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## *Ethnos and Ethnicity in Early Greece*

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During the past decade, ethnicity, the sense of peoplehood arising from shared blood, history, territory, language, and customs, has come increasingly to serve as the ideological basis for violent political action.<sup>1</sup> Separatist groups such as the Basque ETA and the Tamil Tigers define themselves by their ethnic affiliation rather than according to a specific political ideology. In extreme cases, ethnicity has provided the fault line along which entire societies have come apart, as in the Rwandan civil war, which was played out as an ethnic confrontation between Hutu and Tutsi, or the war precipitated by the breakup of Yugoslavia. The underlying causes of these conflicts are often to be found in the upheavals that follow the collapse of central authority, and it is frequently economic contraction that contributes most to the popular frustration that leads to violent confrontation. Ethnic consciousness can focus discontent, however, in a way that is easily manipulated, since it entails a group definition that necessarily proceeds by both inclusion and exclusion. Serbs, Croats, and Bosnians can point to differences of language and religion, as well as historical grievances going back a thousand years, even if ten years ago Serb and Croat families intermarried and both lived peacefully alongside Muslim neighbors.<sup>2</sup> Ethnic differences invite the redefinition of complex problems along the lines of brutally simple ethnic antagonisms.

Parallel to this political dimension is a broader cultural discourse on ethnicity that manifests itself in countless ways, from the special status given indigenous languages such as the Gaeltacht in western Ireland to the furious debate on Ebonics in the United States. Ethnicity is part of the *Zeitgeist*, and common to virtually all treatments of ethnicity is the belief that it is innate.

The cry, for example, that "Macedonia is, has always been, and always will be Greek" depends on construing ethnicity as a primordial attachment to a fixed group with closed boundaries. According to such a view, the set of all things Greek includes within it entirely the set of all things Macedonian, as it has from time immemorial.<sup>3</sup> Here the emic understanding of ethnicity (that is, the claim made by an ethnic group about itself) commonly relies on four assumptions: first, that an ethnic group is a biologically self-perpetuating population; next, that its members have common cultural values or forms; further, that it consists of a field of communication and interaction; and finally, that it is a grouping that identifies itself and is identified by others as constituting a category different from other categories of the same type.<sup>4</sup> This amounts to the belief that the ethnic group has an absolute, discrete, historical reality. Nor is this essentialist approach confined to the way ethnic groups formulate their own identities. Scholars have typically deployed the same assumptions etically, that is, in describing ethnic groups from the outside. For earlier generations of anthropologists, "tribe," "culture," and "people" were all terms used to isolate separate entities. Ethnicity was not the subject of study, since the scholar's primary concern lay in identifying the characteristic habits and practices of a particular culture rather than investigating the means by which the group identity of that culture was fashioned. This required assuming that cultural and tribal groups and the boundaries between them were well-defined, so that one could speak of *the Nuer* and *the Dinka*, or even *the Aborigines*. In places where different groups coexisted the metaphor of a mosaic was used to explain the relationship between them: like tesserae, ethnic groups were seen as separate units, distinct from each other.

For Greek historians much of this has a familiar ring, since the same assumptions have long underlain the treatment of Greek ethnicity. Most nineteenth-century scholars treated the Greeks as a distinct, discrete people from the beginning. The question to be answered was not what led people to identify themselves as Greek but, rather, when did the characteristic forms of Greek culture first appear and under what circumstances. This is an approach still to be seen today, reflected in such titles as Robert Drews's *The Coming of the Greeks*. Origin, as Marc Bloch noted, is often taken as a complete explanation. Nineteenth-century research on Greek ethnicity also dwelt on origins but followed two trajectories. The first, associated with Karl-Otfried Müller and his student Ernst Curtius, saw the Greeks as the biological and cultural fusion of two *Unterstämme*, Ionians and Dorians, whose innate genius determined the cultural flowering of the Classical age. Differences and similarities between dialects were used to support this view, allowing the dialects to be classified according to a single coherent system that proceeded from a basic distinction between East Greek and West Greek. Historical traditions, too, such as the

Return of the Heraclids, were useful, since they could be interpreted as the myth-historical memory of actual population movements that had resulted in the fusing of the Greek tribes. By contrast, Numa Denis Fustel de Coulanges and most of the historians who came after him championed the notion that the turning point for the Greeks came not in the blending of two subdivisions of the Greeks but in the founding of cities. This was accomplished not by degrees but in a moment, as a deliberate choice: "As soon as the families, the phratries, and the tribes had agreed to unite and have the same worship, they immediately founded the city as a sanctuary for this common worship, and thus the foundation of the city was always a religious act."<sup>5</sup> According to this interpretation, then, religious ties rather than ethnic character prompted the founding of polis culture.

