

HELLENICITY

BETWEEN ETHNICITY AND CULTURE



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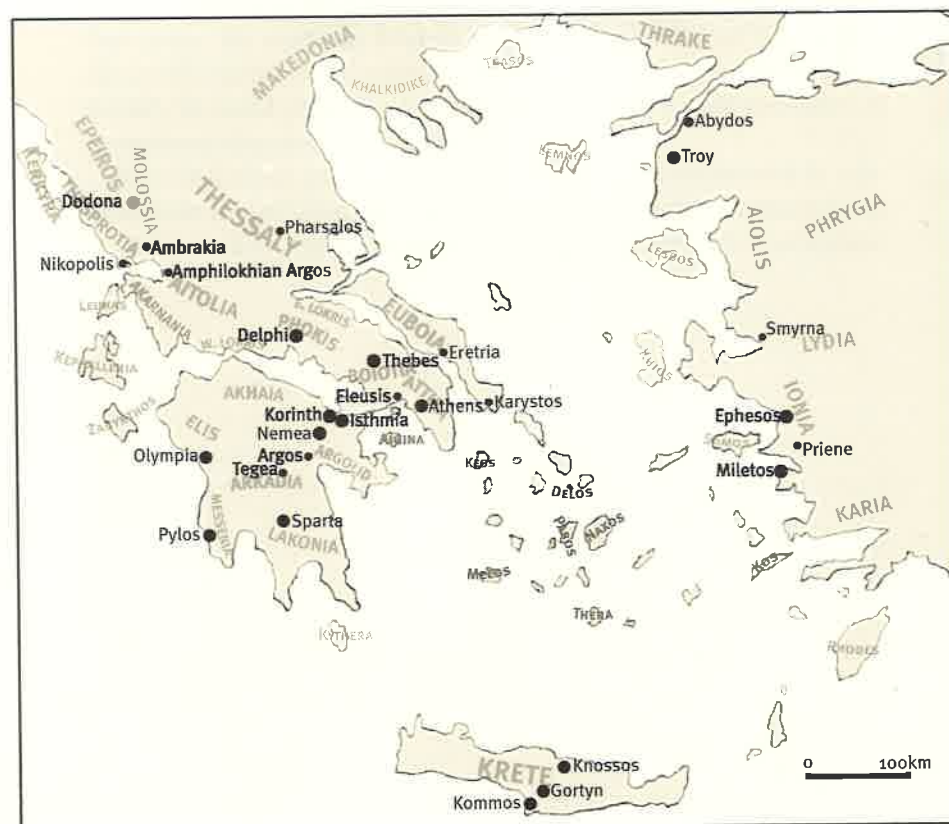
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To my parents

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Map 1. Greece and the Aegean

CHAPTER ONE

Theory and Method in Studying Ethnicity



INTRODUCTION

For a few brief weeks in the autumn of 2000, before the astonishing events of the US presidential election diverted the world's attention elsewhere, a heated controversy flared up in the British press. The issue at stake was nothing less than what it means to be British and was prompted by the publication of a report entitled *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain*. In a letter to the right-wing broadsheet the *Daily Telegraph* of Friday October 13, the leader of the Conservative Party, William Hague, wrote:

In 2000, the threat from the Left is . . . a cultural one and it manifests itself in the tyranny of political correctness and the assault on British culture and history. We should call it the anti-British disease . . . These people believe that the very idea of 'Britain' is irredeemably tainted by the combination of our imperial history, a concept of nationality that is past its sell-by date and public institutions that are 'institutionally racist'. In short, they hate who we are, where we have come from and where we are going.

In a similar vein, the *Daily Telegraph* for Tuesday October 10 derided the 'sub-Marxist gibberish' that was threatening the inclusiveness of British identity: 'Until now, we have thought of the shaping events in our history as everyone's heritage, regardless of where their ancestors lived . . . Under the guise of "multi-culturalism", they are advancing their old Marxist dislike of any national culture'. The paper also noted that 'it is our common

nationality that allows us to define Britishness in civic, rather than racial, terms'. On the same day, a headline in the second edition of another right-wing newspaper, the *Daily Mail*, read "'British' is Racist, Says Peer Trying to Rewrite Our History', while that paragon of political correctness, the *Sun*, carried a banner proclaiming "'British' is Race Slur' and proceeded to explain how 'The word "British" is RACIST, according to a new report that has been welcomed by the government'.

The report, commissioned by an independent but left-leaning think-tank called the Runnymede Trust and chaired by the Labour peer and political theorist Bikhu Parekh, was charged with promoting racial justice in Britain by proposing a series of recommendations dealing with areas of public life such as the police service and criminal justice system, education, the arts, media and sport, health and welfare, employment, immigration, politics and religion. These recommendations were largely ignored by the media, which instead focused its attention on a misreading of what the Commission had to say about the national story and its future direction. The report did not actually claim that the term 'British' was racist, but that 'Britishness, as much as Englishness, has systematic, largely unspoken, racial connotations'.¹ The reason for this derives from the fact that 'Britain' and 'England' are often used synonymously or, to be more precise, that

Englishness gradually acquired a dominant position within Britishness, as England did within the United Kingdom. England has often been surreptitiously extended, by the English themselves, to stand for the whole of the UK. It sometimes appears, indeed, that the UK is thought of as an essentially English nation-state, which happens for odd historical reasons to have Celtic fringes and (more recently) small pockets of non-English settlement.²

Indeed, Britain and England are technically distinct categories even if they are often conflated in the minds of continental Europeans as well as Americans. The kingdom of England and Wales and the kingdom of Scotland were united under the same crown in 1603 with the accession of James VI of Scotland to the English throne, but it was not until 1707 that constitutional Union took place and the three kingdoms were officially known as Great Britain. After the parliamentary Union with Ireland in 1801, the name of the new state became the United Kingdom and, after the

1. Parekh et al. 2000: 38.

2. Parekh et al. 2000: 21. For the essentially English core of British identity, see A. D. Smith 1999: 71–73.

partition of Ireland in 1922, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The term 'United Kingdomers' has never entered into common parlance and so the population of the United Kingdom, including Northern Ireland, is conventionally termed 'British' even though Northern Ireland is formally distinct from Great Britain.

Nevertheless, as the report remarks, it is not just non-nationals who conflate Britain and England. Growing up in southern England in the 1970s I recall that we regularly spoke of England and the English when we more properly meant the United Kingdom and the British, but at some point – perhaps after the admission of the United Kingdom to the European Union in 1973 – we became aware that such lax terminology was offensive and usurpatory to our 'fellow nationals' in Scotland and Wales as well as to those who had migrated from the Caribbean and Asia. Since then I have taken care to draw a distinction between ethnic identifications (English, Scots, Welsh, Irish) and political-legal-juridical status (British).³ Throughout the 1980s and much of the 1990s, English – unlike Scottish or Welsh – ethnicity was rarely a salient dimension of identity, except perhaps at sports events, largely because members of dominant groups tend to view themselves as individual human subjects, relatively underdetermined by affiliations with broader social categories.⁴ I considered myself British rather than English and I regarded as my compatriots all those who were citizens of the United Kingdom, whether they were ethnically Scots, Welsh, Irish, Jews, Indians, Bangladeshis, Pakistanis, African-Caribbeans, Africans or Arabs. Clearly I was not alone. British Home Secretary Jack Straw, who had initially launched the Commission in 1998, cautiously welcomed most of the report's recommendations but took exception to its views on Britishness. 'I'm proud to be British', he announced at the launch of the report, 'and I'm proud of what I believe to be the best of British values. Indeed, last year I spoke publicly about how the concept of Britishness has become an inclusive plural one with people happily defining themselves as Black British or as Chinese British or as Asian British'.⁵ Likewise, in his letter to the *Telegraph*, Hague argued that 'Britain is not a racial group. It is a nation forged from different peoples, from the Scots, the Welsh, the English and the Northern Irish, and from

3. See Snyder (1983: 257–59), who remonstrates against Sir Winston Churchill's reference to a 'British race': 'There is no such thing as a British race... any more than there is an American race'.

4. Deschamps 1982: 90; J. M. Hall 1997: 32.

5. Transcript of the speech made by the Home Secretary, the Rt. Hon. Jack Straw MP, at the launch of *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain* at the Royal Commonwealth Society, Wednesday 11 October 2000.

millions of people who have come to our shores from around the world to share in our national life’.

We had all, of course, been labouring under a naïve delusion. Our inclusive extension of the term ‘British’ was nothing more than an empty liberal gesture so long as some ‘Little Englanders’ could take exception to British African-Caribbean athletes draping themselves in the Union Jack at the Sydney Olympics,⁶ or so long as half of the fifty-nine percent of British-Irish polled who believed that they should be classified as an ethnic group felt that they were treated like outsiders in the United Kingdom.⁷ In fact, the report questions whether British ‘civic nationalism’ was ever really so distinct from the sorts of ethnic nationalisms that arose in continental Europe: ‘Civic nationalisms are always embedded in particular cultural values and traditions. They involve not only a rational allegiance to the state, but also an intuitive, emotional, “ethnic” allegiance to the nation.’⁸ Nor is the prognosis encouraging. When the Labour government granted devolved powers to a Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh and a Welsh Assembly in Cardiff, it fulfilled an election promise, but this uncoupling has had an unintended – though, in retrospect, entirely foreseeable – consequence. The cause of devolution was promoted on the grounds not of regional autonomy but of national traditions and culture, and the government’s enthusiastic support for nationalism in Scotland and Wales has precipitated something that many of us thought (and hoped) we would never see – an increased salience in English ethnic consciousness and an emergent English nationalism. Whereas, however, the Scots and the Welsh have in a certain sense constructed their national identities ‘against the grain’ of British identity by drawing on a repertoire of distinctive cultural symbols, the English have no cultural resources to employ other than those symbols – the village green, the stiff upper lip, John Major’s pint of warm beer – which had formerly been associated with Britishness. The lexical substitution of England for Britain in the past may have been largely unintentional; the current usurpation of the term ‘Britain’ by the English is less benign.

The reader may well be wondering what all this has to do with a book about the ethnic and cultural identity of the ancient Greeks. The point is this. In the smaller, more interconnected and cosmopolitan world in

which we live, ethnic and national categorization has assumed an ever increasing importance. Whether filling out a census return or an international mailing form, applying for an immigration visa or showing a passport at a frontier, watching the Olympics or remembering those who died in war, we are constantly reminded of the labels by which we are defined and come to define ourselves. If, in spite of these incessant reminders, there can still be so much disagreement as to what the term ‘British’ means, how much more problematic must it be to determine what ‘Greekness’ was in a period that lacked the modern obsession with classification, surveillance and control? Who did the Greeks – or Hellenes, as they called themselves – believe they were and why? On what criteria did they base their sense of Hellenic consciousness? In short, how ‘ethnic’ were the Greeks?

