

April 2011

Book review: Alan M. Greaves, *The Land of Ionia: Society and Economy in the Archaic Period*.

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Recommended Citation

Patterson, Lee E., "Book review: Alan M. Greaves, *The Land of Ionia: Society and Economy in the Archaic Period*." (2011). *Faculty Research & Creative Activity*. 37.

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Bryn Mawr Classical Review 2011.04.17

Alan M. Greaves, *The Land of Ionia: Society and Economy in the Archaic Period*. Chichester/Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010. Pp. xvi, 269. ISBN 9781405199001. \$110.00.

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In the last decade or so Alan Greaves has distinguished himself as a leading authority on the archaeology of ancient Ionia,¹ and in *The Land of Ionia: Society and Economy in the Archaic Period* he brings his expertise to bear in a splendid synthesis intended primarily for a general audience and with a thesis that challenges us to rethink our use of evidence in understanding an ancient culture. Rather than provide a new history of the twelve cities of Ionia (the Ionian *dodekapolis* identified by Herodotus at 1.142), Greaves' study has two other principal goals in mind, both of which address an imbalance in traditional thinking about the region. First, the significance of archaic Ionia has traditionally been seen through the lens of its literary output, philosophical, poetic, or historical, much of it occurring in later periods. This approach skews the realities of Ionian culture and identity that a more balanced assessment of topography, archaeology, and literary evidence can provide, such as that offered by the *Annales* school. Second, Greaves wishes to resist the Athenocentric attitudes that have informed past assessments of Ionia through 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 the various Ionian communities achieved more individualized identities. This nuanced approach requires the reader to follow several layers of argumentation throughout the book, and part of its success lies in Greaves' ability to help the general reader navigate these layers as he moves through pottery, colonization, warfare, religion, art, and other evidence. Only in the last chapter does a problem arise with the supposed integration of literary evidence into the schema.

Chapter One summarizes the evidence to be considered. Among Greaves' more important points is that, despite ongoing excavations in Turkey, many of the most valuable archaeological discoveries continue to be those made by earlier excavators who approached their endeavors with preconceptions that overlooked the local and individualized identity of the various Ionian sites. These preconceptions were informed by written material that grafted an Athenocentric identity onto Ionia. Moreover, the written material, a product of a tiny minority (e.g., philosophers), is hardly representative of Ionian society as a whole.

As explained in Chapter Two, the solution to this problem lies in the *Annaliste* approach to history and archaeology. The *Annales* school, as promoted, for example, by Fernand Braudel, takes a "bottom-up" approach, meaning that it starts with the landscape, then considers archaeology, then written evidence, as opposed to the "top-down" text-based approach just described. The land itself determines where sites will be placed, what value

certain archaeological features will have, and so on. The archaeology then will suggest a broader picture in which the literary evidence can be situated but handled in the proper context. Corresponding to this spatial schema is a diachronic one, whereby an ancient community can be investigated in a tripartite chronological framework: macrohistory, lasting centuries or longer and investigating geographical and ecological factors; mediohistory, lasting generations and showing demographic, technological, and economic developments in a society; and microhistory, covering years or even days and denoting specific historical events.

In the remaining chapters Greaves applies this theoretical schema to his reconstruction of Ionian culture and identity. Chapter Three takes up the topography, which for Ionia means mountains and ridges that separated communities along a north-south axis while great rivers, especially if navigable, could have facilitated contact between the Greek coast and the Anatolian hinterland, providing more opportunity for cross-cultural influence. To this must be added the sea, whose unifying force on Ionian identity cannot be ignored. And yet, even the land itself is not static, and Greaves argues that the *Annaliste* approach can be taken only so far because of the changing nature of Ionia, especially its major rivers, which created within the short space of only a few centuries new alluvial plains from the enormous amount of silt carried from the interior. On the surface this might explain the sizable exodus of Milesians to Athens in the Hellenistic period, as suggested by funerary inscriptions, because Miletus' harbor had silted up by then, cutting the city off from the Gulf of Latmus. And yet Ottoman records suggest a robust trading city in later centuries, a source of some puzzlement for scholars.

With this caveat in place, Greaves proceeds to more archaeological matters. Chapter Four takes up cereal and other products of the land and the extent to which the Ionians traded their produce. Greaves surveys the evidence of vines, olives, cereals, animal husbandry, metals, stone, timber, and fish, and then the industries for olive oil production, decorated pottery, and textiles. Afterwards he assesses the distribution of amphorae in Ionia and beyond and examines the evidence of coins and mints. Subjecting this evidence to "world-systems analysis," which considers the interactive relationships, commercial and otherwise, among societies within a certain region and takes into account different kinds of trade networks (bulk, prestige, etc.), Greaves concludes that Ionia's wealth was based on generally impressive agricultural output and vigorous but largely local trading.

Chapter Five presents a catalogue of the twelve cities of the *dodekapolis*, describing the physical landscape and the way it shaped the fortunes of each location. However, following the detailed descriptions of the topography of each site would have been much easier if maps had been provided. For instance, to understand better the integrated hinterland of Miletus, which stretches southward over the peninsula it commands and was connected by a sacred way to Didyma, I had to consult an external map. (This criticism also applies to the book overall. While there are a few maps, such a paucity is surprising in a study so reliant on an examination of geography.) The chapter goes on to make an important point: surface surveys and ethnographic analogy (that is, comparing practices in modern Turkey to ancient ones) suggest an important rural landscape of farms, which is the source of the cities' agricultural wealth and reveals a world from the

“bottom-up” far removed from the urban haunts of philosophers and tyrants. The chapter concludes with some observations about the design of city walls and fortifications and the grid pattern of streets, which suggest possible Anatolian influence.

