Werner Greuter, Hervé Maurice Burdet, and Gilbert Long, eds., *Med-Checklist: A Critical Inventory of Vascular Plants of the Circum-Mediterranean Countries/Inventaire Critique des Plantes Vasculaires des Pays Circum méditerranéens*, Vol. 3 (Geneva, Switzerland: Conservatoire et Jardin Botaniques de la Ville de Genève, 1986); Nicklas Jansson, “The Unknown Turkish Oak Landscapes—A Threatened Biological Culture Heritage,” *Kalabalik! Bulletin of the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul* 9 (2021): 3–18.

⁴ Ulysses Prentiss Hedrick, ed., *Sturtevant's Notes on Edible Plants. Report of the New York Agricultural Experiment Station for the Year 1919. State of New York, Department of Agriculture 27th Annual Report*, Vol. 2, Part II (Albany, NY: J. B. Lyon Company, State Printers, 1919); Andreas Papadopoulos, “Rediscovering Valonia Oak Acorns,” factsheet produced by the AGFORWARD research project funded by the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration under grant agreement No 613520, 2017, https://euraf.isa.utl.pt/files/pub/07_rediscovering_valonia_oak_acorns.pdf.

⁵ William Wylie Mackie, *The Value of Oak Leaves for Forage*, College of Agriculture, Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 150 (Sacramento: University of California Publications, 1903).

⁶ Theodor Kotschy, *Die Eichen Europa's und des Orient's* (Vienna und Olmütz: E. Hölzel, 1862).

⁷ Jansson, “Unknown Turkish Oak Landscapes.”

⁸ Sümer Haşimoğlu et al., “Meşe Yapraklarının Bir Yaşlı Tokluların Rasyonlarında Kaba Yemin Bir Kısımının Yerine Kullanılma Olanakları,” *Atatürk Üniversitesi Ziraat Fakültesi Dergisi* 7, no. 2 (1976): 37–60, <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/ataunizfd/issue/2976/41217>.

⁹ Ceren Kabukcu and Eleni Asouti, “Early to Mid-Holocene Vegetation History and Human Settlement in Anatolia,” in *Winds of Change: Environment and Society in Anatolia*, eds. Christopher H. Roosevelt and John Haldon, Koç University Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations (ANAMED) Series (Istanbul: Koç University Press, 2021), 65–83; Urban Emanuelsson, *The Rural Landscapes of Europe: How Man Landscaped European Nature* (Stockholm: Swedish Research Council Formas, 2009); Atiya Azim et al., “Nutritional Evaluation of Some Top Fodder Tree Leaves and Shrubs of District Chakwal, Pakistan in Relation to Ruminants Requirements,” *Pakistan Journal of Nutrition* 10, no. 1 (2011): 54–59, <https://doi.org/10.3923/pjn.2011.54.59>.

nia Oak in both the natural and cultural landscapes of Anatolia, its enduring traditions and affiliated geographies, make it a particularly apt representative of ANAMED's journal.

This first issue of *Valonia* owes much to the many people who have made it possible. First and foremost among these are its guest editors, the late Robert G. Ousterhout (January 16th, 1950–April 23rd, 2023) and Tolga Uyar, both long-term supporters of ANAMED. Together, Bob and Tolga co-led ANAMED's "Cappadocia in Context" (CAPP) summer program for many years, a program first established with the help of Bob's initial impetus. Leveraging their long expertise in matters of medieval Cappadocia, they marshalled a cast of contributors including past CAPP students, pre-eminent scholars of Cappadocia, and—fittingly—the founding director of ANAMED. We are extremely thankful to all for putting their careful research in ANAMED's hands and hope they are pleased with the outcome.

We remain regretful, nonetheless, that this first issue of *Valonia* was unable to reach publication before Bob's death. Bob had served on ANAMED's first international Advisory Board for six years, gave numerous talks and keynote lectures at our events over the years, contributed to many of our publications, and more. He gave generously of his effort, expertise, and time and was a treasured member of the extended ANAMED family. Although we regret the late timing, we know that he would have been happy to see this outcome and would no doubt have had a witty quip to share on the occasion! (It was from Bob, with characteristic humor, that ANAMED learned that we'd chosen a journal title also known for a particular type of algae.)

Others who have been instrumental in bringing *Valonia* to press and to whom we are grateful include former and current Koç University Presidents, Umran S. İnan and Metin Sitti; former and current Vice Presidents İrşadi Aksun, Alphan Sennaroğlu, and Hakan Ürey; ANAMED Steering Committee members Shirine Hamadeh, Nikos Kontogiannis, Christina Luke, and Inge Uytterhoeven, for their helpful feedback and guidance along the way; Naz Uğurlu, for her faithful and beautiful illustration of the hairy-scaled cupules of a Valonia Oak that became the journal's logo; Kibele Yarman, for the design of the journal, and Alper Yıldırım, for final implementation of that design; and the entire ANAMED core team, especially those contributing to ANAMED publications behind the scenes, including Buket Coşkun, Duygu Tarkan, former and current production editors Alican Kutlay and Özge Ertem, Tara Ingman, Emir Alışık, Yağmur Uyanık, and Hilal Küntüz. Many, many thanks to all, with hopes for enjoyable and edifying reading.

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