

Introduction

This book starts from two premises. First, the Mediterranean basin during the first millennium BC was a multicultural region with a great variety of linguistic, religious, social, and ethnic groups. Second, this diverse and dynamic social and cultural landscape encouraged extensive contact and exchange and fostered permanent modes of interaction among many different groups. Building on these two ideas, this book studies the construction of identity in the archaic and classical periods from a Mediterranean perspective. The underlying questions are: What happened when different ethnic, social, linguistic, and religious groups, among others, came into contact with one another? What means did they employ to mediate their interactions? How did each group construct distinct identities while interacting with others? What new identities came into existence because of these contacts?

This study of human interactions in the Mediterranean brings together several strands of scholarship that have emerged and become popular recently in the field of ancient Greek history, especially in ethnic, religious, and Mediterranean studies, in order to provide a new understanding of the archaic and classical Mediterranean. The book breaks with much of the historiography on the study of ancient identity, thereby revealing new aspects of identity construction in the region, first because it deals with the Mediterranean as a whole and second because it focuses not only on ethnic identity but also on other types of collective identities, such as civic identity based on an individual's city-state, linguistic identity determined by language, religious identity decided by membership in a cult, and social identity based on social status. In what follows, I present the benefits in approaching the subject of identity construction from a Mediterranean perspective and the necessity and importance of examining other types of identities besides ethnicity, and I lay out the book's methodological approach.

Mediterranean perspectives

In the last three decades, numerous journals and books with the word "Mediterranean" in their title have appeared, and the field of Mediterranean

studies has experienced a resurgence in popularity in many disciplines, including that of classics.¹ This recent explosion of interest in the ancient Mediterranean came after a hiatus that lasted for almost half a century. After Braudel's *magnum opus* on the Mediterranean in the age of Philip II, published originally in 1949, nothing much appeared until the 1980s that treated the Mediterranean as a subject of study, despite the wide-ranging debates that Braudel's work sparked in the field of history. One of the major reasons for the recent reemergence of Mediterranean Studies lies in the unprecedented connectedness we experience in the contemporary world, which has created an intellectual milieu interested in looking more at linking institutions rather than at isolated states.² It should come as no surprise that in the discipline of classics, the response to the increasing need to approach the field from a global perspective, whether imposed institutionally, by academic trends, or today's globalized culture and society, has been to emphasize the connections, mobility, and networks throughout the Mediterranean basin.³

The attention to Mediterranean Studies has not appeared without criticism. Whether modern historians can treat the Mediterranean as a single field of inquiry or not is a notoriously difficult subject. Is it the production of certain crops, such as the vine and the olive, that unites the Mediterranean or the extent of their consumption? Is it, instead, transhumant pastoralism? Is it a dependence of local economies on each other? Or is there some semblance of a cultural unity that ancient historians can discuss, especially before the Roman conquests?⁴ One of the more impressive undertakings has been Horden and Purcell's *The Corrupting Sea*, a remarkable work that has

¹ Morris 2005 presents numbers and statistics on these titles and discusses various journals' Mediterranean scope.

² Similar academic trends exist in other fields. A case in point is "transnationalism," a hot topic in modern history, sociology, and political science. Transnationalism emphasizes the movement of ideas, people, technologies, and institutions across national boundaries; it involves the study of migration patterns, ethnic diasporas, trade networks, and other institutions that connect nations; it questions the efficacy of nation-states as a framework for analysis, given the contemporary historical situation; and it tries to explain the nation-state in terms of cross-cultural influences. A useful recent synopsis is Iriye and Saunier 2009. For the adoption of the rubric of transnational history in modern history see Tyrrell 2007 and Espagne, Geyer, and Middell 2010. Transnationalism is purely concerned with modernity. It is interesting to note, however, that Braudel 1949 actually approximated a kind of transnational history. Though not considered transnational in its scope because it treated a pre-modern era when dynastic rule prevailed rather than the nation and it was concerned with cultural and regional history, rather than national and international history, Braudel's work combined comparative approaches and pioneered cross-cultural history.

³ Morris 2005 also attributes the increase in popularity of Mediterranean Studies to globalization.

