



THE IDENTITY OF IONIA

HALLMANNSECKER (M.) *Roman Ionia. Constructions of Cultural Identity in Western Asia Minor*. Pp. xvi + 308, colour ills, colour maps. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022. Cased, £75, US\$99.99. ISBN: 978-1-009-15018-7.

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Over the last fifteen years Ionian identity has been scrutinised by several scholars: J.P. Crielaard, *Ionian Identities* (2009), A. Greaves, *The Land of Ionia* (2010) and N. Mac Sweeney, *Foundation Myths and Politics in Ancient Ionia* (2013) in particular have contributed to the debate on culture and identity in this crucial region of the Greek world. H.'s book intends to complete this picture for the Roman period (133 BCE – late third century CE). H. (p. 3) argues that many scholars limit themselves to the Archaic and early Classical periods because they consider later periods uninteresting or not worth discussing, although they primarily use sources from those later periods to discuss earlier phases. In fact, he continues, there is far more later information due to the intensification of the epigraphic habit and the more expressive coin issues. More importantly, he contends that there was a growing need for a distinct Ionian identity in later times: in Archaic times, when the *polis* was the most important point of reference for identity constructions, there was no distinct sense of an Ionian cultural identity under Lydian or Persian dominance (p. 17).

In the introduction H. defines the concept of (cultural) identity. His study advocates the anti-essentialist view that identity is multi-layered, context-dependent, fluid and constructed (p. 6). To avoid the pitfall of the simple equivalence of ethnicity with identity, H. frames his study around the concept of cultural identity. Cultural identity is conceived (p. 10) as encompassing a variety of markers of identity such as language, religion, myths, onomastics, dating systems and a common association (*koinon*). Other important markers of cultural identity include food and clothing style; according to H. there is not enough information on these aspects for the Roman Imperial period: many scholars would disagree.

His overarching research question is: how did the cities of Ionia construct and express a distinct sense of Ionian identity under Roman rule? Issues of identity became increasingly important as a result of the incorporation of a region into the expanding Roman Empire. There, provincials were facing a larger and more diverse out-group than ever before and therefore began to cultivate or re-evaluate distinctive local and regional forms of identity-constructions to distinguish themselves (cf. E.S. Gruen, *Rethinking the Other* [2011]; T. Whitmarsh [edd.], *Local Knowledge and Micro-identities* [2010]). The study fathoms to what degree Ionia was still perceived as a coherent cultural region and meaningful frame of reference for identity constructions in the Roman period. H. tries to answer this question using literary sources, complemented by epigraphic and numismatic evidence.

Each chapter is concerned with a different aspect of the discursive construction of 'Ionianness' – expressions and perceptions of a distinct Ionian cultural identity – in the Roman period. Chapter 1 investigates Ionia as a distinct cultural region, claiming that Ionian identity was based on shared cultural expressions and not on a geographical notion of Ionia: simply put, not every city in geographical 'Ionia' could claim to be 'of Ionia' as a cultural region. Ionianness as a cultural resource became particularly important in intercity rivalries of the second and third centuries, but also individuals could claim this.

Chapter 2 characterises the *koinon* or league of Ionian cities as a focal point for fostering Ionianness by issuing common honorific decrees, engaging in ruler cult and organising collective rituals. It was the repetitive participation in such collective activities and rituals, like the festival Panionia celebrated at the Panionion sanctuary, that perpetuated the socio-cultural importance of Ionianness and the bonds between the *koinon* members.

Chapter 3 looks at cults and myth as expressions of Ionian identity. The cults of three deities in particular are considered typically Ionian: Dionysos Phleus, Poseidon Helikonios and Apollo Delphinios. As many Ionian *poleis* had legendary Ionian kings as their foundation heroes, their foundation myths and the mythological narratives of the Ionian Migration too embodied a shared sense of ethno-cultural origin.

Chapter 4 focuses on time reckoning and onomastics as expressions of Ionianness. H. considers the continuing use of Ionian month names as a marker of group identity. Ionian cities also maintained the tradition of counting their years by eponymous magistrates. A similar conservatism can be observed regarding the names of civic subdivisions. Evidence for personal names of specific Ionian flavour in the Roman period, on the other hand, is limited.

Chapter 5 considers speaking or writing in dialect as clear expressions of cultural identity. Yet, the establishment of *koine* Greek as the standard language largely replaced local dialects since Hellenistic times. From the limited amount of evidence for the continued use of Ionian dialect in Roman period inscriptions, H. deduces that it played no important role for the construction of cultural identity.