Two principal arguments are advanced in this book. The first, which occupies chapters 2–5, is that a subjective sense of Hellenic identity – over, above or in addition to regional, civic or subcivic affiliations – emerged in Greece rather later than is normally assumed. Although the Greeks themselves believed in polygenetic origins within the Balkan peninsula, the discovery of the Indo-European language group prompted scholars to view Greek speakers as immigrants from an original Indo-European homeland. Furthermore, the fact that Greek civilization is known predominantly – and, prior to the emergence of the discipline of archaeology, exclusively – through its literary remains has tended to promote the Greek language as the quintessential expression of Greekness. The result is that a horizon has been drawn between a pre-Greek chronological phase and a properly Greek era, signalled by the arrival of the first Greek speakers. Chapter 2 charts the various attempts that have been made to date this arrival by means of perceived disjunctures in the archaeological record and argues, firstly, that these supposed cultural breaks are becoming ever more illusory as our archaeological knowledge increases and, secondly, that the very assumptions that apparent material innovations should signal the arrival of a new language and that a linguistic group necessarily equates with a self-conscious ethnic group are, on the basis of comparative anthropological evidence, questionable. A more productive approach would be to follow John Myres (1930) in speaking of the ‘becoming’ rather than the ‘coming’ of the Greeks, but this is only to defer the question as to exactly when a sense of Hellenic identity first emerged in Greece. There is no evidence that the term ‘Hellenes’ was employed during the Bronze Age, but several scholars have supposed that the presumed cultural and linguistic unity of the Mycenaean world, together with Hittite references to a western region named ‘Ahhiyawa’, pro-

6. Cf. the racist taunt: ‘There ain’t no black in the Union Jack’; see Gilroy 1987.

7. Bronwen Walter, ‘The Irish community: diversity, disadvantage and discrimination’. Paper presented to the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain, 18 June 1999. Cf. Parekh et al. 2000: 38: ‘In Scotland and Wales the conflation of Britishness with Englishness has always made being “British” a problem.’

8. Parekh et al. 2000: 19.

vide strong indications for a unified sense of Greek identity before the end of the second millennium. These arguments are examined and found to be less than compelling.

Chapter 3 considers the four principal ethnic subcategories of the Greeks – the Akhaians, the Ionians, the Aiolians and the Dorians – and argues that each of these ethnic affiliations, far from being primordial or essential survivals from a premigratory period, emerged in precise historical circumstances during the course of the eighth and seventh centuries. Akhaian identity was first forged in the orbit of Southern Italy during the later seventh century as a response to territorial claims between the Akhaian city of Metapontion and the Ionian city of Siris; it was then transferred back to Peloponnesian Akhaia, a region which later claimed the credit for the foundation of many of the South Italian cities. Ionian identity itself dates back to at least the eighth century and first emerged in Asia Minor – perhaps as the consequence of external classification by populations of the Near East, though also in tandem, and opposition, with a sense of Aiolian identity. Contestation between the two groups over the city of Smyrna seems to have triggered a climate of differentiation and self-identification. Both the Ionians and the Aiolians chartered their ethnic solidarity on the grounds of a migration from the mainland, and this eventually allowed mainland populations to attach themselves to Ionian and Aiolian pedigrees. Next, chapter 3 examines the evidence for and against the Dorian invasion. While the archaeological and linguistic testimony is found to be equivocal, the literary evidence reveals the composite nature of the tradition, suggesting that it represents not so much the hazy memory of a genuine migration at the end of the Bronze Age but rather an attempt to systematize various appeals to a Dorian affiliation that almost certainly arose in the Early Iron Age – perhaps at Sparta, where there was a pressing need to legitimate the forcible expropriation of territory from previous occupants. From a broader perspective, however, the forging of distinct ethnicities in conjunction and opposition with one another militated strongly against the creation of a singular, overarching Hellenic identity.

The view that a self-conscious sense of Hellenic identity first emerged as a result of the colonial expeditions of the eighth century is challenged in chapter 4. Firstly, encounters between Greeks and non-Greeks were not a novelty of this period but had occurred throughout the preceding centuries; the plantation of colonial cities in the eighth century simply represented an intensification in such contacts. Secondly, the establishment of colonies – while often initially violent – did not promote a universal or enduring sense of hostility between settlers and indigenes; in

fact, the two communities often reached an equilibrium of accommodation through intermarriage, which would have served to blur ethnic categories somewhat. Thirdly, questions of acculturation, as revealed through the archaeological record, need to be uncoupled from the expression of ethnic identity since they may be governed by a whole series of nonethnic environmental, adaptive or sociopolitical factors. Fourthly, the notion that linguistic differentiation would have sharpened ethnic differences is found not to measure up to the complexities of the linguistic evidence, where linguistic interference between Greek and indigenous idioms may well testify to the existence of bilingualism. Fifthly, the literary evidence concerning non-Greek peoples in the Archaic period is heterogeneous and betrays little hint of the sort of derogatory ethnic stereotyping or ‘othering’ that is so discernible from the fifth century onwards.

Chapter 5 returns to the Greek mainland and opens with a survey of when and how the terms ‘Hellas’ and ‘Hellenes’ were employed in early Greek literature. Interestingly, they seem not to have developed entirely in parallel. ‘Hellas’ originally denoted a small area south of Thessaly, and then central Greece more generally; by the end of the seventh century, it was employed to describe the whole of mainland Greece, while by the mid-sixth century it designated the whole of the Greek world. ‘Hellenes’ was also initially applied to the population of ‘Hellas’ in its most restrictive sense, but the term then disappeared until the early sixth century, being substituted in the intervening period by ‘Panhellenes’. In fact, the gradual expansion in the geographical scope of the term ‘Hellas’ tracks almost exactly the increasing membership of the Pylaian-Delphic Amphiktyony throughout the Archaic period, suggesting that it was simply a geographical expression employed to describe the aggregation of states that administered the sanctuary of Delphi. The term ‘Hellenes’, however, was strictly associated with issues of descent and most frequently appears in connection not with Delphi but with Olympia from the early decades of the sixth century. I suggest that it was the Thessalians – dominant within the Delphic Amphiktyony by the seventh century and more frequent competitors at Olympia from the sixth – who endowed the terms ‘Hellenes’ and ‘Hellas’ with an ethnic significance in order to exclude the ‘perioikic’ populations of central Greece and to promote their own hegemonic claims within central Greece.

The second argument of this book, elaborated in chapter 6, is that the definitional basis of Hellenic identity shifted from ethnic to broader cultural criteria in the course of the fifth century. The notion that cultural considerations weighed more heavily in Hellenic self-definition from the

Classical period onwards has been observed before,⁹ but it has certainly not been accepted by all scholars. Immediately after the Second World War, for instance, Hans Erich Stier (1945) argued forcefully that national identity throughout the whole of Greek antiquity began and ended at the level of the city-state and that the concept of Hellenism indicated nothing more than a 'supernational, spiritual and cultural community' (*übernationalen, geistig-kulturellen Gemeinschaft*).¹⁰ Against this cultural conception, Frank Walbank marshalled evidence that he believed indicated the continued importance of shared descent within Hellenic consciousness and concluded that 'Stier cannot be said to have made out a case for thinking that "Hellas" was originally a cultural rather than a racial or national concept' (1951: 47). Even among those who have recognized the 'cultural turn' in Hellenic self-definition in the later Classical period, there has seldom been a systematic attempt to demonstrate the shift, let alone explain it.

The emergence of a stereotypical image of the barbarian in the fifth century has often been hailed as a crucial development in Hellenic self-classification, but it is frequently assumed that Hellenes and barbarians constituted mutually exclusive categories, diametrically opposed to one another. While there are some traces of this conception in fifth-century literature, I argue that barbarians were more commonly viewed as being situated at the other end of a linear continuum which did in fact permit category crossing. Such 'passing' was only rendered possible because Hellenic identity now came to be understood primarily in cultural terms: a barbarian could 'become' Greek by adopting Hellenic practices, customs and language. I also conclude that it was Athens, the self-proclaimed 'school of Hellas', which was chiefly responsible not only for the invention of the barbarian but for the redefinition of Hellenicity in cultural terms, formulating a conception of Greekness that was not so much bipolar as 'Athenoconcentric'. In the fourth century, this view of the relationship between Hellenes and non-Hellenes became the dominant paradigm for champions of 'Panhellenism' such as Xenophon and Isokrates, but it also created ripples in the political thought of Plato and Aristotle. Finally, I consider very briefly the situation in the Hellenistic and Roman periods in order to demonstrate just how engrained this cultural conception of Hellenicity had become by the last centuries of the first millennium BC.

The distinction that is being urged here between ethnic and cultural criteria of identity may not be immediately obvious, especially since there

9. E.g. Bengtson 1954: 31; Schaefer 1963: 306; Perlman 1976: 3 n. 8; Trédé 1991: 72.

10. Cf. Stier 1955; 1970.

is often a tendency to treat the two as virtually synonymous. In a study of ethnicity in Hellenistic Egypt, Koen Goudriaan (1992: 95) does distinguish between ethnicity and culture and warns that the adoption of cultural features does not imply 'that these changes of culture automatically entailed changes of ethnic identity', but the argument depends on the undemonstrated assumption that terms such as 'Greeks' or 'Egyptians' are by definition ethnic categories. It is this assumption that I wish to challenge, but in order to do so it is necessary first to outline and defend my somewhat narrow definition of ethnicity.

DEFINING ETHNICITY

The term 'ethnicity' denotes both the self-consciousness of belonging to an ethnic group ('ethnic identity') and the dynamic process that structures, and is structured by, ethnic groups in social interaction with one another.¹¹ Since I have discussed definitions of the ethnic group in detail elsewhere (1997: 17–33), I shall here limit myself to summarizing those conclusions. (i) The ethnic group is a self-ascribing and self-nominating social collectivity that constitutes itself in opposition to other groups of a similar order.¹² (ii) Biological features, language, religion or cultural traits may appear to be highly visible markers of identification but they do not ultimately define the ethnic group.¹³ They are, instead, secondary *indicia* (the operational set of distinguishing attributes that tend to be associated with membership in an ethnic group) or 'surface pointers'.¹⁴ (iii) Ultimately, the definitional *criteria* or 'core elements' which determine membership in an ethnic group – and distinguish the ethnic group from other social collectivities – are a putative subscription to a myth of common descent and kinship, an association with a specific territory and a sense of shared history.¹⁵ (iv) The ethnic group is neither static nor monolithic and is often subject to processes of assimilation with, or

11. Glazer and Moynihan 1975: 1; Eriksen 1993: 12.

12. Goffman 1959; Moerman 1965: 1219; Barth 1969a: 14–15; Brass and Van den Berghe 1976: 200; Just 1989: 74–75; Yelvington 1991; Eriksen 1993: 20–22, 38; Schwartz 1995: 49–50; De Vos 1995: 25; Banks 1996: 13.

13. Physical features: Rex 1986: 16; Nash 1988: 6, 12–13; Wade 1993: 23. Language and religion: Enloe 1980: 350; Horowitz 1985: 50. Culture: Leach 1954: 281; Moerman 1965: 1219.

14. For the *criteria* and *indicia* of ethnicity: Horowitz 1975: 119–21. For 'core elements' and 'surface pointers': Nash 1988: 10–13.