Chapter Six takes up colonization, for which archaic Ionia was particularly famous. Greaves discusses the evidence yielded by topography (harbors, rivers, natural sources, etc.) in the selection of locations of colonies, and then considers archaeological and literary evidence, the latter with considerable reservation in light of the generally fictive nature of foundation myths. He then addresses the causes of colonization by suggesting a two-phase model by which the colony starts out as a trading outpost (*emporion*) and then, at least in some cases, becomes an *apoikia* with a massive influx of population from the *metropolis*, as seems to have happened to colonies of Miletus, Phocaea, and Teos when these cities fell to the Lydians and the Persians. The reaction of these cities to forces larger than themselves presents itself in the archaeological record of the colonies after we move beyond Hellenocentric literary accounts.

In Chapter Seven Greaves considers the role of warfare as an expression of cultural identity. In *Annaliste* fashion he begins by considering the role of landscape for optimal defensive positions, e.g., hills, peninsulas, and offshore islands, and then moves on to material remains, e.g., weapons, armor, artistic renderings of combat, votive offerings, burials, destruction deposits, and fortifications (there is also a handy presentation on walls of major sites in Box 7.1), before moving on to naval warfare and mercenaries. Some of the walls in particular raise doubts that they “were built in response to historically attested threats” (160), such as the supposed Cimmerian invasion (Hdt. 1.6), when their scale suggests long-term planning.

Chapter Eight considers the evidence of cult in Ionia. Greaves’ purpose here is to discuss it in a context broader than merely Greek cult, noting possible Anatolian influences as well. First he notes that the location of temples and sanctuaries is often connected to preferential factors such as commanding views, sources of water, and mythological reference points. When moving on to the next layer of the *Annaliste* schema, Greaves identifies certain similarities in the morphology of Ionian cult sites to “Phrygian”-style sites. He also shows how sacred ways provided a path for processions that connected the urban core to the rural periphery and thus represent a material remnant of certain cultic behavior.

Chapter Nine examines the art of Ionia and raises the question of what value Ionians would have attached to what we call “art.” After considering the role land plays (by providing raw material, for instance), Greaves looks at specific media for art objects, such as metal, cloth, and wood, quickly passes over literary accounts (unreliable due to their tendency to make philosophical points rather than throw light on an artifact’s production or original meaning), and then cautions against judgments of aesthetics or craftsmanship by Athenian or modern standards. Here, too, the conclusion is a synthesis of Greek and Anatolian traditions.

Chapter Ten, finally, comes to the evidence that is usually the first stop in an exploration of archaic Ionia, the literary traditions. Greaves' analysis thins out considerably here, but for an ostensibly good reason. Relying on fifth-century traditions about archaic Ionia leaves us with a better understanding of the former (especially of Athenian traditions and propaganda) than of the latter. Moreover, the debate about the literary evidence, especially the tradition of the Ionian Migration, "seeks to meld pre-Archaic archaeological evidence from Ionia with the post-Archaic literature of Athens without reference to the intervening centuries" (223). Even so, while Greaves is true to the *Annaliste* approach of giving greater priority to topography and then to archaeology, I was disappointed that he did not follow through with a more earnest consideration of how the literary evidence fits into the broader contexts established earlier. One missing element in his discussion was *oral* material, which likely preserved some sort of local identity in various Ionian cities before it was subsumed under an Athenocentric Migration story.² A fuller account of these traditions would have benefitted a lay reader looking for an integrated, multilayered accounting of the cultures and societies of archaic Ionia.

This was a missed opportunity, but not significant enough to diminish the book's success and usefulness. Greaves lights the way to investigations of archaic Ionia and no doubt other regions that can be better informed than in the past. Moreover, the book presents what is often challenging argumentation in an approachable way for a general audience. Technical terms are usually explained, and Greaves translates Greek terms as they come up. There is also a glossary of terms (233-234), and the book is punctuated throughout by "boxes" that provide additional information on side issues, e.g., the *Emporion* of Al Mina (Box 6.1) and the cult of Artemis at Ephesus (Box 10.1). Finally, while anyone reading the book from cover to cover may eventually feel like the overall thesis hits one's head like a hammer for all its repetition, as on pages 40, 71, 79, and 156, for those who merely read selected sections of the book, the repeated reminders are likely beneficial.

I noticed almost no errors, except for the following: "8.3" should be "8.6" (166), Bronchidai should be Branchidai (179, Fig. 8.2).

Notes:

1. For instance, he has authored *Miletos: A History*, London & New York: 2002, and co-edited with Alexandra Fletcher *Transanatolia: Bridging the Gap between East and West in the Archaeology of Anatolia*, London: 2007.
2. A number of scholars have asserted local Ionian identities developing independently of Athenian tradition before becoming attached to the Migration narrative. For bibliography, see J. M. Hall, *Hellenicity: Between Ethnicity and Culture*, Chicago, 2002, 70 n.68.