The Panionion: Where Religion and Politics Met in the Early Ionian League


143 But those of Asia were cut off from the other Ionians only in the way that I shall show. The whole Hellenic stock was then small, and the last of all of its branches and the least regarded was the Ionian; for it had no considerable city except Athens. Now the Athenians and the rest would not be called Ionians, but spurned the name; even now the greater number of them seem to me to be ashamed of it; but the twelve cities aforesaid gloried in this name, and founded a holy place for themselves which they called the Panionion, and agreed among themselves to allow no other Ionians to use it (nor in fact did any except the men of Smyrna ask to be admitted).

147 Yet since they set more store by the name than the rest of the Ionians, let it be granted that those of pure birth are Ionians; and all are Ionians who are of Athenian descent and keep the feast Apaturia. All do keep it, except the men of Ephesus and Colophon; these are the only Ionians who do not keep it, and these because, they say, of a certain pretext of murder.

148 The Panionion is a sacred ground in Mycale, facing north; it was set apart for Poseidon Heliconius by the joint will of the Ionians. Mycale is a western promontory of the mainland opposite Samos; the Ionians used to assemble there from their cities and keep the festival to which they named Panonia.
2. Strabo 14.1.4
These are the twelve Ionian cities, but at a later time Smyrna was added, being induced by the Ephesians to join the Ionian League: for they lived together in ancient times, when Ephesus was also called Smyrna. . . . Smyrna was an Amazon who took possession of Ephesus; and hence the name both of the inhabitants and of the city. . . . On departing from the Ephesians, the Smyrnaeans marched to the place where Smyrna now is, which was in the possession of the Leleges, and, having driven them out, they founded the ancient Smyrna, which is about twenty stadia distant from the present Smyrna. But later, being driven out by the Aeolians, they fled for refuge to Colophon, and then with the Colophonians returned to their own land and took it back, as Mimnermus tells us in his Nanno, after recalling that Smyrna was always an object of contention:

“After we left Pylus, the steep city of Neleus, we came by ship to lovely Asia, and with our overweening might settled in beloved Colophon, taking the initiative in grievous insolence. And from there, setting out from the Asteeis River, by the will of the gods we took Aeolian Smyrna.”

3. Vitruvius, De arch. 4.1.4-5
Melite, on account of the arrogance of its citizens, was destroyed by the other cities in a war declared by general agreement, and in its place, through the kindness of King Attalus and Arsinoe, the city of the Smyrnaeans was admitted among the Ionians. Now these cities, after driving out the Carians and Lelegans, called that part of the world Ionia from their leader Ion, and there they set off precincts for the immortal gods and began to build fanes: first of all, a temple to Panionion Apollo such as they had seen in Achaia, calling it Doric because they had first seen that kind of temple built in the Dorian states.

4a. Homer, II. 20.401-405
And as Hippodamas breathed forth his spirit he gave a bellowing cry, even as a bull that is dragged bellows, when young men drag him about the altar of the lord of Helice.

αὐτὰρ ὁ θυμὸν ἠπόθεν καὶ ἤριγεν, ὡς ὅτε ταῦτα ἠριγεν ἐλκύμνοις Ἐλικόνιον ἀμφὶ ἀνακτα κούρων ἐκλόγων:

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4b. Strabo 8.7.2
For the sea was raised by an earthquake and it submerged Helice, and also the temple of the Heliconian Poseidon, whom the Ionians worship even to this day, offering there the Pan-Ionian sacrifices. And, as some suppose, Homer recalls this sacrifice when he says: “but he breathed out his spirit and bellowed, as when a dragged bull bellows round the altar of the Heliconian lord.”

5. Her. 1.170
When the Ionians, despite their evil plight, nonetheless assembled at the Panionion, Bias of Priene, I have learned, gave them very useful advice, and had they followed it they might have been the most prosperous of all Greeks: for he advised them to put out to sea and sail all together to Sardinia and then found one city for all Ionians; thus, possessing the greatest island in the world and ruling others, they would be rid of slavery and have prosperity; but if they stayed in Ionia he could see (he said) no hope of freedom for them.

This was the advice which Bias of Priene gave after the destruction of the Ionians; and that given before the destruction by Thales of Miletus, a Phoenician by descent, was good too; he advised that the Ionians have one place of deliberation, and that it be in Teos (for that was the center of Ionia), and that the other cities be considered no more than demes.
Bibliography