15. Shibutani and Kwan 1965: 47; Schermerhorn 1970: 12; Fishman 1977: 17; Keyes 1976: 205–6; Horowitz 1985: 57; A. D. Smith 1986: 24; 1999: 15, 62–70, 262; Nash 1988: 10–11; Tambiah 1989: 335; Yelvington 1991: 168; Bentley 1991: 169; Hobsbawm 1992: 63; Eriksen 1993: 12; W. Connor 1994: 74–78, 197.

differentiation from, other groups.¹⁶ (v) Since individuals possess a broad repertoire of social identities and roles that they adopt in varying circumstances and for specific goals and purposes, membership in an ethnic group will not always be the most salient dimension of identification, though it tends to assume greater importance at times when the integrity of the ethnic group is threatened.¹⁷ (vi) Finally, ethnicity often emerges in the context of migration, conquest or the appropriation of resources by one group at the expense of another.¹⁸

The centrality of fictive kinship and descent to definitions of ethnicity is hardly a novelty. Already in 1922, Max Weber defined ethnic groups as 'those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or customs or both, or because of memories of colonization and migration; this belief must be important for the propagation of group formation; conversely, it does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists' (1978: 389). The essential difference between this definition and the definition sketched above is that while Weber believed that 'the subjective belief in common descent' was based on indicia such as physical type or customs, it is no longer certain that such indicia need pre-exist ethnogenesis. As the Norwegian anthropologist Fredrik Barth argues, 'much can be gained by recognizing . . . [the sharing of common culture] . . . as an implication or result, rather than a primary and definitional characteristic of ethnic group organization' (1969a: 11).

It is, then, perhaps surprising that Weber's definition has not been adopted more universally by students of ethnicity. The most extreme reaction has been to deny flatly the importance of ideas concerning descent and kinship in definitions of ethnicity. Robert Bartlett, for example, maintains that 'while the language of race – *gens*, *natio*, "blood", "stock", etc. – is biological, its medieval reality was almost entirely cultural' (1993: 197). Yet this affirmation is hardly supported by four of the examples he proceeds to cite. Firstly, Regino of Prüm, writing ca. AD 900, states that 'the various nations of people are distinguished from one another by descent, customs, language and laws'. Secondly, King Robert Bruce, writing to the Irish in 1315, begins by noting that Scots and Irish 'have sprung from one national stock, and a common language and common custom stir us to come together eagerly and joyfully in friendship'. Thirdly, Donal O' Neill, endorsing in 1317 Edward Bruce's claims to the Irish throne, informs Pope John XXII that 'the kings of lesser Scotia [Scotland] all trace

16. Horowitz 1975: 115–18; 1985: 64–70; Haarmann 1986: 41–55; Tambiah 1989: 335–36.

17. O. Patterson 1975: 308–13; J. Turner 1982: 31.

18. Parkin 1979: 95–96; cf. Weber 1978: 43.

their blood to our greater Scotia [Ireland] and retain to some degree our language and customs'. Finally, King Edward III ordained in 1359–1360 that 'no one of English descent shall speak in the Irish tongue with other Englishmen' (1993: 197, 202–3). This last example could hardly be more explicit: King Edward makes it clear that the English are defined by descent – speaking Irish can hardly alter that fact. In the other three cases, each of the historical actors refers first to descent, and then to language and customs. To insist that descent 'was relatively insignificant' in the Middle Ages while 'other criteria – customs, language and law – emerge as the primary badges of ethnicity' (1993: 197) is ultimately to step outside the discourse of representation in which all cultural identities operate.¹⁹ It also directly contradicts the findings of other medieval historians for whom subjective professions of common descent remained central to the ethnic communities of the Early Middle Ages, even if they sometimes appear to be oriented towards supposedly more objective markers such as language, culture, law or the political community.²⁰

A second response has been to occlude the significance of fictive kinship by defining ethnicity in the most general terms possible as simply a matter of group difference. Even Barth (1969a: 13) only reluctantly and elliptically refers to common descent when he argues that a categorical ascription is ethnic 'when it classifies a person in terms of his basic, most general identity, presumptively determined by his origin and background'. Colin Renfrew (1998b: 275) is more direct: ethnicity is 'ultimately a matter of group self-recognition and self-identity'. It is not that this characterization of ethnicity is untrue, but rather that it is insufficient since it is as applicable to the Chicago Bulls or Freemasons as it is to the Lapps of Norway. Indeed, social psychologists have noted that the instinct to behave in terms of group membership – even when group categories are artificially imposed on individuals who have never met before – is basic to most human beings.²¹ There is, however, nothing that entitles us to regard all such behaviour as ethnic in nature.

Yet another response has been to adopt a 'polythetic' definition of ethnicity which regards a myth of common descent as simply one of the ingredients, alongside physical features, language, religion and culture, that *may* define the ethnic group but is, singly, neither a necessary nor sufficient criterion.²² Thus, in his review of my earlier discussion of ethnicity,

19. See S. Hall 1996: 4.

20. E.g. Pohl 1994: 11–12.

21. J. Turner 1982: 23; Hirschfeld 1996: 23.

22. E.g. Haarmann 1986: 38; Esman and Rabinovich 1988: 3; Brass 1991: 18; De Vos 1995: 18; Schwartz 1995: 50.

David Konstan (1997b: 109) writes: 'In my judgment, it is to the general currency of and competition among asseverations of ethnic identity, each availing itself of the traits most suitable in the context, whether common blood or customs or gods or language, that one ought to apply the name of ethnic discourse'. Nevertheless, I should like to suggest that 'polythetic' definitions of ethnicity are unsatisfactory for three reasons. In the first place, if ethnicity can be defined sometimes by kinship, sometimes by language, sometimes by religion, sometimes by cultural considerations and sometimes by an unquantifiable mixture of any of the above, then its heuristic potential becomes extremely limited. As Walker Connor notes, 'the . . . practice of employing ethnicity as a cloak for several different types of identity exerts a . . . baneful effect' (1994: 102).²³ Applied indiscriminately to a wide range of diverse social situations, it is little wonder that the concept 'has failed to encompass satisfactorily the variety of inter-group interactions that it has been applied to'.²⁴ Instead, as Thomas Hylland Eriksen argues, it is not the definition of ethnicity itself but the social context in which ethnicity operates that varies, and in order to measure or assess those different contexts, 'ethnicity should always have the same meaning lest it ceases to be useful in comparison' (1993: 13).

Secondly, while physical traits, language, religion or cultural orientations, either singly or in combination, may appear to constitute the most important markers of differentiation – and may indeed be invoked as such by members of the ethnic group – they lack the universality which criteria such as consubstantiality and fictive kinship possess in defining ethnicity. Phenotypic differences between WASPS (White Anglo-Saxon Protestants) and African-Americans in the United States may continue to remain a salient dimension of identification, but before ca. AD 1680 it was religion rather than colour that served to distinguish African slaves from their Christian captors,²⁵ while in many other situations – for example, the conflict between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland or that between Flemish and Walloons in Belgium – physical differences are simply irrelevant. Indeed, despite considerable contact from an early date between Mediterranean and African populations, very little attention – let alone prejudice – seems to have been attached to skin colour in ancient Greek and Near Eastern perceptions of others.²⁶ Language is a salient dimension of identity for the Welsh in Britain, Bretons in France or Basques in Spain, but carries next to no significance in Bosnia, where

23. Cf. S. Jones 1997: 61; J. M. Hall 1998: 268.

24. Banks 1996: 142.

25. Horowitz 1985: 43.

26. Snowden 1983.

the Orthodox Serbs, Catholic Croats and Muslims have been engaged in an internecine struggle despite sharing what is for the most part a common language. Religion is important to Sunni and Shiites in Iraq and to the linguistically diverse Jews of the diaspora, but is less relevant to the Yoruba of Nigeria, where Christians and Muslims privilege their common language over their divided religious faiths. Bangladeshis stressed their Islamic religion when seeking independence from India in 1947 but the Bengali language (shared with Hindu neighbours in Indian West Bengal) when separating from Pakistan in 1972.²⁷ Distinctive cultural traits are significant for the Scots in Britain or for the Pennsylvania Dutch in the United States, but appear absent among certain groups such as the Kachin of Burma or the Lue of Thailand who nevertheless entertain a strong collective ethnic consciousness.²⁸

Thirdly, if physical appearance, language, religion and culture cannot be considered necessary criteria for ethnic classification, neither are they sufficient. Difference in stature tends to be an operating indicium of differentiation between the Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda and Burundi, but tall Europeans do not assume that their shorter peers are ethnically different. There are linguistic groups (Spanish-speakers; international air-traffic controllers) and religious groups (Lutherans; Catholics) who are not ethnic groups. The conversion of a Bosnian Muslim to Christian Orthodoxy would probably not automatically cause him or her to be recognized as a Serb. Similarly, despite Abner Cohen's insistence (1974) that high rates of endogamy, a sense of communal identity and a shared culture make London stockbrokers an ethnic group, it is plainly evident that stockbrokers – like punks – constitute a definable cultural group which lacks any sense of ethnic affiliation.

I suspect that these various attempts to demote fictive kinship from the definitional criteria of ethnicity arise from an ideological discomfort that an ethnic group defined in terms of descent may appear alarmingly similar to a 'biological race'. In the wake of the atrocities committed during the Second World War and obscenely legitimated by racial philosophies rooted in the nineteenth century, scholars attempted to distance themselves from such dubious pseudo-scientific theories by drawing a distinction between race (based on biologically-inherited characteristics) and ethnicity (based on culturally-transmitted traits).²⁹ Yet, in reality, this oppositional distinction was always somewhat illusory since in academic discourse ethnicity was 'a collocation often used in covert syn-

27. Das Gupta 1975: 471; Horowitz 1985: 68–69.

28. Leach 1954: 281; Moerman 1965: 1219.

29. Blu 1980: 204; Just 1989: 76.

onymy for "race";³⁰ while in popular usage the term 'race' continued (and continues) to enjoy common currency.³¹ What needs to be remembered, however, is that the definition of race as a biological category represents only one particular strand within the general discourse of race – namely, the nineteenth-century doctrine of scientific racism whereby conceptions of 'race as lineage' gave way to theories of 'race as type' and eventually, via the influence of Darwin, to theories of 'race as sub-species'.³² In other contexts the term has commonly been applied to nations, linguistic communities or cultural groups without any biological implications.³³

The biological underpinning of race is now, of course, thoroughly discredited. Already in the 1960s research suggested that there is often greater genetic variability within a single group than between two distinct groups.³⁴ More recently the discovery of the entire sequence of the human genome has revealed that the visible physical traits commonly employed to differentiate human groups account for the minutest fraction of an individual's genes and that in strict terms there is only one biological race – *viz.* the human race. Notwithstanding this, Pierre Van den Berghe (1978; 1995) has argued that since all social groups are biologically disposed towards nepotism and since the level of altruistic behaviour shown to others is in direct proportion to the degree of relatedness (real or perceived), it is physical features that provide the most efficient and effective cues for gauging such a degree of relatedness. Cultural markers only come into play when two groups are physically similar to one another, but even then the cultural markers selected – for example, language or religion – are assumed to indicate biological affinity. This is not, however, quite the same as saying that ethnicity is biologically defined. Although Van den Berghe himself believes that there usually is some biological truth to the myth of common descent proclaimed by members of an ethnic group, he leaves open the possibility that perceptions may be as important as realities. Most anthropologists today prefer to regard 'race' not so much as an objective biological property of a group but as a socially constructed category oriented around the *notion*

30. Chapman, McDonald and Tonkin 1989: 16; cf. Snyder 1983: 255–56; Chapman 1993: 14. Along somewhat similar lines: Kuper 1999: 240.

