Response to Professors Hölscher and Isaac
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Professor Hölscher's warning about the conflicts that can result from a 'sacred dogma', based on descent and heritage, finds a graphic illustration in events that are currently, even as I write, taking place just a few hundred miles to the north of me. In the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), violence, assassinations and the early closing of polling stations have marred a general election that was precipitated when Greece vetoed the fledgling Slavic state's attempt to join NATO on the basis of its name. The latest stand-off has reignited a dispute that first arose in 1991 as Yugoslavia disintegrated and its constituent provinces sought independence. The struggle for identity has been conducted both on the 'local' and on the 'genealogical' level, to quote Hölscher's useful typology. The most visible (and visual) expression of local identity is symbolized by the so-called Star of Vergina – a radiate, starburst motif that adorned the gold cinerary larnax found in Grave 2 at Vergina and thought by the excavator, Manolis Andronikos, to contain the cremated remains of Philip II. The star was swiftly appropriated by FYROM for its new national flag; in reaction, new one-hundred drachma coins were minted in Greece with the bust of Alexander the Great on the obverse and the Star of Vergina on the reverse.[1] There is also, however, a genealogical component to the ideological war as both Greece and its northern neighbour lay claim to the heritage of Philip II, Alexander the Great and ancient Makedon. Anybody who has visited the royal burial complex at Vergina will have experienced the sacred, almost mystical ambience of the subterranean structure that houses Philip's supposed resting place. Its excavator, recently portrayed by Yannis Hamilakis as the shamanistic creator of a new national imagination, is one of the few Greek archaeologists to have received a state funeral (in the church of Ayia Sofia in Thessaloniki in April 1992).[2]

Hölscher's paper ends in a self-reflexive mode, questioning whether the historian of antiquity should be complicit in a project that seeks to ground collective identities in an 'exclusive' past. That would certainly make for a fascinating discussion, and the 'Macedonian Question' is just one case-study that might serve as a springboard for that, but for now I wish to respond to his first question: namely, whether the pattern that he sees in visual culture, whereby more 'paradigmatic' strategies of identity formation and maintenance eventually yielded – at least in Athens – to more 'genealogical' or 'local' conceptions, is valid in itself and whether it finds support in other types of evidence.

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[1] See K.S. Brown, 'Seeing stars: character and identity in landscapes of modern Macedonia', *Antiquity* 68 (1994), 784-96.

[2] Y. Hamilakis, *The Nation and its Ruins: Antiquity, Archaeology, and National Imagination in Greece* (Oxford, 2007), 125-67. For the dispute in antiquity, see J.M. Hall, 'Contested ethnicities: perceptions of Macedonia within evolving definitions of Greek identity', in I. Malkin (ed.), *Ancient Perceptions of Greek Ethnicity*, 159-186 (Washington DC, 2001).

Here, however, two complicating factors arise. The first is the historian's standard obsession with agency – an issue that has certainly been much discussed by art historians though without, perhaps, yielding any clear-cut or definitive answer. Who sets the agenda within iconological programmes? The purchaser/commissioner or the artist? If images in the early polis of the eighth and seventh centuries draw on a common repertoire of motifs and themes that transcend local or regional borders, is this a reflection of a shared thought-world or a function of the fact that artists (and skilled professionals in general) tended to be itinerant? In the Homeric epics, the *damiourgos* is a marginal figure who works for the *demos* or community without necessarily being a member of it; in the sixth century, sculptors such as Aristion of Paros were in demand well beyond their communities of origin. In the early 1990s, a multivariate statistical analysis of motifs on the Geometric pottery of the Argolid produced a fascinating account of political posturing between the settlements of Argos, Mykenai, Tiryns and Asine in the eighth century, yet the nagging doubt remains that, within such a geographically narrowly circumscribed area, it is unlikely that potters did not travel from community to community.[3]

Secondly, how representative of society at large is the world-view that we seek to construct from the visual evidence? While it is undoubtedly true that painted vases were not the luxury items that they are today at auctions,[4] it is still difficult to believe that the products of potters and painters such as Euphronios would have adorned the table of the average smallholder. This is still more true of public architecture where, even within the radical democracy of fifth-century Athens, let alone the aristocratic governments of Archaic city-states, public works were initiated by the elites. To what extent, then, is the 'paradigmatic' expression of identity that Hölscher sees in public and private art of the Archaic period limited to the elite sphere? It was, after all, their participation in a transregional – even 'panhellenic' – society, characterized by emulation and competition, that guaranteed aristocrats' right to status and esteem in their home communities.