⁴ Harris 2005: 1–42, especially 20–9, reviews the historiography on the question of Mediterranean unity. See also Carpentier and Lebrun 1998, Grove and Rackham 2003, and Abulafia 2003.

created a framework based on historical ecology for studying the history of the Mediterranean region over several millennia in order to determine the extent and basis on which the pre-modern Mediterranean can be treated as a single field of inquiry.⁵ The project's agenda, clearly influenced by our own global universe, involves "decentering" the Mediterranean and emphasizing instead the fluidity and connectedness of the region in order to interpret it.⁶

Even if the connectivity of the Mediterranean is taken for granted, and this, too, has been questioned because of the inability to define and provide consistent limits for the Mediterranean, no satisfactory answer has been given to the questions above, and especially not to the last one.⁷ The point, however, should be that in ancient Mediterranean thought the Mediterranean basin was treated as a unit connected by the sea. In Plato's *Phaedo*, Socrates says: "the earth is very large, and we inhabit a small portion of it, from Phasis to the pillars of Heracles, and we live around the sea like ants and frogs around a swamp; many other peoples live in many such parts of it."⁸ This statement is significant because it reveals that at least some ancient Greeks already conceived of the Mediterranean sea – the swamp, as Plato likens it – and the lands that surrounded it as a unit. Ancient Greek authors who wrote sailing manuals described the connectedness of the Mediterranean and the cities on its coasts in terms of navigation: discussing sailing from harbor to harbor, these texts transport the reader slowly around the different city-states located in the Black Sea, the Red Sea, the Bosphorus, the coasts of Europe, Asia, and Libya; in other words, all the areas that Plato includes within the limits that he offers for the world, namely Phasis on the Black Sea and the pillars of Heracles (Straits of Gibraltar) in the western Mediterranean. The notion of a Mediterranean unit, therefore, was not only present in ancient thought, but also observable on the ground (or sea!), and is thus a legitimate subject of study.

Who precisely the subject is in Socrates' statement that "we live around the sea like ants and frogs around a swamp" is unclear and perhaps we should not take it to refer only to Greeks. Certainly ancient Greeks were cognizant of the

⁵ Horden and Purcell 2000. The authors' responses to reviews and critiques of their project are: Horden and Purcell 2005 and 2006, and Purcell 2005a. At the time of writing, *Liquid Continent*, a sequel to the *Corrupting Sea*, was scheduled to appear in the fall of 2012.

⁶ Horden and Purcell 2006; Morris 2005.

⁷ Morris 2005: 35–7 discusses the "studied imprecision" with which the Mediterranean is described by Braudel, Horden and Purcell, and the general editors of various journals that publish studies on the Mediterranean.

⁸ Plato, *Phaedo* 109b: "Ἐπὶ τοίνυν, ἔφη, πάμμεγά τι εἶναι αὐτό, καὶ ἡμᾶς οἰκεῖν τοὺς μέχρι Ἡρακλείων στηλῶν ἀπὸ Φάσιδος ἐν σμικρῷ τινι μορίῳ, ὥσπερ περὶ τέλμα μύρμηκας ἢ βατράχους περὶ τὴν θάλατταν οἰκοῦντας, καὶ ἄλλους ἄλλοθι πολλοὺς ἐν πολλοῖσι τοιοῦτοις τόποις οἰκεῖν."

fact that non-Greeks inhabited the same regions as they did. Thus, with some of the earliest writings, such as those of Homer, Hekataios, the lyric poets, and Herodotus, we hear descriptions of the non-Greek populations of the Mediterranean lands. Sailing around the wine-dark sea inevitably brought different groups into contact with each other: seaborne communication, in terms of movement of both people and knowledge, was easy, and land was frequently traversed by both people and ideas. Soldiers, pirates, pilgrims, slaves, athletes, artists, craftsmen, prophets, oracle emissaries, philosophers, law-givers, guest-friends, judges, diplomats, and traders, to mention but a few, traveled throughout the area, and their travels created the connections that linked the Mediterranean lands.