31. Rex 1986: 18–19.

32. See generally Stocking 1968: 42–68; 1987: 46–77; R. Williams 1983: 248–50; Hirschfeld 1996: 34–35; and especially Banton 1998: 17–116.

33. Chapman, McDonald and Tonkin 1989: 3.

34. Eriksen 1993: 4; Hirschfeld 1996: 3–4. For earlier work, see Neel 1970.

of biological similarity.³⁵ This definition is not so very different from that proposed for the ethnic group, though whether the term 'race' has yet outgrown its troubled past sufficiently to re-enter current social-scientific discourse remains to be seen. The important point, however, is that while ethnic identity revolves around notions of kinship, the genetic reality of this kinship is unimportant and not infrequently fictitious. What matters is that ethnic members act *as if* they are related.

This fictive and performative dimension of ethnic proclamation deserves greater emphasis. Different societies 'buy into' the myth of fictive descent with varying degrees of credulity. Anthony Smith (1999: 57–58, 70–71) distinguishes between 'genealogical' and 'ideological' myths of descent. According to Smith, 'genealogical' myths of descent rest on direct and unbroken filiation from progenitors, although this should more properly be regarded as a 'synecdochical' genealogy, expressing a system of relationships between personages considered to be direct lineal ancestors. So, for example, in the *Gospel of Matthew* (1.1–17), Christ's lineage is traced back through David to Judah, son of Jacob and ancestor of the tribe that bears his name. The ancient Greeks, on the other hand, employed 'metaphorical' genealogies, where genealogical relationships between legendary figures stand for relationships between ethnic groups and subethnic units in the present, but direct lineal descent is not explicitly professed. Few Dorians of the Peloponnese can have literally believed that they were descended from the eponymous Doros – indeed, Doros is treated more as a leader than an ancestor – but the figure of Doros and his genealogical relationship to his father Hellen, his brother Aiolos and his nephews Ion and Akhaïos (see fig. 1.1) expressed in metaphorical guise kinship relationships with other Hellenic groups in which the Dorians did believe. According to Smith, 'ideological' myths of descent simply provide a sense of 'spiritual kinship' with the ancestors, triggering the vague acknowledgement of an underlying consubstantiality. Even today, for all our postmodern scepticism, we still play this role even if we no longer believe the script. It is invariably invocations of 'common blood' that ethnic separatist leaders employ to mobilize support,³⁶ and it is not by accident that the national anthems of 'ethno-nations' – i.e. states where political boundaries are ideally (if not actually) coterminous with ethnic boundaries – are peppered with kinship terms.³⁷ So, the French

35. E.g. Eriksen 1993: 4–5. Chapman (1993: 34–35) and Banks (1996) term this notion 'folk biology'.

36. Roosens 1989: 15; W. Connor 1994: 75, 202.

37. Eriksen 1993: 108.

anthem begins 'Allons enfants de la patrie' ('Onward, children of the fatherland'), while the opening lines of the Italian anthem are 'Fratelli d'Italia, l'Italia s'è desta' ('Brothers of Italy, Italy has awakened'). By contrast, those national anthems that avoid kinship references generally belong to countries such as the United States or Switzerland where statehood is not predicated on the myth of ethnic homogeneity.³⁸

Notions of shared kinship are not, of course, limited to the ethnic group. The paradigmatic expression of kinship is the family – and, by extension, social groupings based on aggregations of families – but it is precisely the fictive nature of the belief in kinship that distinguishes the ethnic group from the family. As Weber noted, 'Ethnic membership differs from the kinship group precisely by being a presumed identity, not a group with concrete social action' (1978: 389). The ethnic group is, in other words, an 'imagined community' whose constituents 'will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion'.³⁹ Fictive kinship also plays an important role within the 'tribe', but here it is necessary to disentangle the various ways in which this term has been employed. In Africa, and especially among British social anthropologists, the term 'tribe' was often applied fairly loosely to population groups that we would now consider ethnic groups.⁴⁰ Elsewhere – particularly in the Middle East and Northern Africa – it is employed in a more precise and technical sense to denote political or quasi-political subdivisions of an ethnic group, be they the twelve tribes of Israel, the ten Kleisthenic tribes of Athens or the four tribes of the Syrian Alawites.⁴¹ Members of a tribe in this sense will often imagine their consubstantiality through reference to a founding father, but this fictive kinship is modelled on – and dependent upon – the presumed kinship that underpins the broader ethnic unit to which the tribal subdivisions belong. At the same time, the fact that tribal subdivisions are normally demarcated on a more or less rational basis for predominantly political purposes endows them with an aura of artificiality – even to insiders – that is lacking from the ethnic group,⁴² and it is this political, present-oriented function of the tribe that distinguishes it from the past-oriented perspective of the ethnic group.⁴³ In short, Walker

38. Interestingly, references are also scant in the anthems of Eastern Bloc countries prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall – presumably due to the Marxist doctrine that class consciousness would eventually outweigh more 'archaic' affiliations. See Roosens 1989: 9.

39. B. Anderson 1991: 6.

40. Eriksen 1993: 9; Banks 1996: 25.

41. See Weber 1978: 389–90; W. Connor 1994: 107–8. For the Alawites: Tibi 1990: 138.

42. Weber 1978: 393.

43. De Vos 1995: 18–19.

Connor's description (1994: 202) of the ethnonational community (i.e. a group of people within a state who believe they are ancestrally related) as 'the *largest* group that can command a person's loyalty because of felt kinship ties' (my emphasis) is equally applicable to ethnic groups in general.

I am certainly not suggesting that ethnic groups and cultural groups are mutually exclusive categories, but neither are they homologous. If cultural identity can be defined as the conscious reification of ideas, beliefs, values, attitudes and practices, selectively extracted from the totality of social existence and endowed with a particular symbolic signification for the purposes of creating exclusionary distinctiveness,⁴⁴ then ethnicity is a *specific type* of cultural identity, alongside other subvarieties such as linguistic identity, religious identity, occupational identity, and so forth. What distinguishes it from these other types of cultural identity is the fact that the symbols upon which it draws revolve around notions of fictive kinship and descent, common history and a specific homeland.

Before turning to more methodological considerations, two further, mutually-associated objections should briefly be anticipated. The first is that ethnicity is an essentially modern phenomenon whose study in the past is therefore anachronistic.⁴⁵ Indeed, it is often observed that the term itself is a neologism, first attested in 1941.⁴⁶ Roger Just, who regards it as a 'retrograde step that ethnicity should ever have entered into the *analytic* vocabulary of the social sciences' (1989: 76), declares himself 'sceptical about whether a discourse of ethnicity can be attributed to Greek antiquity' (1998: 279). Admittedly, the ancient Greeks possessed no single term that might equate to our word 'ethnicity'. The Greek term *ethnos*, from which the modern social-scientific terms are derived, simply designates a class of beings (humans or animals) who share a common identification. While it can be applied to populations that we might today recognize as ethnic groups, it may also be employed to describe groups of birds, bees, boys or girls.⁴⁷ Does this mean, though, as Colin Renfrew (1998b: 277) infers, that the Greeks had no concept of ethnicity in the modern sense?

44. This is not the place for a discussion of theories and definitions of 'culture', which I intend to publish elsewhere. For now, the reader is referred to the following works: Parsons 1951; Kroeber and Kluckhohn 1952; Goodenough 1964; Stocking 1968; 1987; Keesing 1974; Ortner 1984; Swidler 1986; Clifford 1988; Chartier 1988; Berger 1995; Brightman 1995; Kuper 1999; Bauman 1999; Sewell 1999.

45. E.g. Glazer and Moynihan 1975: 1–3; cf. Geary 1983: 16.

46. Warner and Lunt 1941: 73. See Sollors 1989: xiii and (assigning the publication to the wrong year) Banks 1996: 4–5. *Contra* Glazer and Moynihan (1975: 1), who date the appearance of the term to 1953 (cf. J. M. Hall 1997: 34).

47. Donlan 1985: 295; Chapman, McDonald and Tonkin 1989: 12; C. P. Jones 1996a; J. M. Hall 1997: 34–35.

This linguistic 'argument from silence' is hardly compelling. The ancient Greeks possessed no single terms that equate directly to our words 'gender', 'class' or even 'culture', yet few would argue that these are topics that cannot be studied in antiquity. The fact is that social theory was not an invention of the Greeks and we can hardly therefore hold them accountable for failing to develop the sort of analytical terminology for which we might have wished. They could, however, talk 'around' these concepts. When they discuss how particular populations are characterized by their *diata* (daily way of life), *ethea* (dispositional habits) and *nomoi* (regulated norms), or speculate that mental values and physical comportment may be inculcated in the young through *paideia* (education), it is difficult to maintain that they are not talking about culture in certain senses that we are able to recognize.⁴⁸ Similarly, in attributing the social solidarity of an *ethnos* to *genos* (birth) and *syngeneia* (kinship), the Greeks came about as close as they could to our concept of ethnicity.⁴⁹

The second possible objection would concede that ethnicity is a trans-historical phenomenon but challenge the validity of applying a definition elaborated by comparative research among contemporary societies to populations of the past.⁵⁰ Ultimately, however, this objection perpetuates a sterile dichotomy between the generality of comparative models and the historical, regional and social particularities of the past. Furthermore, ironically perhaps, it places the sceptics in the same camp as the most relativist of poststructuralists who argue that since different 'universes of meaning' are culturally specific they are therefore incommensurable and cannot be subsumed under any general comparative theory. The result is a type of 'superempiricism . . . that regards each case or research setting as . . . fully explainable by detailed description without "explanation"'.⁵¹ The truth is that an analytical tool that allows itself to be moulded to the contours of its object quickly becomes a blunt instrument. A near-universal working definition of ethnicity provides a neutral yardstick by which the Greek case may be compared with other societies, historical or otherwise. The alternative – to derive a definition of ethnicity inductively from the Greek material alone – would guarantee the result even before investigation and the import of the discovery would be parochial at best.⁵² Like an 'ideal type', a working definition will rarely account for all

48. J. M. Redfield 1985: 98–99.

49. J. M. Hall 1997: 34–40. For affirmations of ethnicity in other early societies, see Hutchinson and Smith 1996: 3; A. D. Smith 1999: 106–8.

50. E.g. Dench 2000: 210–11.

51. Berger 1995: 69.

52. Cf. S. Jones 1997: 87.

the data in every context, but it is the different 'fits' between individual case-studies and the working definition that ultimately illuminate the former and generate further questions for investigation.⁵³

DISCOURSE AND PRAXIS: SAYING AND DOING

In general, two classes of evidence have survived from classical antiquity. The first is literary, comprising the conscious but subjective expressions of poets, historians, politicians, philosophers and scientists, the deliberate but sometimes propagandistic formulations of civic and religious inscriptions and the conscious or half-conscious graffiti, often casually scribbled on fragments of pottery and tile. The second is archaeological and includes phenomena as diverse as architectural, sculptural and painted-pottery styles and iconographic conventions, manufacturing techniques, settlement patterns and even subsistence strategies. Both types of evidence are crucial routes that the historian must follow attentively in entering into a dialogue with the past. However, I have argued (1997: 111–42) that since ethnicity is discursively constructed through the employment of symbols such as fictive kinship, literary evidence will normally constitute the initial point of departure in any analysis of ancient ethnicity. It was to be expected that many archaeologists would find this unpalatable, and so I conclude this chapter by reclarifying my position.