That said, there is, I believe, further support for Hölscher's thesis that both public and private art of the sixth century – and, I would specify further, the first half of the sixth century – is characterized by 'paradigmatic' appeals to a panhellenic visual vocabulary. As Hölscher points out, this is the period in which the great stephanitic games at Delphi, Isthmia and Nemea were founded, or at least reorganized; some would even put the origins of the Olympic games in this period, rather than two centuries earlier. This is when the various Dorian, Ionian and Aiolian communities resident at Naukratis in the Nile Delta banded together to found a sanctuary to 'the Gods of the Hellenes' (Herodotos 2.178.2-3). Perhaps most tellingly, this is when the ethnonym 'Hellenes' first appears in the written record to designate all Greeks rather than a specific subset of Greeks resident in Phthia (Pausanias 10.7.5-6 [citing an inscription that he dates to 586 BCE]). Ironically, however, this is also the period when the Greeks first seem to have endowed Hellenic identity with a genealogical interpretation, as witnessed by a stemma in the

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[3] C. Morgan and T. Whitelaw, 'Pots and politics: ceramic evidence for the rise of the Argive state', *AJA* 95 (1991): 79-108.

[4] M. Vickers and D. Gill, *Artful Crafts: Ancient Greek Silverware and Pottery* (Oxford, 1994).

pseudo-Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women* (frs 9 and 10a.20-24 Merkelbach and West) which derives the descent of the eponymous founding fathers Aiolos, Doros, Akhaios and Ion from the Greek *Urvater*, Hellen. As Hölscher notes, genealogies are as exclusive as they are inclusive and it is possible that this represents a first attempt to define a Hellenic community in opposition to non-Greek peoples 'beyond the fringes', though, on the basis of the marked Thessalian tenor to the Hellen myth, I continue to suspect that the original aim was to exclude dependent populations of northern/central Greece such as the Perrhaiboi, the Dolopes and the Magnesians.[5]

I am less persuaded, however, that the sixth century witnesses few appeals to 'local' or 'genealogical' expressions of identity and here it is interesting that, although such ideologies *ought* to be exclusionary, what we actually find are cases where city-states seek to appropriate for themselves the mythical heritage of others. Hölscher himself points to the case of Kleisthenes of Sikyon, who expelled the cult of Argive Adrastos from his city and imported the cult of Melanippos from Thebes. Actually, Adrastos also received cultic recognition at Megara (Pausanias 1.43.1) and Kolonos in Attika (Pausanias 1.30.4) while his companion, Amphiaraos, received heroic honours at Knopia (Herodotos 1.46, 49) and Sparta (Pausanias 3.12.5) as well as in the sanctuary that bears his name near Oropos (Pausanias 1.34). And at a certain point, both Adrastos and Amphiaraos, together with the five other heroes who died in the fateful assault on Thebes, were believed to be buried at Eleusis (Euripides, *Suppliants* 634f). We do not have much in the way of chronological control as to when many of these cults were instituted but we do know that, in the middle of the sixth century, the Argives established a hero-shrine to the Seven against Thebes in their *agora*. Now, the myth of the unsuccessful attack on Thebes is almost certainly a Theban creation and, in fact, the Argives did not pretend to lay claim to the physical remains of Adrastos and his companions: the *horos* that marked the enclosure was inscribed 'Heroon of those in Thebes', which implies that the Argives believed the heroes to be interred in the Boiotian city. But this essentially Theban myth was politically useful to the Argives in the mid-sixth century because the expedition against Thebes, though it included chieftains from various Peloponnesian cities, set out from Argos under an Argive leader (Adrastos). The monumentalization of the myth therefore serves to legitimate Argos' (ultimately unsuccessful) claims to hegemony of the Peloponnese.[6]

Another interesting case is provided by Agamemnon. Indelibly associated with Mykenai in the Homeric epics, Agamemnon was certainly the recipient of cult at Mykenai in the Hellenistic period, though it is not entirely certain that he had been worshipped there earlier. Inscribed dedications, however, reveal that he was the recipient of cult (under the title Zeus Agamemnon), together with Alexandra/Kassandra at a small shrine near Amyklai, south of Sparta from at least ca. 525 BCE. The tradition evidently predates the earliest inscribed votives. On one occasion, Homer (*Odyssey* 4.514-20) describes

[5] See generally J.M. Hall, *Hellenicity: Between Ethnicity and Culture* (Chicago, 2002), ch. 5.

[6] J.M. Hall, 'Beyond the *polis*? The multilocality of heroes', in R. Hägg (ed.), *Ancient Greek Hero Cult* (Stockholm, 1999), 49-59.