Although Greek perceptions of the ancient Mediterranean are the only ones that survive in discursive form, given the unfortunate fragmentary nature of literature from other Mediterranean populations, non-Greek populations shared the Greek maritime perspective, and perhaps also the Greek notion of the Mediterranean as a unit. The multiethnic landscape of the archaic Mediterranean was created by expeditions – a direct consequence of the maritime outlook of Mediterranean populations – that resulted in countless new city-states along the Mediterranean and Black Sea shores, especially from the ninth to the sixth centuries BC. This kind of immigration, regardless of whether it was forced or peaceful, also created permanent contacts among different groups. Greeks and Phoenicians founded city-states all along the coast of North Africa, Iberia, the south coast of Italy, and on Sardinia, Sicily, and Corsica. A strong Phoenician presence is also attested on Cyprus, the Balearics, and in various cities in the Greek world, such as Kommos on Crete, Eretria, and Athens, whereas Greeks also established settlements in France, all around the Black Sea and the Illyrian coast, and they were present in Phoenician communities in the East.⁹ The Etruscans established communities on the Greek island of Lemnos, the northeastern coast of Italy, and had a strong presence in Sardinia and Iberia, while Etruscan city-states in Etruria were hosts to Phoenicians and Greeks.¹⁰ In some cases, city-states were founded jointly by various groups, as for example Pithekoussai, which was probably founded by Phoenicians and Greeks and had a strong Etruscan presence.¹¹ Even the kingdom of Egypt, which is usually

⁹ The bibliography on this subject is vast. I offer here only a few starting points. For Phoenician colonization, see Moscati 1968, Niemeyer 2000, and Aubet 2001. For Greek colonization, see Tsatsikis and De Angelis 1994, Graham 2001, and Tsatsikis 1998, 1999, and 2006.

¹⁰ Cristofani 1983; Paoletti and Perna 2002.

¹¹ Although usually called the first western Greek colony, there is evidence to suggest that Pithekoussai was actually jointly founded by Euboian Greeks and Phoenicians and that Etruscans were present from the very origins of the settlement (Ridgway 1994).

thought to have been more isolated, participated in these movements: Egyptians lived in Athens, and Greek, Phoenician, Carian, and other mercenaries fought in Egyptian armies and were subsequently settled in Egypt.¹² The many settlements founded along the Mediterranean coast were axiomatically multiethnic because they brought into permanent contact the migrant groups with indigenous populations and with each other.

These few examples, though by no means exhaustive, demonstrate the maritime outlook of the various Mediterranean groups and the ease of mobility enabled by the Mediterranean Sea. The islands, promontories, and jutting peninsulas facilitated sailing from port to port, even if dangers were never absent, and the many different groups inhabiting this region could not have existed in isolation from each other. On the contrary, an appropriate vision of the Mediterranean region is one that regards it as a cosmopolitan area at least from the archaic period onwards. Horden and Purcell's recent emphasis on the connectivity that the sea provided to the region, the same one that Socrates describes in the quotation above, has not, however, addressed the issue of how this connectivity affected Mediterranean populations. It is not enough to show that the lands of the Mediterranean were connected. What is important is to move beyond this static image and to shift our attention to the question of how Mediterranean populations changed over time as a result of these interconnections.

This is one of the motivating questions for this book. While this is not the first time that it has been asked, this time the question tackles a different issue, namely, identity construction in the Mediterranean as a whole. More specifically, recent comparative works on the history of Mediterranean populations have identified similarities in their political, religious, and material culture, in addition to their common maritime outlook, discussed above: the groups of this region had similar political structures based around small city-states, similar polytheistic religious systems that were easily translatable among different groups, and artifacts or artistic and architectural styles that comprised a common material culture. Further, these works point out that it was precisely cross-cultural borrowing and adaptation that led to the creation of a common Mediterranean culture. I build upon this scholarship by showing how different groups used this common culture both to mediate among themselves and to construct distinct identities.

