

Memory, Migration, and Myth: Negotiating Greek Identity in the Built Environment of Aeolis and Ionia c. 4<sup>th</sup> c. B.C.E. – 1<sup>st</sup> c. C.E.

Paul Veyne famously asserted that the Greeks believed their myths, but ceased to believe them when their interest in believing ended (Veyne 1988). Hellenistic Anatolia, marked by shifting cultural identities and urban transformations, offers a rich window into the manipulation of historical memory central to Veyne's thesis. This paper considers heroa from Aeolis and Ionia constructed during the long Hellenistic period. It argues that Greek polities used heroa (the tombs of heroes) associated with the historical memory of the Aeolian and Ionian Migrations to assert claims to Greek ethnic identity. This assertion was of great significance to community formation in western Anatolia.

In recent years, the question of Greek identity in western Anatolia, particularly with respect to the stories told about the Aeolian and Ionian Migrations, has been a subject of debate. Scholarship suggests that the historicity of migration stories was of lesser importance to the people who told them than the role the stories played in constructing a Greek identity (Hall 1997; Hallmannsecker 2022; MacSweeney 2013, 2017; Rose 2008). This paper uses architectural and literary analysis to further discussions of Greek ethnic identity by focusing specifically on the heroa of oikists.

In the wake of the King's Peace (387/386 B.C.E.), Ionian and Aeolian communities prospered. With this change in circumstance, however, came no significant shift in identity. Eastern Greek cities continued to bear the indelible imprint of earlier associations with the mainland vis-à-vis Athens and the Delian League. To set themselves apart from their eastern neighbors, and to place their cities firmly within the Greek sphere, assertions of Greek identity became more pronounced, especially in the built environment.

Taking this as a point of departure, I first examine both the textual accounts of Greek heroes' tombs in sources such as Pausanias' *Description of Greece* and Strabo's *Geography*, as well as the physical remains of monuments identified as heroa in places such as Ephesus, Miletus, and Notion. In the second part of the paper, I examine stories recounting probable indigenous heroa, demonstrating assertions of Greek identity in the built environment were never absolute, and that cultural pluralism remained a defining feature of western Anatolian communities across the long Hellenistic period. Through interdisciplinary analysis of western Anatolian heroa and hero cult, this paper contributes to broader discourses concerning identity and ethnicity in antiquity.

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