Agamemnon running into a storm off Cape Malea, south of Sparta, on his return from Troy and, in the *Iliad* (9.149-53), Agamemnon attempts to appease Akhilleus' wrath by offering him seven cities that lay between Lakonia and Messenia. Neither passage makes much sense unless Homer was aware of an alternative tradition that associated Agamemnon with Sparta and, in fact, both Stesikhoros and Simonides located Agamemnon's palace at Sparta (Schol. Euripides, *Orestes* 46) while Pindar (*Pythian Odes* 11.32; *Nemean Odes* 11.34)) notes that Agamemnon died at Amyklai and that his son, Orestes, was Lakonian by birth.[7] There are, then, decided attempts in the sixth century not only to construct identities along genealogical and local lines, but even to appropriate the heritage of others. Alternatively, a specifically local interpretation of a panhellenic theme might be attempted. This is the case with the pedimental groups of the Late Archaic temple of Aphaia on Aigina, which probably depict two different assaults on Troy – the first with Herakles and Telamon, the son of the Aiginetan hero Aiakos, the second with Akhilleus and Telamon's son, Aias.

When we move into the fifth century, Hölscher is clearly right to identify a new, more chauvinistic and exclusionary tone to the expression of Athenian identity. It is in this period that Athens abrogated to itself the right to define Greek culture in essentially Athenian terms – illustrated most clearly by Isokrates' assertion that 'those who are called Hellenes are those who share our [i.e. Athenian] culture rather than a common biological inheritance' (*Panegyrikos* 50). What deserves perhaps more emphasis is the astonishing degree to which non-Athenians 'bought into' this ideology. In the 440s BCE, the Samians set up precincts to Athena, Ion and the four eponymous Ionian heroes and there are no strong indications that they did this under compulsion.[8] Again, Makedon is an interesting case. As early as the fifth century, its ruling house was at pains to stress its Greek origins (Herodotos 5.22.1-2) but, by the fourth century, that Hellenic identity was based on an appropriation of Athenian culture, which may explain why both Philip and Alexander displayed more than a little patience with a suicidally recalcitrant Athens. It can hardly be accidental that, towards the end of the fourth century, after an Attic-based dialect had been adopted as the language of court at Pella, a Makedonian aristocrat should have chosen to decorate his mansion with a mosaic that represents the unashamedly Athenian myth of Theseus abducting Helen.

There is, of course, a significant chronological hiatus between where Professor Hölscher leaves off and where Professor Isaac picks up the story and it is an important intermission because it was the conquests of Alexander and the campaigns of his successors, as well as the eventual expansion of the Roman Empire, that led to the situation that Isaac sketches out, where intellectuals from as far afield as Syria or Gaul could engage in an extended discussion of their place within the cultural *oikoumene*. Here, we are decidedly in a world of intellectual elites: save for some of the more wretched characters in Lucian's satires – and it is difficult to know to what extent this is representative description or caricature – we seldom, if ever, hear the voice of the man, let alone woman, on the street.

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[7] Ibid.

[8] J.P. Barron, 'Religious propaganda of the Delian League', *JHS* 84 (1964): 35-48

Isaac presents us with a spectrum of attitudes concerning origins and identity, ranging from Posidonios of Apamea, who seeks to play down his Syrian origins, to Meleager and Favorinus, who feel no need to apologize for their birthplace, to Lucian, who seems to have something of a chip on his shoulder. With the exception of Ptolemy of Alexandria, however, whose writings evidently owe much to the scientific speculations of the pseudo-Hippokratic corpus and Aristotle, all of the authors that he presents have one thing in common: they all focus their discourse around cultural and/or linguistic aspects and have very little to say about the role of heredity in self-definition. Their strategies of identification are, in Hölscher's terms, 'paradigmatic' – primarily, though not exclusively, based on a notion of *paideia* as a culturally-determined set of ideas, dispositions and modes of behaviour, acquired by means of a 'correct' education. Indeed, if, in the sixth century BCE, Hellenicity was defined genealogically by tracing the descent of ethnic groups such as the Dorians or Ionians back to the eponymous Hellen, it is striking how absent this concept is from the authors that Isaac discusses. And, in support of this, it is interesting that 'sub-ethnic' identification (Dorians, Ionians, Aiolians, etc.) has become essentially meaningless. While it is true that Meleager's poetry conforms to the stylistic rules of elegy, it is still somewhat ironic that he should claim to be born in an Attic fatherland while using the Doric form of *nesos/nasos* ('island') to describe his upbringing in Tyre. Along similar lines, Dio Chrysostom notes that the inhabitants of Tarsus – an Ionian colony, as Isaac notes – claimed to be descendants of Argive settlers, and yet there is no tradition that Argos was ever inhabited by groups that considered themselves Ionian. It is tempting to suppose that the Isokratean definition of Hellenicity, conferred by assimilation to Athenian cultural values rather than by biological inheritance, has 'won out'. I suspect, however, that this is only half the story and that the discourse that Isaac discusses takes place against a counter-rhetoric of identity based on heredity.[9]