Each of these trans-cultural phenomena that characterized the Mediterranean basin played an important role in creating a middle ground in

¹² Ionian, Carian, and Phoenician mercenaries were in the service of the Egyptian pharaohs from the seventh century on, as graffiti written by these mercenaries attests. Bernard and Masson 1957; SEG 37, 994.

which different groups could coexist. In terms of the political landscape, from the archaic to the Hellenistic periods, Phoenicians, Etruscans, Greeks, and Latins, among others, all had political structures based on small city-states.¹³ Each of these groups may have used a different word to describe its own polity, but Hansen's comparative work on the city-state has identified a common definition: a city-state is a self-governing but not necessarily independent, highly institutionalized and centralized micro-state, consisting of one town and its immediate hinterland, settled with a stratified population whose political identity is focused on the city-state itself even though ethnically it is affiliated with the population of neighboring city-states.¹⁴ The similarities among city-state cultures extend even to the administration and types of offices – e.g., councils of elders and voting assemblies – and have led some scholars to argue that the origin of the Greek polis in the archaic period may be found in Phoenician polities and that of the Roman *res publica* in the Oscan and Etruscan communities of the Italian peninsula.¹⁵ The shared understanding of polities in the ancient world also helps explain the joint establishment of new city-states undertaken by various groups, such as the foundation of Pithekoussai, discussed above. The common Mediterranean political structures, therefore, allowed for mediation among different groups. The question remains, however, of how these groups maintained distinct identities while living in multiethnic states and what new political and civic identities they created through their interactions with each other.

In addition to common political structures, ancient Mediterranean populations also had similar religious systems, which played an important role in reaching accommodation among different groups. Religious exchange often involved simple borrowings of sculptural styles for statues of divinities or architectural techniques for temples. At other times, gods themselves were exchanged. Mediterranean pantheons had gods with specific characteristics and functions that made it easy to recognize others' gods, integrate them

¹³ For the Phoenicians see Moscati 1968, Niemeyer 2000, and Aubet 2001; for the Etruscan city-state see Heurgon 1957, Cristofani 1983, Massa-Pairault 1996, Torelli 2000a and 2000b; for the Greek city-state see the multiple volumes published by the Copenhagen Polis Centre, among which are Hansen and Raaflaub 1995 and 1996, Hansen 1996a, Nielsen 1997, and Hansen 2000a and 2006b; for the Italian city-state see Drews 1981 and Cornell 1991, 1995 and 2000. See also the other essays in Hansen 2000c and 2002, including Larsen 2000 on Neo-Babylonian city-states and Marksteiner 2002 on Lycian city-states.

¹⁴ Hansen 2000a: 19. Greeks called it a polis, the Romans *civitas*, in Oscan it was *touta*, in Etruscan probably *meθlum*, and in Phoenician 'M.

¹⁵ Gschnitzer 1990 and 1993; Cornell 2000; Demand 2004. Contrary opinions do exist. See for example Raaflaub 2004 who questions whether there were Phoenician influences on the Greek polis.

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978-1-107-01944-7 - Negotiating Identity in the Ancient Mediterranean: The Archaic and Classical Greek Multiethnic Emporia

Denise Demetriou

Excerpt

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into one's own pantheon, or even create new hybrid divinities in a process called syncretism or hybridization, a popular subject again in recent years.¹⁶ Herodotus – and he is not the only ancient writer who does this – often describes foreign gods in terms of their Greek analogues or provides the Greek translation of their names.¹⁷ Cross-cultural interactions also led to the adoption of foreign gods into one's own pantheon, as is evidenced by the Athenian state's adoption of Thracian Bendis or the Roman introduction of the Phrygian Magna Mater, to name but two examples. Regardless of their hometown or cultic affiliation, patrons could worship in the same sanctuary. For instance, Etruscans and Carthaginians used the temples at Pyrgi, the port of the Etruscan city Caere, and pan-Hellenic sanctuaries like Delphi enjoyed a reputation far beyond the limits of the Greek world and were frequented by non-Greeks: the Lydian king Croesus consulted the oracle, Etruscan city-states built treasuries there, and the Egyptian pharaoh Amasis was the biggest donor when Delphi asked for contributions to rebuild the temple of Apollo after it had burned.¹⁸

All these examples show that the polytheistic nature of Mediterranean religions with their highly differentiated divinities created a space in which there was a universal religious language shared by the various groups inhabiting this region.¹⁹ Yet, in a recent volume on ancient religions that points out similarities among pantheons and religious practices in this region, the sole essay on Mediterranean religion only goes so far as to say that what ancient religions had in common was the fact that they were in constant contact.²⁰ Even more surprising is that very few studies have dealt with religion in multiethnic settlements.²¹ The questions that I ask in this book focus on religion in cosmopolitan settings: how did groups inhabiting the Mediterranean basin use their common religious universe to mediate among themselves? When and why did certain religious practices acquire particular salience in the self-definition of groups? How were rituals

¹⁶ For example, Bonnet and Motte 1999, Porter 2000, Iles Johnston 2004, and De Angelis and Garstad 2006.