Chapter 6 looks for the presence of Ionianness outside of Ionia. While the motivations for Ionian colonies of the Black Sea can be understood, similar appropriation in Anatolia (Synnada, Isinda) cannot be explained as easily. Rather, these claims should be framed within the concept of mythological kinship.

In the conclusions H. characterises Ionianness as a cultural resource conveying prestige to explain the continuing expressions under Rome. For the Roman period he situates the use of Ionianness primarily in the context of intercity rivalries of the second to third centuries CE, something that was expanded further by the creation of the *Panhellenion* under Hadrian. A second peak in interest was brought about by the perceived unification of the peoples of the Roman Empire following the *Constitutio Antoniniana*, which required additional forms of distinction for identity constructions. As Ionianness continued to be employed as a meaningful frame of reference, cultural references to it are not artificial archaisms, H. contends. The multifarious expressions of Ionianness have demonstrated that terms like ‘Greek’ and ‘Roman’ are too simplistic to do justice to the complexities of provincial identities. Finally, H. concludes that expressions of identity mainly reach us through the activities of civic elites, who were the ones who actively used this cultural identity to legitimise their social positions; especially the latter observation is skewed by his methodology.

Essentially, H. has written a mentality history by studying contexts – literary, epigraphic, numismatic – in which individuals and cities make reference to a distinct Ionian awareness. As such, H. employs a traditional methodology and a somewhat limited conceptual framework. The growing corpus of studies on collective memory and social memory processes (e.g. K. Galinsky and K. Lapatin [edd.], *Cultural Memories in the Roman Empire* [2016]; F. Rojas, *The Pasts of Roman Anatolia* [2019]) could be more prominently present, for example. Yet, it is perhaps the focus on categories of evidence that exclude the great majority of the population that is most problematic. Arguing that the study of material culture lies outside his area of competence (p. 10), archaeological sources are excluded from the study. This inevitably raises the question to what extent this Ionianness affected individual and collective identity constructions, given that his

sources only represent a small frame of reference. Even if deducing cultural identity from material culture is a prickly issue (cf. A. Van Oyen and M. Pitts [edd.], *Materialising Roman Histories* [2017]), at least the potential of this category of evidence should have been evaluated. A ‘bottom-up’ approach that first considers the landscape, archaeology, and only then written evidence, as opposed to the ‘top-down’ text-based approach, could have benefited the study in this respect. This was used by Greaves (2010) in an attempt to characterise Ionian identity in the Archaic period through divergent categories such as pottery, colonisation, warfare, religion, art and other evidence. It resulted in a more balanced acknowledgement of Anatolian and Greek influences on Ionian identity as found especially in the archaeological record, leading to the conclusion that under such influences Ionian communities achieved more individualised identities. A similar exercise for the Roman period would have been welcome as it would have made the concept of Ionianness less abstract.

Overall, H.’s work represents a traditional approach to a hot topic that would have benefited from a broader methodological and conceptual base, but it is nevertheless important for its presentation of evidence of Ionian cultural identity and its evaluation within the Roman Imperial matrix.

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POLITICAL *MEMORIA* AND *DAMNATIO MEMORIAE*

USHERWOOD (R.) *Political Memory and the Constantinian Dynasty. Fashioning Disgrace*. Pp. xvii + 350, figs, b/w & colour ill. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022. Cased, £89.99. ISBN: 978-3-030-87929-7.

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All societies have ways to deal with their past, especially when that past troubles or disturbs them. The Romans were a society of memory. It is no surprise, therefore, that bad memories were exorcised through (very) public measures after individuals were deemed to be disgraced. The term *damnatio memoriae* might be a modern construction, datable to at least the seventeenth century, but the practice – or *practices* – was real. After a long silence vis-à-vis the memory boom of the 1980s and 1990s, Roman scholarship has, since the turn of the millennium, steadily studied this phenomenon. U.’s book (a much-revised version of her doctoral thesis) is the latest addition to this movement. It focuses on the Constantinian period, from the victory at the Milvian Bridge to the ascension of Julian, utilising four case studies to elaborate on how these previously honoured figures (Maximian, Licinius, Crispus and Magnentius) became subjects of disgrace.

U. consciously avoids the use of the term to describe the phenomenon, mainly because a totalising view goes against her main thesis, that ‘the penalties associated with political disgrace were neither immediate nor universal, neither centrally imposed nor regulated’ (p. 5). According to U., the fashioning of disgrace was a much more multifaceted and fluid process than is commonly understood.