

NOCITA, MICHELA. *Italiotai e Italikoi. Le testimonianze greche nel Mediterraneo orientale* (Hesperia 28). 2012. Roma: L'Erma di Bretschneider. 224 p. ISBN 978-88-8265-712-3.¹

The presence of people from Magna Graecia (*Italiotai*) and ancient Italia (*Italikoi*) in the Greek Mediterranean Basin has been the object of several studies, most of which are devoted to the analysis of the activities and dedications of *mercatores* and *negotiatores* in Delos.² More extensive and comprehensive works have become out-dated and, indeed, limited, both in terms of the chronological span investigated, i.e. the period between the 2nd century BC and the 1st century AD, and in terms of the evidence considered, namely epigraphic sources.³

Nocita's book, which comprises the results of her PhD thesis in Ancient History that was obtained from Padua in 2004, aims to study the attestations of *Italiotai* and *Italikoi* in the eastern Mediterranean Basin, i.e. in continental Greece, the Aegean islands, Asia Minor, Egypt and Crete, through the examination of Greek literary and epigraphic sources.⁴ Her investigation concerns private individuals, selected by explicit reference either to their ethnicity or to their place of provenance. In comparison with previous scholarship on the topic, the broad chronological span, from the 6th century BC to the 1st century BC – although in some cases attestations from the 1st century AD and later imperial times are also included⁵ – represents a further element of novelty.

A very handy introduction (pp. 11–17) cogently explains the geographical range of investigation, the *status quaestionis*, the research criteria and the structure of the book, which consists of two interrelated sections: a collection of sources on geographical topics and a prosopographic repertoire. The first part (pp. 25–164) encompasses all the sources referring to private individuals from Magna Graecia and ancient Italy, divided on a regional basis (i.e. according to the destination of the 'travellers' – Attica, the Peloponnese, Boeotia, Phocis, north-western regions, north-eastern regions, Delos, the Cyclades, the Sporades, Euboea, Asia Minor and Samos, Egypt and an appendix on Crete) and arranged diachronically from the most ancient to the most recent attestations. A further internal division separates the *Italiotai* from the *Italikoi*. Each regional study ends with a useful chart containing all the information found on the *Italiotai* and *Italikoi* (dating, epigraphic and/or literary source(s), find-spot of the inscription, profession/activity, place of origin/ethnicity, personal name). The first section ends with a very short conclusion in which Nocita points out the most frequently attested ethnic affiliations spread throughout the eastern Mediterranean Basin (Tarantines, Eleates, Crotonians), the professions cited (pp. 165–181), and a very short appendix on the presence of women and ephebes (pp. 183–184).

The second part of the book contains a prosopographic dossier of the c. 300 individuals previously recorded in the first section. They are here listed in alphabetical order (pp.

¹ This contribution was written while working at the Institut für Römisches Rechts und Antike Rechtsgeschichte, Universität Wien, at the FWF Project no. P25418-G18 founded by the Austrian Scientific Foundation.

² See, for instance, more recently COMPATANGELO SOUSSIGNAN (2006); FERRARY – HASENOHR – LE DINAHET (2002); HASENOHR (2007); BAUZON (2008).

³ HATZFELD (1919).

⁴ A brief summary was published already in NOCITA (2003).

⁵ See for example catalogue entries in Attica, Peloponnese, Phocis, Rhodes-Cos and Egypt.

191–272). A bibliography (pp. 273–294) and two indices, one listing ethnicities and another patronimics, end the volume (pp. 295–303).

The book indeed represents a valuable tool in the study of interregional movements and relations between the Italian peninsula and the Greek and non-Greek eastern Mediterranean, but a few points puzzle the reviewer. First, the criteria used to detect the *Italiotai* and *Italikoi*. Nocita affirms very clearly at the beginning that the only certain piece of evidence to detect the place of provenance of the individuals is either the stated ethnicity or the explicit mention of the *polis*. Although theoretically no objection should be raised to this statement, I wonder whether, without reaching peaks of pure speculation, she could have exploited the *Lexicon of Greek Personal Names* collection more extensively, especially with a cross-comparison, where it is possible, between the diffusion of the name and the writing and dialect of the inscriptions. Perhaps a section of ‘likely’ *Italiotai* and *Italikoi* in the eastern Mediterranean would have enriched and grounded her work.

Secondly, the prosopographical section tends to repeat almost *verbatim* entire passages from the first part; thus, one might wonder whether a simple reference to the main text would have been sufficient and whether, on the contrary, more space should have been devoted to the historical analysis. Indeed, the plethora of information contained is barely historically framed in a coherent and broad manner and the analysis of the data is in a rather initial stage. A more complex set of issues, even if only left open to further future discussion, would have been appreciated. For instance, Nocita should perhaps have spent more words on the mobility of artists in the eastern Mediterranean, on account of which proxeny decrees were granted, on the reasons why some ethnicities (and members of the same family, who are found repeatedly in various places) are more widespread than others and why, apart from more obvious cases such as Delphi and Olympia, some areas were more visited than others, for instance Boeotia.

Strikingly, from Nocita’s work the almost total absence of contacts between the two shores of the Adriatic emerges. Apart from four attestations limited to the 3rd–2nd century BC, *Italiotai* and *Italikoi* are not attested at any time either in the Ionian islands, or on the Epirote coast or, more surprisingly, at Dodona. But this is wrong. Recent publications on the oracular tablets of Dodona,⁶ which Nocita seems to ignore, supply precious and plentiful information about the presence of *Italiotai* and *Italikoi* at the shrine of Zeus Naios and change at least in part her research.⁷ Moreover, the equation ‘lack of written evidence equals lack of contacts’ does not hold true as archaeology has often demonstrated.⁸

The book is very carefully written, with only a few typos, for instance on p. 43 in the main text a comma is missing between Delos and Corcyra, and in footnote no. 46 no page number for the reference BE 1956, n. 121, is given. More appropriate maps than those supplied (pp. 186–187), showing synchronically destinations and provenances of the *Italiotai* and *Italikoi*, would have been welcome.

⁶ LHÔTE 2006; EIDINOW (2007: 72–138). Most of the oracular tablets were, however, already published in archaeological reports and articles.

⁷ This leads to another problem with this book, whose bibliography contains no title after 2004, the year of submission of Nocita’s thesis.

⁸ As an example of determining the presence of Etruscans and of *Italiotai/Italikoi* in Greek sanctuaries through the examination of the archaeological evidence, see more recently, NASO 2006.

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