¹⁷ In 4.59 Herodotus describes the Scythian gods by using Greek names and in 2.42 and 2.59 he translates the names of Egyptian divinities into Greek (Osiris is Dionysus, Zeus is Ammon, and Isis is Demeter).

¹⁸ Pyrgi: Serra Ridgway 1990. Delphi and Lydia: Herodotus 1.153; Delphi and Egypt: Herodotus 2.180; Delphi and Etruria: Herodotus 1.167 and Strabo 5.1.7 and 5.2.3.

¹⁹ Graf 2004: 3–16. ²⁰ Iles Johnston 2004; Graf 2004: 14–16.

²¹ One exception is De Angelis and Garstad 2006, who contextualize Euhemerus' *Sacred History* in multiethnic Sicily, where syncretistic forces at work among Phoenicio-Punic, Greek, and indigenous populations created a unique pantheon. Another is Scholtz 2002/2003 and his projected work, entitled "Goddess at the Margins: Greek Religion between Cultures, across Boundaries," which focuses on religious mediation in multiethnic sites.

conditioned and shaped by the multiethnic nature of the space in which they were conducted?

The connectedness of the ancient Mediterranean is also evident in the material culture that circulated in this region. Artifacts and styles traveled widely and were adopted by various populations in the Mediterranean. For example, Egyptian scarabs are found throughout the Mediterranean in Punic, Phoenician, Etruscan, Greek, and other local contexts. This commodity was traded and, as its popularity increased across various cultures, it became part of a common Mediterranean material culture, spawning local workshops that emerged to produce scarabs on Cyprus and Rhodes, among other places.²² If we consider a different example, namely, the distribution of Phoenician metal bowls or ivories, it is clear that these circulated throughout the Mediterranean outside the orbit of Phoenician settlements: they are found in non-Phoenician contexts in Iberia, Italy, Sardinia, and mainland Greece, among other regions. Just as in the case of Egyptian scarabs, local, non-Phoenician workshops also existed that produced ivory and metal goods in the style of their Phoenician originals.²³ These examples of the Mediterranean-wide distribution of artifacts and commodities, which could be easily supplemented with other cases, suggest that there existed a common material culture that could be used as a means of communication among Mediterranean populations. Yet, despite the existence of a common material culture, scarab workshops did not exist everywhere, and Phoenician ivories and metalwork were almost certainly popular primarily among elite circles. In other words, specific objects acquired particular importance for some people in certain places at given times and could become indicators of identities.²⁴ I am interested in examining instances both when artifacts signified identities and when they were used in processes of mediation.

Mediterranean identities

By this point, I hope to have demonstrated that in the archaic and classical periods the Mediterranean region was cosmopolitan inasmuch as there were permanent and extensive interactions among the groups inhabiting this region, which resulted in structural similarities among Mediterranean

²² Kaczmarczyk and Hedges 1983; Gorton 1996.

²³ Moscati 1988: 436, 440, 443, 542–3, 547; Aubet 1971.

²⁴ See also Duplouy 2006: 151–83 who discusses the circulation of *orientalia* in elite circles and the importance of these objects as symbols of social identity, albeit in the Early Iron Age, an earlier period than the one studied here.

populations. I now turn to a consideration of how these groups used their common Mediterranean background – politics, religion, material culture, and maritime perspective – to define themselves and create new identities. Like Mediterranean Studies, identity has become an increasingly popular topic among scholars, resulting in a copious bibliography on identity in the ancient world. Yet, despite the ever-expanding list of titles that contain the word identity, the subject is rarely approached from a Mediterranean perspective and usually involves the study of ethnic identity, to the exclusion of other types of identity. I hope to remedy this by examining here various kinds of identities – civic, religious, linguistic, and ethnic, among others – throughout the Mediterranean.