I hope that it is more than marital loyalty that inclines me to give merit to Ilaria Romeo's view that the Second Sophistic discourse on the primacy of culture in definitions of Hellenicity may be a reaction to the establishment of the Hadrianic Panhellenion in 131/2 CE. We know that admission to the Panhellenion was based on *genos* or heredity. In a letter that Hadrian wrote to Kyrene in 134/5 CE, the Emperor recognizes the Libyan city's Hellenic credentials on the basis of its affiliation to the *genos Akhaion kai akribos Dorion* ('according to Akhaian – and, more accurately – Dorian descent' [where 'Akhaian' is probably used in the sense of the Roman province of Achaea]).[10] Romeo goes further, however, and highlights the writings of Polemon of Laodikeia, who wrote a treatise on physiognomics, in which 'authentic' Greeks are defined as a 'pure' people since no other *genos* has been mixed with them (*Physiognomica* 1-5). Polemon was close to Hadrian and his hostility to Favorinus, who was soon to fall out of favour with the Emperor, was barely concealed. Romeo actually suggests that the Favorinus passage that Isaac quotes, where the orator offers himself as an example to the Hellenes, the Romans

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[9] See B. Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton, 2004) together with D.S. Richter's review in *Classical Philology* 101 (2006): 287-90.
[10] See C.P. Jones, 'The Panhellenion', *Chiron* 26 (1996): 29-56, esp. 47-53.

and the Celts, is an explicit critique of the Panhellenion's ideology which championed blood over culture in Hellenic self-definition.[11]

What I find most striking in Isaac's paper is that whereas intellectuals of the Second Sophistic make pains to profess what they are *not*, they seem – at least in the passages that Isaac cites – far more circumspect as to what they *are*. Posidonios does not define himself as a Syrian; Meleager does, but he does not regard that as his *patris*. Lucian also admits to being a Syrian but regards himself as no less barbarian than the inhabitants of Soloi, Cyprus, Babylon or Stageiros.[12] Apuleius claims to feel no need (which, of course, means that he feels the need) to explain away his Numidian/Gaetulian origins while Favorinus admits to being a Celt but simultaneously distances himself from his barbarian compatriots. It may well be that this apparent crisis in self-identity was a consequence of Roman administration. As Isaac points out, the Greek word *ethnos* is often used in Roman-era inscriptions to describe Roman provinces. Originally, however, it had designated groups of individuals who were thought to share something in common (often, though not always, ethnic heritage). In Greece, it was *ethne* such as the Boiotians, the Akhaians or the Makedonians who gave their name to the region they inhabited. When the Romans, however, reemployed a fundamentally sociological term in a geographical/administrative sense, the consequence was that – in Roman eyes at least – populations were defined by the region they inhabited, which must have cut across far more complicated (and mutable) levels of self-identification.

That still leaves the question as to who these writers thought they were, beyond members of a transregional intellectual elite. If we give credence to the *Historia Augusta*, Septimius Severus and Severus Alexander wished to identify with Rome, but since *Romanitas* is essentially a political-juridical, rather than ethnic-cultural, status, it is a less problematic profession of identity than Hellenism. Favorinus is said to have 'led the life of a Hellene', but that in itself does not seem to *make* him a Hellene and indeed, in the *Corinthian Oration*, he could either be understood to be associating himself equally with Greeks, Romans and Celts or, alternatively, standing outside each of those three groups. Lucian receives a Greek *paideia* and is enrolled in a *phyle* and made the citizen of a Greek *polis*, but he anticipates the charge of not having changed his Syrian character. And Meleager's Hellenism hardly outweighs his affiliation to his Syrian and Phoenician roots. Hellenic *paideia* and the Greek language were crucial prerequisites for those who aspired to the world of the cosmopolitan elite but, on the evidence provided by Isaac at least, the concept of Hellenism seems to have been emptied of much of its ethnic content.

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[11] I. Romeo, 'The Panhellenion and ethnic identity in Hadrianic Greece', *Classical Philology* 97 (2002): 21-40.

[12] The reference to these four places is hard to fathom, as Isaac notes. Stageiros presumably refers to the birthplace of Aristotle. The other three toponyms seem to have a linguistic reference: Babylon was fabled for its cacophony of speech, while Soloi gave its name to people who commit grammatical errors in speech. The addition of Cyprus may be due to the fact that ancient authors were often confused as to whether it was the inhabitants of Cilician or Cypriot Soloi who were guilty of solecisms. If this reading is correct, the addition of Stageiros at the end of the list is presumably a joke.

Within just a century and a half after the period we have been discussing, the Greek-speaking elites of the eastern Roman Empire were referring to themselves as Romans rather than Hellenes. The explanation normally given for this is that the rise of Christianity led to the name 'Hellenes' being associated with paganism and, certainly, Julian the Apostate's promotion of the 'Hellenic Liturgy' can only have emphasized the association. But I wonder whether the reason that the ethnonym disappeared so quickly might not also be due to the fact that, already in the second century CE, Hellenism was viewed as a slippery and fundamentally compromised category of self-identification.