According to the 'culture-historical' method of Gordon Childe, 'peoples' might be recognized in the archaeological record through the appearance of regularly associated material cultural traits.⁵⁴ The notion was not too dissimilar to the 'settlement archaeology' approach pioneered at the beginning of the twentieth century by the German prehistorian Gustav Kossinna (1902), who argued that the dispersal of Corded Ware pottery and other associated artefacts could track the origins of the Indo-Europeans from a primordial Teutonic homeland. The cultural – and, by implication, 'racial' – primacy that this conclusion bestowed upon the Germanic *Volk* was promoted and exploited by the National Socialist Party as proof of Aryan supremacy, and it is little wonder that scholarly reaction to this nationalistic application of archaeology should have discredited not only Kossinna's theories but also those of Childe, despite his attempts to distance his conception of a 'people' from the racial categories that informed 'settlement archaeology'.⁵⁵

53. For 'ideal types' as models: I. Morris 2000: 112–13.

54. See Childe 1929: v–vi.

55. See Trigger 1980: 44; Renfrew 1987: 15, 215; Veit 1989: 37–39; S. Jones 1997: 2–3; J. M. Hall 1997: 129. For other nationalistic applications of archaeology within Europe, see Diet-

The 'culture-historical' method fell further into abeyance as a result of the emergence of 'New Archaeology' (also known as 'Processual Archaeology') in the 1950s and 1960s.⁵⁶ Influenced by cultural ecologists, the New Archaeologists tended to view culture in terms of a systemic adaptation to the environment; continuities were stressed over discontinuities and endogenous (internal) factors were favoured over exogenous (external) determinants. This meant that different cultural manifestations were associated with adaptive responses rather than individual population groups, and cultural change was explained in terms of positive and negative 'feedback mechanisms' operating *within* the culture-system rather than the migration or conquest of culturally distinct peoples.⁵⁷ In recent decades, a series of case-studies has manifestly demonstrated that ethnic and material cultural boundaries need not be coterminous,⁵⁸ while even the very principles of archaeological classification have come under investigation. No archaeological assemblage can be defined on a monothetic basis, but identification on the grounds of 'typical diagnostic' traits has been criticized as intuitive, arbitrary and subjective.⁵⁹

One of the most sophisticated treatments of the relationship between ethnicity and archaeology to date has been put forward by Siân Jones (1997). Arguing for a dynamic, situational and constructivist view of ethnicity, she suggests that traditional 'normative' approaches that depend upon a conception of material culture patternings as static and monolithic are inappropriate and misinformed. She appeals instead to Pierre Bourdieu's 'theory of practice'. Bourdieu's central project has been to transcend the debilitating opposition between 'objectivist/structuralist' approaches that attribute primacy in social explanation to objective, determinist forces existing outside individual human consciousness (e.g. social structure or the economic base) and 'subjectivist/existentialist' views that challenge objectivity and regard social reality as nothing other than the product of human consciousness.⁶⁰ In Bourdieu's opinion, social structure and individual agency are mediated by means of what he calls the *habitus* – 'durable, transposable dispositions [i.e. attitudes, perceptions, sensations] . . . acting as a system of cognitive and motivating

ler 1994 (Celts in France), Díaz-Andreu 1997 (Iberians in Spain) and S. James 1999 (Celts in Britain).

56. E.g. Willey and Phillips 1958: 49; Clarke 1978: 365.

57. S. Jones 1997: 26–27.

58. E.g. Arnold 1978: 58; O'Shea 1984; Collett 1987: 106; DeCorse 1989: 137; Díaz-Andreu 1998.

59. Binford 1965: 205; Clarke 1978: 37; Shanks and Tilley 1987: 83–84; S. Jones 1997: 108–9; Díaz-Andreu 1998: 203–4.

60. See, for example, Bourdieu 1990: 55.

structures' (1990: 53; cf. 1977: 72). Generated in the first place by objective social and economic conditions, the *habitus* is unconsciously 'embodied' in individuals from an early age as part of the socialization process, providing not so much a codified system of rules and regulations but rather a practical sense on which social actors draw in a variety of different situations. At the same time, it is through those actions (practice) that the *habitus* is continually reproduced, bequeathed and occasionally transformed. In this sense, the *habitus* is both a system of 'structuring structures' that generate and organize practices and a system of 'structured structures' that are shaped by social practice.⁶¹

Bourdieu (1977: 24–27) takes great care not to equate the *habitus* with 'culture', which, for him, constitutes a symbolic order typical of a 'field' (a structured system of social positions co-ordinated in terms of power relationships within which the *habitus* of individual agents operates).⁶² Other social scientists have, however, considered the *habitus* to operate in a broadly similar way to the concept of culture,⁶³ and G. Carter Bentley (1987) has argued that ethnicity arises when members of a group recognize the subliminal dispositions that are generated by their shared *habitus*. Whereas Bentley stresses feelings of affinity and commonality, however, Jones – in line with recent anthropological thinking – focuses more on processes of differentiation and opposition and draws on Bourdieu's distinction (1977: 159–69) between 'doxic', 'orthodoxic' and 'heterodoxic' modes of knowledge or social experience. The 'doxic' mode characterizes situations in which subjective principles of classification adhere closely enough to objective conditions of existence so as to entail a misrecognition or naturalization of the arbitrariness on which they are based. However, contact with another 'doxic field' may give rise to 'orthodoxy' (an entrenched defence of 'doxic belief' in the knowledge that alternative beliefs exist) or 'heterodoxy' (the recognition of other, competing modes of belief). For Jones, exposure to a different cultural tradition entails a break with 'doxic' knowledge, as a consequence of which 'a set of cultural practices and beliefs which had previously formed part of the domain of *doxa* becomes reified as a coherent and concrete object in opposition to specific "others"' (1997: 95). In this way, '[t]he cultural practices and representations that become objectified as symbols of ethnicity are derived from, and resonate with, the habitual practices and experiences of the people concerned [i.e. the *habitus*], as well as reflecting the instru-

61. See generally Jenkins 1992: 74–84; Postone, LiPuma and Calhoun 1993: 2–4; S. Jones 1997: 88–89.

62. See Jenkins 1992: 84–87; LiPuma 1993: 18; Brightman 1995: 536–37.

63. E.g. Ortner 1984: 148; Jenkins 1992: 90.

mental contingencies of a particular situation' (1997: 128). Jones believes that this 'transformation of habitual, material variation into active self-conscious ethnic symbolism' should be detectable in the archaeological record by observing diachronic changes in the nature or distribution of certain material items within a broader contextual framework (1997: 126).

When Bentley formulated his earlier 'practice theory' of ethnicity, a reviewer commented that the 'awareness of objective commonalities' that he derived from a shared *habitus* properly refers to a common culture rather than a shared sense of ethnic solidarity.⁶⁴ The same criticism can be levelled at Jones. Her advocacy of a careful, detailed diachronic analysis of material culture that is acutely attentive to context may well reveal instances of symbolic signalling through material culture – in other words, exactly the sort of reification of symbolic resources through which a cultural group communicates its distinctiveness.⁶⁵ It may also be that this emblematic communication of cultural symbols is designed to reinforce a sense of ethnic consciousness. But since not all cultural groups are ethnic groups, there is nothing about material signalling *per se* that permits us to class the phenomenon as ethnic. Ultimately, the only way that Jones is able to establish the equation is by defining ethnic groups as 'culturally ascribed identity groups, which are based on the expression of a real or assumed shared culture *and* common descent' (1997: 84 [my emphasis]), but the definition itself is never justified.⁶⁶ Revealing in this respect is the case-study of Romanization in Britain that she employs periodically throughout the book. An analysis of architectural features and pottery assemblages from Late Iron Age and Early Roman sites in Essex and Hertfordshire reveals significant variations in style, function and chronology between sites that can only challenge earlier ideas about the uniform, universal and unilineal character of Romanization. At the same time, she believes that 'changes in the material culture of south-east England must, in part at least, reflect the articulation of cultural identities in the past' (1997: 133), and she goes on to classify Romanization itself as a

64. Yelvington 1991: 158.

65. My own suggestion (1997: 136) that a contextual analysis of material culture is capable of revealing active signalling ('the deliberate emphasis on cultural distinctiveness in circumstances where such distinctiveness is not otherwise immediately apparent, or on cultural conformity in situations where such conformity is not necessarily accepted') comes, I think, close to what Jones is advocating here; see S. Jones 1998: 272.

66. Interestingly this definition betrays a certain slippage from the definition provided in the preface (1997: xiii), where the ethnic group is characterized as 'any group of people who set themselves apart and/or are set apart by others with whom they interact or co-exist on the basis of their perceptions of cultural differentiation *and/or* common descent' (my emphasis). Morgan (2001) avoids the problem by omitting any reference to common kinship from her definition of the ethnic group.

complex process of ethnic identification (1997: 135). Yet *Romanitas* is precisely *not* an ethnic identification.⁶⁷ It is the cultural communication of a legal-juridical status that lacked any concept of a common ethnic core. Even those Romans who inhabited the city of Rome itself and claimed descent from generations of Roman forefathers would not have professed otherwise: Roman identity was predicated from an early date on the notion of ethnic heterogeneity between Latin, Sabine and Etruscan populations.⁶⁸

It is not that it is 'unlikely that we can ever know what the sentiments of affect were between people long dead'.⁶⁹ There is not infrequently a correlation – however complex – between what people think and what they do (and consequently what they deposit in the archaeological record). Nor is it necessarily the case that a sense of common descent or kinship cannot be communicated materially. I have argued previously (1997: 138–40) that in the course of the eighth and seventh centuries, certain communities within the Argive Plain expressed their ethnic solidarity through a range of 'ancestralizing strategies' – for instance, situating new sanctuaries in areas of Late Bronze Age activity or depositing offerings and even practising reburial in Bronze Age tombs – with the aim of establishing a direct connection with presumed ancestors and an intimate association with an ancestral territory. Yet that conclusion was only made possible by the existence in those same communities of ethnic myths which traced descent back to Herakles and origins back to the Bronze Age communities of the plain. In the absence of an explicitly articulated ethnic discourse, there is nothing about these archaeological phenomena that necessarily makes them ethnic strategies: the establishment of a sanctuary to Helen and Menelaos near a Bronze Age 'mansion' at Lakonian Therapne can hardly represent an attempt to forge an ethnic link between the Dorian Spartans and former Akhaian ancestors from whom they never claimed descent.⁷⁰ To overemphasize observable similarities between practices is to misrecognize that they may actually possess quite different regionally-specific significations.

