

## BOOK REVIEW

*Insularity and Identity in the Roman Mediterranean*. Edited by ANNA KOUREMENOS. Havertown, PA: Oxbow Books, 2018. Pp. vi + 208. Paperback, \$55.00. ISBN: 978-1-78570-580-9.

This collection of essays originated in a panel organized by the Anna Kouremenos at a conference on Theoretical Roman Archaeology (TRAC) at the University of Reading in 2014. The eight papers treat the ways inhabitants of Mediterranean islands understood and acted on their identity as islanders in the Roman period (in many cases in fact from the pre-Roman into the Roman periods), and how that identity shifted during the process of Roman conquest and imperial political and economic development. Most of the papers engage the theoretical background established by such scholars as C. Broodbank (*An Island Archaeology of the Early Cyclades*, 2000) and A. B. Knapp (*Prehistoric and Protohistoric Cyprus: Identity, Insularity, and Connectivity*, 2008) for prehistory. The studies in this collection have shifted their focus to the Roman period but retain the theoretical concern with differentiating insularity (the experience of isolation) from islandness (the experience of connection). The authors draw on the evidence of archaeology (including underwater archaeology), art history, epigraphy, numismatics, history and literature and engage—and often correct—modern studies. As professional academics or advanced graduate students, the authors have archaeological experience in their respective islands, and they have fruitfully applied their expertise to exploring the topic of Kouremenos’s panel.

The editor’s brief introduction (1-3) lays out the theoretical background and then specifies, “The purpose . . . is to discuss how specific islands or island groups functioned in the interconnected world of the Roman Empire.” The islands range from Cyprus in the east to Sardinia and Corsica in the west, and from large islands such as Cyprus and Crete to small islands such as the western Sporades and Malta. Jody Michael Gordon’s long and wide-ranging chapter, “Insularity and Identity in Roman Cyprus: Connectivity, Complexity, and Cultural Change” (4-40), describes the multiple identities (“islandscapes” and “coastscapes”) that developed in this large island’s various regions—I found especially insightful her way of looking at island interiors as different to mainland interiors because dependent on “coastscapes.” The emergence of multiple identities

depended on the various regions' relationships with each other and with Greece and the Levant; they also changed because of Roman conquest and political and economic incorporation into the empire. Cyprus lost the strategic importance given it by the rivalry of the Hellenistic monarchies but enjoyed new sources of economic wealth that benefitted the ruling elite.

Kouremenos treats another large island with varied regional identities and connections in "In the Heart of the Wine-Dark Sea: Cretan Insularity and Identity in the Roman Period" (41-64). She shows how Roman engagement caused the Cretans to lose their communal identities because an elite taking advantage of Roman political and economic opportunities emerged. She also demonstrates how Cretans took advantage of their island's mythological associations to make it a Roman touristic destination. Alkiviadis A. Ginalis's "Insularity and Identity in the Northern Sporades Islands: The Question of Roman Policy in Central Greece" (65-76) suggests that the islands experienced isolated insularity in the Republican and Byzantine periods, but that Skiathos and Skopelos experienced connected islandness in the imperial period while Alonnisos and Skyros remained more isolated.

Sophia Zoumbaki takes us to the Ionian Islands with "Where East Meets West: Island Societies of the Ionian Sea under Roman Rule" (77-107). She argues that these islanders did not experience insularity because of their close connection to the mainland of Greece and Italy; in fact, they had greater unity with the mainland than with each other. Identity varied markedly among the islands in the Roman period. For example, Ithaka enjoyed touristic interest in Homer and Kefalonia saw considerable Roman settlement, especially at Fiskardo, while Zakynthos, off the major E-W maritime route, experienced less Roman influence. Danijel Dzino shifts attention northward into the Adriatic with "The Cult of Silvanus in the Central Adriatic Islands between Insularity and Connectivity" (108-124). He shows how Greek Pan and then Italian Silvanus syncretized with local nature deities in ways that varied from the Dalmatian hinterland, coast and islands according to particular local negotiations of religious meaning and iconography. Such negotiations permitted local people to become Roman while retaining Dalmatian and island identity.

In "Tracing Identity from Insularity: Maltese Industries in the Late Punic and Roman Period" (125-143), Maxine Anastasi, failing to find evidence for textile exports, scrutinizes the scarce evidence in the ceramic industry for insularity or islandness but can do little more than notice exports to Pantelleria. Andrea Roppa's "Connectivity, Trade, and Punic Persistence: Insularity and Identity in Late Punic to Roman Republican Sardinia (3<sup>rd</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> Century BC)" begins with a demonstration of how connectivity spelled the end of Nuragic and the rise of Punic culture in the Bronze and Iron Ages.

She then moves to case studies of the archaeology of four areas of this large island to show the consequence of Roman economic and then political influence as the Punic western Mediterranean became Roman, economic exchange shifted from northern Africa to Italy and small agricultural settlements became more common as the Romans ensured more secure conditions. These shifts occurred at a different rate in the various areas depending on their connections southward or eastward. Finally, Jean-Baptiste Mary turns to his extensive survey of western Corsica in "Études et constat préliminaire des implantations fortifiées de Corse du second âge du fer au changement d'ère" (165-198), but his results cannot yet shed light on the issues raised by this book.

The great value of this collection has to do with the way it shifts focus from the Roman Mediterranean as a whole to the experience of inhabitants of individual islands within the Mediterranean. Although the authors rarely reference each other, the conclusion by Swii Yii Lin (199-205) usefully draws together the themes of the work by summarizing each essay. She then points to future work that can refine the concept of insularity and then return to the archaeological evidence to develop models of insularity and identity.

This affordable, handsomely produced book has many photographs, mostly appropriate and clear. Each chapter has its own bibliography but suffers from inconsistent style and even omission of some works cited in the text. Although the volume uses the author-date citation system, all chapters have endnotes, and Gordon often puts in his parenthetical references long, distracting explanatory notes. Roppa and Mary include numerous tables that contribute little to the argument. I noticed numerous printing errors throughout, and the index does not reference all topics treated in the volume. Brief biographies of the contributors round out the ancillary matter.

CLAYTON MILES LEHMANN

*University of South Dakota*, Clayton.Lehmann@usd.edu