It is important to note at the outset that the general analytical category of identity is a modern construct. Nonetheless, identity was part of social reality in the ancient Mediterranean: individuals and groups experienced different kinds of identities subjectively, whether these were self-representations or imposed by outsiders, and these identities conditioned some of their choices and decisions. While the use of categories of identity – religious, civic, ethnic, etc. – to analyze ancient societies represents the point of view of the modern observer, ancient social actors themselves did proclaim various kinds of identities that often converged with and at other times differed from modern ones. These two perspectives, usually discussed in studies on ancient identity or ethnicity, correspond to the anthropological distinction between *etic* (externally perceived) and *emic* (internally perceived) categories.²⁵ In other words, *emic* perspectives are based on the conceptual schemes and categories that are meaningful to the members of the group under study, whereas *etic* perspectives are based on the conceptual schemes and categories that are meaningful to the contemporary community of researchers.

An instance when the *emic* and *etic* classifications diverge concerns the names of the Mediterranean groups under study here – Greek, Etruscan, and Phoenician, among others. It is instructive first to point out that none of these groups used these names to describe themselves. Phoenician is a descriptor that Greeks used for the people who lived on the Levantine coast, and it has been adopted by modern scholars for the population of this area usually from the Iron Age onwards.²⁶ By contrast, although written

²⁵ The terms *emic* and *etic* were originally coined by Pike 1954, a linguistic anthropologist, and were subsequently taken up by cultural anthropologists in particular. The papers in Malkin 2001 are most useful in discussing how the *etic* and *emic* points of view pertain to studies of ancient identity. For similar discussions of these perspectives see J. Hall 1997: 18–19 and 2003: 23–4, and Ruby 2006: 33–4.

²⁶ Niemeyer 2000: 92–3 discusses the use of the name ‘Phoenician’ in scholarship.

sources produced by the Phoenicians are not many, they indicate clearly that the Phoenicians identified themselves sometimes as Canaanites but more frequently in terms of their individual city-states.²⁷ Similarly, Greek is the Latin name given to a specific group of Greeks, called Graikoi, and is used today to describe collectively all those who called themselves Hellenes, at one point or another.²⁸ The name Etruscan derives from the Roman name, Etrusci, given to the Mediterranean population that Dionysios of Halikarnassos claimed called itself Rassena.²⁹ The name Rasna is, in fact, attested in Etruscan epigraphic sources, where it seems to designate the people of Etruria.³⁰ The emic categories in this example are Canaanite (or Sidonian, Tyrian, etc.), Hellene, and Rasna, while the equivalent etic ones are Phoenician, Greek, and Etruscan. To avoid confusion I will use emic categories when referring to ancient viewpoints and etic ones when talking about modern perspectives.

This particular example of the emic and etic categories has two important implications. First, the image of a cosmopolitan Mediterranean presented thus far needs to be complicated even more because the etic terms Phoenicians, Etruscans, Greeks, Iberians, etc., are misleading. They suggest that these groups were monolithic cultures whereas the fact that Phoenicians identified themselves mostly in terms of their city-states of origin – their civic identities – as did other Mediterranean populations indicates that there was diversity within these groups. In fact, each of these different cultures had an incredible variety of dialects, scripts, gods, rituals, artistic styles, etc. Joining a growing body of literature that insists on emphasizing the variety of changing and competing identities available to members of these groups, this book studies cross-cultural interactions in the Mediterranean in the broadest sense possible.³¹ To avoid the facile binary opposition between Greeks and others, I examine the construction of identity among Mediterranean groups and, in particular, among different groups of Greeks.

Such simple distinctions between Greeks and barbarians are typical of past scholarship. In part, they were motivated by intellectual currents that privileged Greek civilization as the foundation of Western civilization, appropriated Greek and Latin literature as “the Classics,” and assumed that “Hellenization,” namely, the westward spread of the values of Greek civilization, was due to the fact that the indigenous populations of the

²⁷ Moscati 1968: 3–4.
²⁸ Ancient sources (ps.-Apollodorus 1.7.3 and Stephanos of Byzantion s.v. Γραικός among others) suggest this group perhaps originally lived in Thessaly.
²⁹ Dionysios of Halikarnassos 1.25. ³⁰ Massa-Pairault 1996: 41–2.
³¹ Malkin 2001; Dougherty and Kurke 2003.