My point, then, is not the criticism – traditionally levelled by literary students – that there can be no archaeology of ideas. There is a great deal that we can, and must, infer from the material record for large parts of the Mediterranean world throughout all periods (and not just those for

67. See Woolf 1998: 240.

68. Cornell 1995: 60.

69. Banks 1996: 130; *contra* A. D. Smith 1986: 70–71. See also Shennan 1989: 14.

70. The Spartan kings claimed to be Akhaian (see chapter 3), but their descent was drawn from a quite different lineage to that of Menelaos.

which contemporary literary documentation is lacking). It is, rather, that a rigorous and precise definition of ethnicity as a matter of a putative subscription to a myth of shared kinship means that this sentiment cannot, in the absence of confirmatory literary evidence, be assumed from the mere detection of cultural signalling in the archaeological record. The cautionary scenario here is represented by the hippie movement of the 1960s. As a cultural group, hippies were eminently distinctive in terms of dress, coiffure, music, diet, vehicular transport and even to a certain extent nomenclature. There is every reason to believe that they will be archaeologically identifiable in the material record of the future, but simply to assume on that basis that they constituted an ethnic group would be to commit a grave error. Ethnicity may be communicated archaeologically, but there can be no archaeology of ethnicity among societies who have left us no record.

Interpreting the literary record is, of course, seldom straightforward, as archaeologists are always keen to point out (though why some should either assume that literary scholars are unaware of this or believe that methodological rigour is a skill with which only archaeologists are endowed is less explicable). From a historical – as opposed to strictly literary – point of view, the process of eliciting meaning from a particular document is not so different from the procedure advocated by archaeological theorists. The signification of the written word is seldom transparent – despite the claims of the author – and needs to be gauged contextually by reading that particular document against the background of other literary and non-literary evidence. This is, however, only attainable for periods, regions or concepts where the contextual material is ‘thick’. Where the evidence is spread more thinly and where such evidence as does exist often derives from authors living several centuries after the events they describe, the endeavour is understandably more difficult. The latter scenario is unfortunately more usual in the study of ancient Greek history, especially when we turn away from more public and political topics and focus research on periods other than the Classical period (480–323 BC) or areas beyond Athens and Attika.

Typical in this respect are those traditions that recount the movements of the principal Greek ethnic groups – the Dorians, Ionians, Aioliens and Akhaïans – towards the end of the Heroic Age. To the extent that such traditions look back to a former era of cohabitation and exodus from an ancestral homeland, they function as a vital charter for ethnic consciousness in cities whose populations claimed descent from the original migrants. At the same time, the most developed accounts of these traditions appear in authors such as Diodoros of Sicily or the compiler of the

pseudo-Apollodoran *Bibliotheka* who were writing when Greece was under Roman rule. To assume automatically that the information they present faithfully preserves the memory of genuine population movements towards the end of the Bronze Age fails to recognize that the function of such traditions was to legitimate circumstances in the present rather than rehearse the actuality of the past. Conversely, to dismiss peremptorily such information simply because it postdates the events it purports to describe by several centuries is simultaneously to credit ancient compilers with more ingenuity and creativity than they deserve and to underestimate their ability to appreciate the complexities of sifting through the sources available to them. For example, in attempting to account for Hellenic origins, Diodoros of Sicily (4.1.1–4) notes that the fourth-century historians Ephoros, Kallisthenes and Theopompos all ‘avoided the ancient myths’ and offers four reasons for their silence. Firstly, the sheer antiquity of the events to be recorded makes them difficult to discover.⁷¹ Secondly, since the dates of early events are unverifiable, readers will often be dismissive of a narrative that deals with this period. Thirdly, the diversity and multiplicity of the various genealogies of heroes, gods and mortals render any synthesis difficult to understand. Finally, and most importantly, those earlier authors who have recounted the deeds and myths of ancient times are seldom in agreement with one another. What is required, then, is an analytical method that steers a middle course between excessive credulity and hypercriticism – one that traces the tantalizing manifestations of traditions in earlier sources where they exist and plausible historical, social and political contexts for the elaboration of such traditions where they do not.

Genealogical traditions represent an extremely valuable type of literary evidence since the familial nature of genealogies is especially suited to articulating notions of descent and relatedness (see above). One of the most important genealogical traditions – the ‘Hellenic Genealogy’ (fig. 1.1) – can be constructed out of two fragments from a poem erroneously attributed in antiquity to Hesiod and known as the *Ehoiai* or *Catalogue of Women* (see Appendix A). The first fragment informs us that ‘the sons of the war-loving king Hellen were Doros, Xouthos and Aiolos who fights from the chariot’ (fr. 9 Merkelbach-West). The second supplements this information with the notice that ‘the spear-famed king Aigimios begat by force in his palace Dymas and Pamphylos’ and that ‘by the will of the gods, Xouthos took as his wife Kreousa of beautiful form, the fair-cheeked daughter of godlike Erekhtheus, and she lay with him in love and

71. Cf. Thukydides 1.21.1.

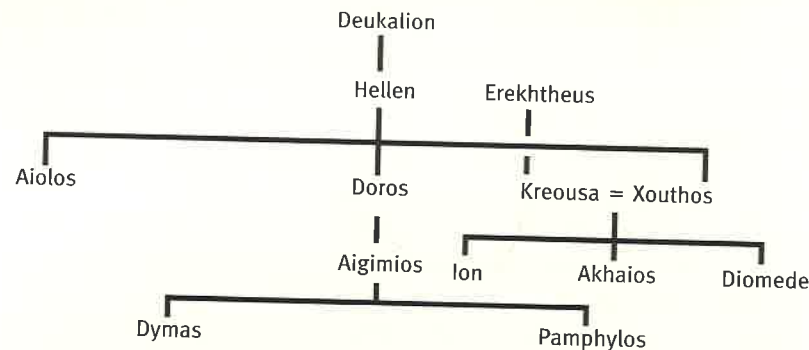


Fig. 1.1. The 'Hellenic Genealogy' According to the *Catalogue of Women*

bore him Akhaïos, Ion of the noble steeds and the beautiful Diomede' (fr. 10(a) 6–7, 20–24). Now although fictive kinship is the *sine qua non* for ethnic consciousness and is often expressed in genealogical form, we cannot automatically assume that every genealogical tradition necessarily serves an ethnic function.⁷² The fact is that genealogies performed multiple purposes for the ancient Greeks. On the one hand, a genealogy might seek to elevate the claims to status and authority of one particular family over ethnically related peers. This is the case with the lineage of the Philaidai, the Athenian family to which Miltiades belonged and which the Athenian genealogist Pherekydes (3 *FGH* 2) traced back to the hero Aias.⁷³ On the other, the interrelationships between – and relative antiquity of – features of the local landscape might be expressed in genealogical form: Pausanias (3.1.2–3) delineates Spartan territory by recounting the union between Lakedaïmon and Sparte (the two interchangeable names by which Sparta was known) and notes that Sparte was the daughter of Eurotas (the principal river of Sparta) while Lakedaïmon's mother was Taygete (from Taygetos, the mountain that looms above Sparta). Lakedaïmon's son, in turn, was Amyklas, and this detail represents in genealogical terms the belief that Amyklai was the last village to be incorporated within the city-state of Lakedaïmon-Sparta.⁷⁴ What makes the 'Hellenic Genealogy' ethnic is not its mere attestation but the fact that its

72. Konstan 1997b: 100; Renfrew 1998b: 277.

73. For family genealogies, see R. Thomas 1989: 161–95. Fowler (1998: 3–4) notes that genealogies with no segmentation tend to legitimize hereditary status and hence display depth rather than breadth. Social (and ethnic) relationships, conversely, can only be communicated through lineage segmentation within genealogies that are as broad as they are deep.

74. See Calame 1987; Malkin 1994: 19–22. For the topographic function of genealogies within the Argive Plain: J. M. Hall 1997: 88.

protagonists are generally anonymous and faceless characters with whom few if any mythological exploits are associated. This is especially true of Doros and Akhaïos; Aiolos is a potential exception (see chapter 5), while the literary and iconographic evidence suggests that the various legends attached to the figure of Ion do not predate the Classical period.⁷⁵ In other words, these particular figures serve no purpose other than to personify the (ethnic) groups which bear their names.

The function of the 'Hellenic Genealogy' is to express the relationships between Dorians, Aioliens, Akhaïans and Ionians – represented by their eponymous founding fathers – as well as to signal the participation of all four groups within a broader Hellenic identity embodied in the figure of the eponymous king Hellen, son of Deukalion.⁷⁶ In addition, the genealogy presents a system of ranking: the credentials of the Dorians and Aioliens are in some senses promoted over those of the Akhaïans and Ionians by having the eponyms of the former ranked as Hellen's sons and those of the latter as his grandsons. What makes genealogies particularly suitable vehicles, however, for expressing ethnic relationships (and, incidentally, furthers the claim that certain genealogies served ethnic functions in ancient Greece) is their adaptability to changing circumstances. As relationships between contemporary groups change, so relationships within genealogies are modified through the addition, omission and substitution of certain names, or a reconceptualization of the relations between existing names.⁷⁷ Indeed, the genealogy that we find in the *Catalogue of Women* was not the only way in which relationships between Greek ethnic groups might be configured. In a fragment of Hekataios of Miletos (1 *FGH* 16), we are told that Ion is the elder brother of Lokros (eponym for the Lokrians of central Greece) and son of Physkos – a hero whose descent is later traced back via Aitolos to Orestheus, the brother of Hellen (fig. 1.2).⁷⁸ Another genealogical version appears in Euripides' *Ion* (57–75, 1589–94), first performed towards the end of the fifth century (fig. 1.3). Here Aiolos is now the son of Zeus rather than of Hellen, and Xouthos is his son, not his brother; Doros joins Akhaïos as son of Xouthos and Kreousa, but Ion retains Xouthos only as a foster-father – his true father is the god Apollo. Apollo's paternity of Ion is repeated in Plato's *Euthydemos*

75. *LIMC* 5.1 702–5 (E. Simon).

76. For the similar use of genealogies in constructing ethnic communities in the Early Middle Ages, see Wenskus 1977.

77. Vansina 1985: 24, 182; Fowler 1998: 3. For the use of genealogies within competing power claims in modern Jordan, see Shryock 1997.

78. Hekataios 1 *FGH* 15 and Skymnos 589. It is, however, by no means certain that the Ion mentioned in this genealogy is the same as the eponymous founding father of the Ionians: see Jacoby's commentary on fr. 16.

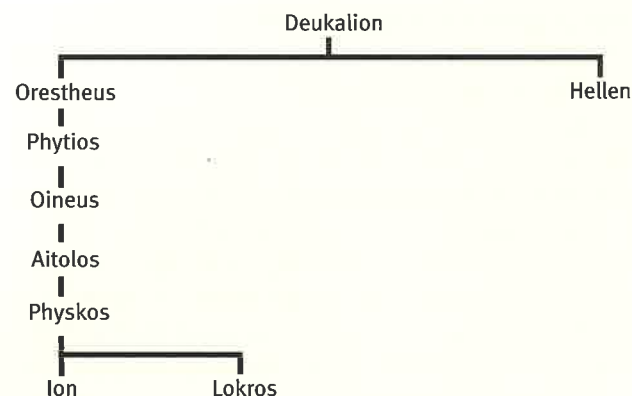
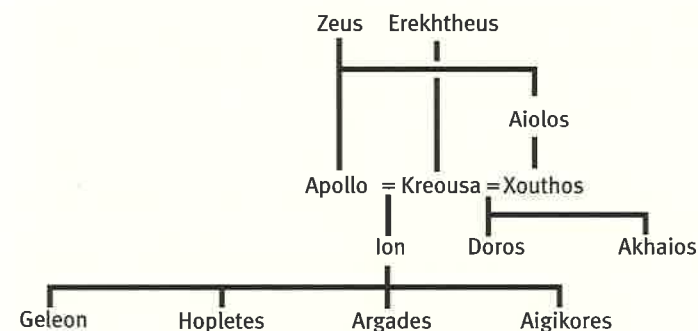


Fig. 1.2. Hekataios fr. 16 with fr. 15 and pseudo-Skymnos 589

(302d) and a fragment of the pseudo-Aristotelian *Constitution of the Athenians* (fr. 381 Rose), while an ancient commentary on the Hellenistic poet Kallimakhos (fr. 7 Pfeiffer) presents some similarities with the Euripidean genealogy in deriving Xouthos' descent from Aiolos, though Aiolos is described as the son of Hellen, not Zeus.

