

Review

MARTIN HALLMANSECKER, *ROMAN IONIA: CONSTRUCTIONS OF CULTURAL IDENTITY IN WESTERN ASIA MINOR* (Greek Culture in the Roman World). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022. Pp. xvi + 308 pages, illus. ISBN 9781009150187 £75.00.

Previous scholarship on the cities of Ionia has mainly been interested in the Archaic and Classical periods, even though a large amount of the evidence is actually of Roman date. Studies of Greek identity under the Roman Empire have largely addressed Greekness at large, resulting in a somewhat homogenising picture, and ignoring potentially different ways of being Greek in different places. In this important and insightful book, Hallmansecker focuses on Roman Ionia and shows there is much to be gained from taking a regional approach to Greek identity under Roman rule. H. seeks to demonstrate both that Ionian Greeks shared certain cultural traits that allow us to recognise them as possessing an identity distinct from that of other Greeks and that they themselves deliberately took pride in and cultivated that identity. The investigation is carried out primarily through analysis of epigraphic and numismatic material, supplemented where necessary with particularly pertinent literary sources. All types of evidence are handled with a high degree of competence. The book contains many insightful readings of texts and inscriptions — with plausible emendations suggested for several inscriptions — and convincing new interpretations of coin iconography. H. takes us far beyond the well-known west *versus* east clichés of the literary sources that paint the Ionians as effete, effeminate and soft, to highlight ways in which we can distinguish the Ionians from other Greeks under the Empire. Whether all of the hallmarks of Ionianness H. identifies would have been recognised as such by the Ionians themselves is less clear, as is the extent to which they purposefully fostered these traits.

The Introduction sets out the book's aims, and the first chapter 'Mental Geographies' provides an overview of the development of the conceptual and political boundaries of the region of Ionia from Archaic down to Roman times. Chs 2–5 interrogate how Ionian identity was constructed by considering in turn the nature and function of the Ionian Koinon, Ionian cults and myths, names (of months, political offices and institutions and people), and the use of the Ionian dialect, above all in literature. The last discussion is slightly off-topic, since authors who employed the dialect are shown to have done so for literary reasons and not to express their identity: historians used Ionian to emulate Herodotus, and medical writers Hippokrates, regardless of where they came from. It is, nonetheless, an interesting and entertaining digression. Throughout these chapters the main focus is on the Greeks in Ionia itself, though the identity of Ionians in other parts of the Greek world — the Black Sea, Pisidia and Phrygia — is touched on in passing. These groups are explored in more depth in chapter 6.

Throughout these chapters, H. persuasively highlights ways in which Ionianness can be recognised, largely in aspects of culture that tenaciously persisted from the Archaic and Classical periods into the Empire. H. identifies striking areas of cultural conservatism in the worship of particular gods, the names of months and the titles of magistracies. Visitors to Ionian cities from other parts of the Greek world are indeed likely to have noticed these traits as unique to the region, as we can too from the vantage-point of modern scholarship. The link between conservatism and identity is, however, one that H. could have done more to probe. Was this conservatism always deliberate, and did it always reflect pride in local identity, or might it simply represent lack of incentive to innovate? In other words, did the Ionians cling to old ways of doing certain things because of a strong sense of attachment, or did it just never occur to them to do things differently? And in either case, just how aware were they of their own cultural idiosyncrasies? H. acknowledges in several places the difficulties of separating etic and emic perspectives, but for the most part assumes — perhaps too readily — that any manifestations of Ionianness must have been deliberate. Even if H. is right and conservatism was a cultural choice, a further problem is whether the identity being emphasised was Ionian or might instead be civic and local. For instance, H. stresses the importance of the figure of Androkles to Ephesian identity. Androkles certainly was an Ionian hero, but does this necessarily mean that when the Ephesians celebrated him they did so *because of* his Ionianness? Androkles would be more convincing as a symbol of Ionian identity if he could be shown to be important to Ionian cities beyond Ephesos.

If conservatism is the dominant thread of H.'s Ionianness and his methodology in looking for it, the spotlight occasionally shines on more outward and forward-looking ways of constructing identity. Particularly persuasive in this respect is H.'s argument that the Ionian Koinon was deliberately reinvigorated in the second century as a regional counterweight to Hadrian's Panhellenion. Considering the enormous amount of evidence he deals with, it would be unfair to criticise H. for largely leaving archaeology out of his discussion. An investigation of material culture might, however, reveal other, less backward-looking strategies by which the Ionians constructed their identity. A study of burial culture, dress and architecture — especially architecture, since the high degree of urban splendour of cities like Ephesos and Miletos really was new under the Empire — could only add texture to the already rich picture that H. is here able to paint.

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