Nevertheless, if the pseudo-Hesiodic 'Hellenic Genealogy' was not unique in antiquity, we can at least be fairly confident of its dominance in the construction of Hellenic identity during the Archaic period. Martin West (1985: 169–70) believes that the *Catalogue of Women* was written down towards the end of the sixth century by an Athenian, partly on the grounds of dialect and partly due to the selection of material – for instance Erekhtheus' paternity of Sikyon, which West views as a reflection of Athenian irredentism. The poem was not, however, simply a vehicle for Athenian propaganda. It was rather a compilation of pre-existing genealogical traditions and legends intended to unite what had formerly been local tales with a purely regional function and significance within a broader Hellenic frame of reference. The task – repeated several times in the subsequent centuries – of reconciling local genealogies with one another was by no means easy, and it is the ingenious tactics to which such compilers resorted that argues for the prior authenticity rather than artificiality of the material included.⁷⁹ Far from representing one author's view of the world, the 'Hellenic Genealogy' reflects the ethnic charter myths through which in the Archaic period Dorians, Aioliens, Akhaians and Ionians began to subscribe to a broader Hellenic identity, and it is for this reason that this particular pedigree enjoyed a centrality and longevity

79. Fowler 1998: 7–8.

Fig. 1.3. The genealogy of Ion in Euripides' *Ion*

in Greek thought that was unmatched by other genealogical variants. Thus, the pseudo-Hesiodic version is rehearsed unaltered in the works of Strabo (8.7.1), Konon (26 *FGrH* 1.27) and pseudo-Apollodoros (1.7.3), while Hellanikos of Mytilene (4 *FGrH* 125) simply adds Xenopatra to the children of Hellen. It is true that Herodotos only mentions Hellen's paternity of Doros (1.56.3) and Ion's filiation from Xouthos (7.94), while Thukydides refers anonymously to the 'sons of Hellen' (1.3.2) and Pausanias (7.1.2) derives the descent of Akhaios and Ion from Xouthos, son of Hellen, without mentioning Aiolos or Doros. Nevertheless, none of these details is actually inconsistent with the 'Hellenic Genealogy' and they suggest at most partial citation rather than ignorance. The aim of the next four chapters is to investigate when and in what circumstances the notion of a shared Hellenic identity, as represented by the 'Hellenic Genealogy', first arose in Greece.

CHAPTER TWO

The Question of Origins



GREEK VIEWS OF GREEK BEGINNINGS

Asked what the Spartans enjoy listening to most, Plato's Hippias responds that they have little time for astronomy, geometry, logic, prosody, rhythm or music, but that they are enchanted by hearing 'about the lineages of heroes and mortals, about the ancient foundation of cities and in short about the whole of antiquity' (285c–d). Nor was this penchant restricted to the Spartans: Menekrates of Elaia is said to have devoted an entire treatise to civic foundation stories,¹ while the works of Strabo and Pausanias preserve a host of local traditions accounting for the foundation of cities, sanctuaries, festivals and institutions. Yet, despite this seeming obsession with 'beginnings', the Greeks actually had great difficulty in accounting for their own origins. It is not that they lacked explanations for the origins of humanity. The compendium of mythology known as the *Bibliotheca* and erroneously assigned to Apollodoros recounts how, following the great flood, Deukalion and his wife, Pyrrha, cast stones which were miraculously transformed into the first men and women, thereby replicating in a certain sense the actions of their respective parents – Prometheus, who moulded an earlier generation of men from earth and water, and Pandora, the first woman (1.7.2). The story was already known to the compiler of the sixth-century *Catalogue of Women* (fr. 234 Merkelbach-West) and was repeated in the early fifth century by Akousi-

1. Strabo 13.3.3.

laos of Argos (2 *FGrH* 35) and Pindar (*Olympian Odes* 9.41–45). Yet, despite purporting to provide a universal explanation for human origins, this tale never succeeded in establishing itself as *the* authoritative account of beginnings in the same way as the biblical tale of Adam and Eve or the creation myths of the Near East.² It remained in essence a local East Lokrian myth, coexisting alongside a number of specific regional variants such as Kadmos' population of Thebes with men sprung from the teeth of a dragon,³ Zeus' creation of the Myrmidones from ants,⁴ or the various tales of autochthony (the fact of having always occupied the same territory) and birth from the earth.

To complicate matters further, the historical populations of Greek cities rarely claimed any continuity between themselves and the protagonists of these 'cosmogonic' myths. It is, for example, telling that immediately after recounting the creation of Pandora, Hesiod embarks on a description of the four earliest 'mythical' populations (*gene*), each of which stands alone disjunctively. The *gene* of gold, silver, bronze and heroes are both created and extinguished by the gods, while the creation of Hesiod's own *genos* of iron, dated to after the Trojan War, is attributed to no agency, divine or otherwise (*Works and Days* 106–76).⁵ In fact, claims to autochthony among the historical populations of Greek cities are the exception rather than the rule: Herodotos clearly believed that the Arkadians were the direct descendants of primeval Pelasgians (2.171.3; 8.73.1) and hypothesizes that the Athenians were also originally Pelasgians who became Greek when they learnt the Greek language (1.57.3). Yet elsewhere he appears to regard the Pelasgians as distinct from the Athenians (2.51.1–2; 6.137–38), and the evidence suggests that the Athenian myth of autochthony was a new coinage of the early fifth century, replacing – at least partially – an earlier belief which regarded the Athenians as Ionians.⁶ Certainly, in the Archaic period some of the most important Athenian families claimed extra-Athenian origins: the Peisistratids professed descent from Neleidai, who had long ago arrived from Messenian Pylos to rule over Athens and to conduct the Ionian migration to Asia Minor, while the Gephyraioi – the family to which the tyrannicides Harmodios and Aristogeiton belonged – claimed to be from the Ionian city of Eretria on Euboea.⁷

2. Luginbühl 1992: 99–262; cf. Loraux 2000: 1.

3. Pherekydes 3 *FGrH* 22; Euripides, *Phoenician Women* 638–75.

4. Hesiod fr. 205 Merkelbach-West.

5. Cf. Vidal-Naquet 1986: 287; Loraux 2000: 4.

6. See Montanari 1981; McNeal 1985: 17; Rosivach 1987; W. R. Connor 1993; J. M. Hall 1997: 51–56; R. Thomas 2000: 117–22.

7. Herodotos 5.65.3 (Peisistratids); 5.57.1 (Gephyraioi).

For Thukydides (1.2.1), it was the thin soil of Attika – and, we assume, the ruggedness of Arkadia – that made these two areas unattractive to potential aggressors and therefore immune from the countless migrations which rocked the Greek world as the ‘Heroic Age’ drew to a close. Sixty years after the Trojan War, Boiotia is said to have been invaded by the Boiotoi of Thessaly, while twenty years after that – 1104 BC on the reckoning of Diodoros of Sicily (7.8.1) – the Dorians and their Heraklid commanders are said to have captured the whole of the Peloponnese except Arkadia, settling among earlier inhabitants in some cities but in most cases expelling the former population.⁸ Their arrival in Lakonia and the Argolid is supposed to have dislodged the Akhaians, forcing them to seek a new territory along the southern shores of the Korinthis Gulf, where they displaced an Ionian population that sought refuge in Attika,⁹ while in the western Peloponnese the Dorians granted the region of Elis to their Aitolian allies.¹⁰ The intervention of these migratory episodes meant, then, that the ‘cosmogonic’ origins of a particular city were seldom the same as the origins of the group that occupied it during the historical period: the Dorian population of Sparta professed no genealogical connection with the Leleges who first inhabited Lakonia just as the Dorians of Argos claimed no continuity with those men and women whom Phoroneus had first settled in communities.¹¹ At the same time, it appears that these beliefs in extraneous origins actually excused the Greeks from concerning themselves unduly with their premigratory existence outside the regions they were eventually to occupy. Inhabitants of Dorian cities assumed an ancestral coexistence in central or northern Greece, though the precise location of the original Dorian homeland varies between accounts (see chapter 3). Similarly divergent accounts are recognizable in the tradition concerning the Ionian migration. Even the origins of the Akhaians who are supposed to have dislodged the Ionians from Akhaia are disputed: most authors assume that they were indigenous to the southern and eastern Peloponnese,¹² but Strabo (8.5.5) recounts a tradition that Pelops led them to the Peloponnese from Akhaia Phthiotis in southeastern Thessaly.

This series of movements to which the principal Hellenic ethnic groups attributed their distribution in historical times was imagined as

8. Thukydides 1.12.3; Pausanias 2.13.1.

9. Herodotos 8.73.1; Strabo 8.1.2; 8.5.5; 8.7.1; Pausanias 5.1.1; 7.1.

10. Strabo 8.3.30; Pausanias 5.4.2.

11. Pausanias 3.1.1 (Lakonia); 2.15.5 (Argos). See Calame 1987; Malkin 1994: 15–45; J. M. Hall 1997: 77–88.

12. E.g. Herodotos 8.73.1; Pausanias 5.1.1.

simply the last of a succession of migratory waves which both overlaid and displaced ‘pre-Hellenic’ populations. Hekataios of Miletos (1 *FGrH* 119) maintained that most of Greece had formerly been occupied by ‘barbarians’ such as the Phrygians, the Egyptians, the Dryopes, the Kaukones, the Pelasgians, the Leleges, the Thrakians and the Phoenicians.¹³ Some of these non-Hellenic peoples were evidently still occupying parts of the Aegean during the fifth century: Pelasgian-speaking populations are attested for the Khalkidike peninsula, the regions west of the river Strymon and the island of Lemnos,¹⁴ while the cities of Hermione in the Argolid, Asine in Messenia and Styra on Euboia together with the island of Kythnos were populated by Dryopes.¹⁵ As in the case of Hellenic groups, however, the earlier settlement history of these populations is vague and confused. For instance, Leleges are said to have once occupied the Megarid, Lakonia and above all the islands.¹⁶ They are often linked with the Karians, and Herodotos (1.171.2) recounts a Kretan tradition that derived the Karians of Asia Minor from Leleges occupying the islands during the reign of Minos, though he notes that the Karians themselves claimed to be autochthonous and to have always used the same name.¹⁷ The Pelasgians are similarly elusive.¹⁸ Often treated as a widely-distributed population occupying much of what was later to be called Hellas but formerly known as Pelasgia,¹⁹ they are typically characterized as being in perpetual transit. So the Pelasgians who conquered Lemnos are said to have been refugees from Attika but originally inhabitants of Samothrake.²⁰ Indeed, the Pelasgians’ migrant nature led ancient authors to connect their name with *pelargoi*, the Greek word for ‘storks’.²¹ Strabo (5.2.4) notes that they originally had a close association with the Aioliens of Thessaly, though Ephoros (70 *FGrH* 113) traced their ultimate origins to Arkadia and Aiskhylos (*Suppliants* 252–57) to Argos. It is this indeterminacy that has led many scholars to suspect that the term ‘Pelasgian’ was not used in any ethnographically precise way to identify a definable, self-conscious popu-

13. Cf. Herodotos 1.173.1–2; 2.49.3; 4.147.4; Thukydides 1.4.1; 2.29.3; Strabo 7.7.1; 9.2.3.

14. Herodotos 1.57.2; 6.137–40; Thukydides 4.109.4.

15. Herodotos 8.73.2; 8.46.4. Cf. Diodoros 4.37.2; Strabo 8.6.13; Pausanias 4.34.9. On the Dryopes, see Sakellariou 1977: 255–78; J. M. Hall 1997: 74–77; Strid 1999.

16. E.g. Pausanias 1.39.6; 3.1.1.

17. Cf. Thukydides 1.4; 1.8.1. Cassola (1957a) hypothesizes two elements within the Karian population: Kretan descendants who occupied the coastal areas and autochthons who inhabited the mountainous interior. For the association between Karians and Leleges: Strabo 14.1.3, 21; Pausanias 7.2–3.

18. See generally Sakellariou 1977: 81–230; cf. Jardé 1923: 106.

19. Herodotos 2.56.1.

20. Herodotos 2.51; 6.137–40.

21. Philokhoros 328 *FGrH* 99; Strabo 5.2.4. See Paraskevaïdou 1991.

lation but was instead a rather vague designation for any populations that later Hellenes believed to be in some sense 'aboriginal'.²²

Nevertheless, if the picture sketched thus far suggests that the Greeks conceived of their earlier history as characterized by migration, displacement and instability, that is only one side of the story. Opposed to – but juxtaposed with – this theme of mobility is another common motif in which *static* populations change their name rather than their abode. It is common in many cultures for a particular population, ethnic group or tribe to trace its descent back to an eponymous ancestor – this is most famously the case with the twelve tribes of Israel.²³ So the third-century geographer Herakleides Kritikos (fr. 3.2 Pfister) and the Augustan historian Konon (26 *FGrH* 1.27) both derive the descent of the Dorians, Aiolians and Ionians from their respective eponyms (Doros, Aiolos and Ion).²⁴ More commonly, however, these eponymous founding fathers are regarded not as ancestors in the strict sense but as kings or military leaders who arrived from outside and gave their name to their subjects. Through this strategy, groups could construct a presumed kinship with one another (Dorian, Ionian, etc.) without positing a wholesale transfer of population. Thus the Pelasgian Aigialeis of Peloponnesian Akhaia began to call themselves Ionians when Ion acceded to the kingship,²⁵ just as Ion's command of the Athenian forces against Eleusis led to his name also being adopted by the Athenians.²⁶ With the arrival in the Peloponnese of Akhaïos' sons Arkhandros and Arkhiteles, the populations of Lakonia and the Argolid began to call themselves Akhaïans.²⁷ Doros and Aiolos each gave their names to the populations over whom they ruled,²⁸ as did Boiotos and Thessalos.²⁹ The Elean Aitolos gave his name to the country on the opposite shore of the Corinthian Gulf, and the Pelasgians of Arkadia took their name from Arkas, the great-grandson of Pelasgos.³⁰

The motif is also attested for non-Hellenic populations: the original Leleges of Lakonia were named after their king Lelex; Kilix, son of the Phoenician Agenor, gave his name to the Hypakhaioi of Kilikia; and the

22. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1931: 64; De Sanctis 1939: 70–71. See generally Biancardi 1961.

23. For the treatment of eponyms as ancestors in Near Eastern genealogies, see M. L. West 1985: 11–17.

24. For Herakleides, see Pfister 1951: 90–92.

25. Herodotos 7.94; Pausanias 7.1.4.

26. Herodotos 8.44.2; Strabo 8.7.1; Apollodoros 1.7.3.

27. Pausanias 7.1.6–7.

28. Strabo 8.7.1; Apollodoros 1.7.3.

29. Diodoros 4.67 (Boiotos); 7.7 (Thessalos).

30. Aitolians: Strabo 8.3.33; Pausanias 5.1.8. Arkadians: Pausanias 8.4.1.

Lykians were originally Kretans who took their name from Lykos, son of the Athenian king Pandion.³¹ But the most significant example of this practice concerns the Hellenes themselves. When, immediately prior to the Ionian revolt of 499 BC, Aristagoras of Miletos pleaded that the Spartans should liberate the Ionians who are their 'blood-brothers' (*homaimones*), he was appealing to the same unity of blood which Herodotos later presents as one of his four defining criteria of Hellenic identity.³² Yet, on the collective level, the Hellenes never subscribed to a monogenetic origin. Thoukydides (1.3.2) narrates how formerly distinct populations (*ethne*) only gradually began to call themselves Hellenes as they came into contact with the eponymous Hellen and his sons, and Herodotos (1.58) agrees that the Hellenic people grew populous through an aggregation of Pelasgians and other barbarians. It is only in this way that the originally Pelasgian inhabitants of Attika and the barbarians of Amphilokhian Argos could 'become' Hellenic.³³

This paradox is the reflection of the geographically and politically fragmented landscape of Greece. There can be little doubt that prototypes of many of the familiar myths and legends were already circulating in the unsettled centuries following the collapse of the Mycenaean palaces ca. 1200 BC (if not earlier), and that the generally introverted and isolated conditions of that period would have fostered the creation of legends whose significance was primarily local.³⁴ Even after the re-establishment of intensive intercommunication in the eighth century BC, the dominant socio-political organization in much of Greece was the *polis*, which throughout the Archaic and Classical periods remained the principal focus of a citizen's loyalty and affiliation, engendering a civic identity that was sanctioned by more or less exclusive, epichoric myths. At the same time, increasing contact between communities created the recognition of – and aspiration to – a range of broader, supraregional affiliations which were articulated through stories of migrations and changes of nomenclature, explaining origins in exogenous (external) and endogenous (internal) terms respectively. What is important is that this tension between local and supraregional accounts of origins is significantly a product of the historical period. The multiple, contradictory versions in which such myths are transmitted to us should not be viewed as the shattered fragments of a genuine historical memory which can be carefully reassem-

31. Leleges: Pausanias 3.1.1. Kilikes: Herodotos 7.91. Lykians: Herodotos 7.92.

32. Herodotos 5.49.3; cf. 8.144.2.

33. Attika: Herodotos 1.57. Amphilokhian Argos: Thoukydides 2.68.5.

34. M. L. West 1985: 143. For the possible Mycenaean origins of various Greek myths, see Nilsson 1972.

bled to write prehistory, and the attempt to rationalize and harmonize them should be resisted. Instead, their sheer diversity should be retained as a valuable indication of how the scattered population groups of Greece attempted to understand their position in the world and their relationships with one another.

THE INVENTION OF THE INDO-EUROPEANS

Although the Greeks believed in multilineal or polygenetic origins, these origins were largely conceived as lying within the Greek peninsula.³⁵ In the post-antique Christianized world, however, such views were incompatible with the biblical story of origins, recounted in Genesis, whereby after the great flood the world was repopulated by the three sons of Noah – Ham, Shem and Japheth.³⁶ In AD 1650, James Ussher, Protestant Archbishop of Armagh, calculated that the world had been created in 4004 BC, and since the Old Testament records that the deluge occurred 1,656 years after God created Adam (Genesis 5.3.32; 9.28–29), so the ‘origin of the nations’ should be fixed at ca. 2348 BC. Undismayed by the short period of time in which the world managed to become populated, Richard Cumberland (1724) reasoned that the earliest humans lived longer and were considerably healthier than their latter-day progeny. More importantly, the biblical account of unilineal or monogenetic origins in the Near East dictated that the ancestors of the Greeks must have arrived from *outside* Greece.³⁷

Ancient Greece did not begin to command much intellectual interest in Europe prior to the second half of the eighteenth century, but such inquiry as there was into Greek origins reveals the strong influence that biblical belief exerted.³⁸ Ever since antiquity there had been suggestions that the Latin language was not only related to, but actually derived from, Greek, and in the sixteenth century the Swiss natural historian and philologist Konrad Gesner (1555) was just one of several scholars who traced the Romance languages back through Latin and Greek to Hebrew. The Hebrew origin of the world’s languages commanded a general acceptance through to the early eighteenth century, when it was finally questioned by the German philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. Leibniz believed in the monogenetic origin of the Celtic, Germanic, Greek and Latin languages, but suggested that they were descended from a Celto-

35. Asheri 1997: 20–21.

36. *Genesis* 9.18–19.

37. See generally Mallory 1973: 22–25; 1989: 9–11; Renfrew 1987: 13.

38. F. M. Turner 1981: 1–6.

Scythian language spoken on the northern shores of the Black Sea.³⁹ Leibniz was certainly not the first to be struck by the similarities between geographically distant languages. Already in AD 1583, the English Jesuit Thomas Stevens had noted that the structure of the languages in India was not dissimilar to that of Latin and Greek, and two years later the Florentine merchant Filippo Sassetti observed commonalities between the European languages and Sanskrit. In 1767, the physician James Parsons proposed a common ‘Japhetic’ origin for the languages of Europe, Iran and India, and six years later the Scottish judge James Burnett, Lord Monboddo, expressed his belief that all the languages spoken in Europe, Asia and parts of Africa were descended from a single parent-language, possibly deriving from Egypt.⁴⁰ It is, however, with the name of Sir William Jones, Chief Justice of India, that the ‘discovery’ of the Indo-European group of languages is normally associated. Addressing the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1786, Jones summarized his comparative research into Greek, Latin and Sanskrit and concluded that

no philologer could examine all the three without believing them to have sprung from some common source, which, perhaps, no longer exists. There is a similar reason, though not quite so forcible, for supposing that both the Gothic and Celtic, though blended with a different idiom, had the same origin with the Sanskrit; and the old Persian might be added to the same family. (1807: 24)

Important as Jones’ pronouncement was, it was based more on intuition and surface similarities than on empirically determined principles, and he still conceded that the ‘common source’ for these languages might be traced back to Noah’s son Japhet. It was only with the work of the Danish philologist Rasmus Christian Rask (1818) and the German linguists Franz Bopp (1833) and August Schleicher (1850; 1863) that the correspondences between languages within the ‘Indo-European’ group were subjected to a more systematic investigation with the aim of uncovering the law-like principles governing their divergence from a Proto-Indo-European (PIE) parent language. Viewing language as a natural organism, Schleicher constructed a genealogical tree (*Stammbaum*) of the Indo-European languages designed not only to show their genetic relationship to one another but also to establish a relative chronology for when each of the principal branches of the tree had diverged from the proto-language. These divergences were interpreted as arising from the

39. See Arens 1969: 70, 96–98.

40. See generally Mallory 1973: 25; 1989: 10–13, 273 n. 1; Renfrew 1987: 9–11; Lincoln 1999: 76–100. Schlegel (1807) derived the origins of these related languages from India.