Regardless, however, of his views on what fueled the historical process, Fustel de Coulanges, like his German contemporaries, still believed that tribes existed before the emergence of the fully developed city-states of the Classical age. In the generation after Fustel de Coulanges historians became more aware of the importance of contact and exchange among Greek communities and moved away from the racial model of Müller and Curtius. Even so, influential historians such as Eduard Meyer still operated with an evolutionary model of state formation, viewing the ethnos as a tribal unit that grew organically out of kinship networks, only to be superseded by the polis.<sup>6</sup>

Despite attacks on the racist assumptions of early *Alttertumswissenschaft*, the evolutionary approach is still widely employed in historians' reconstructions of early Greek history.<sup>7</sup> Historical accounts of the Iron Age, for example, still infer the movement of distinct population groups from the distribution of dialects. As recently as 1984 Fritz Schachermeyr claimed, "While it was probably the Locrians who first advanced out of Aetolia into the middle of central Greece, next came the Phocians from the north. They seized for their own, as Phocis, the central portion of Locrian territory."<sup>8</sup> Here, once again, tribes are the precursors of Greek civilization. Similarly, the scenario recently presented by Michel Sakellariou has tribes settling, growing, and replacing blood relations with political relations: ". . . as soon as blood-related societies established permanent dwelling places, then contiguity began to have a stronger influence than kinship. . . . These groups acquired a political existence while ties based on kinship grew weaker."<sup>9</sup>

Because these blood-related societies are usually supposed to have given way to emerging poleis, they are often described as the negative of the centralized, urban state. For example, Anthony Snodgrass lists the characteristics of the typical Greek ethnos: it is decentralized, nonurban, and unified by ties of religion. He also presents the ethnos as a fossil left over by a process of social evolution, "no more than a survival of the tribal system into

historical times.” According to this approach, ethne can be distinguished not only by their distinctive features but by the fact that they constitute an entire system of social organization that predates the polis. The idea that the ethnos is opposite to and earlier than the polis is, in fact, common to all definitions and reconstructions of the ethnos.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, in each case the ethnos is either explicitly or implicitly equated with a kinship group, consisting of all those families who shared not just a culture but also a lineage. In this respect, the traditional treatment of Greek ethne corresponds to the essentialist interpretation of tribes, by no means confined to Greek history, according to which tribes are “fundamentally cultural groups that [have] virtually impermeable boundaries.”<sup>11</sup> As recently as 1979, for example, one historian could discuss the Archaic period as if it were a time during which the Greeks lived in tribal groups hermetically sealed off from each other:

The Greeks had reached a stage of self-awareness that allowed them to choose between a number of solutions to the same problems. . . . They tended to think in terms of the separate traditions of the different Greek races. This situation came about because of the isolation of these different groups from each other at least until the sixth century. A sixth-century Aeolian would speak the Aeolian dialect, build in an Aeolian style, use Aeolian pottery, and sing and dance to Aeolian music. Minor racial groups tended to be dominated by major ones as trade developed but only in Athens do we find liberation from local racial traditions.<sup>12</sup>

Once again the ethnos, here called a “racial group,” is equated with an extended kinship group, closely associated with a particular territory, whose members have a common culture. It is fair to say, then, that most treatments of early Greek history rely on two assumptions: that ethne preceded poleis as the characteristic form of social organization among the Greeks and that they did not die out with the rise of the polis but remained distinct and separate, albeit less important, groups, to which individuals were affiliated by blood and culture.<sup>13</sup>

There are, however, many problems with such an approach to the ethnos and ethnicity. In the first place, both terms have a multitude of meanings, and therefore it is important to clarify exactly what types of groups are meant when we (or the Greeks) speak of an “ethnos” and what type of self or group identity is meant by “ethnicity.” When, for example, Xenophon’s Socrates asks Niceratus if he knows of an ethnos more stupid than the rhapsodes, he appears to apply the term to a professional rather than kinship group (Xenophon *Symposium* 3.6). Yet not all collectives are ethne, and not all ethne look the same. Nor is it sufficient to define ethnicity simply as membership of a group,

or as group identity, since individuals can feel a sense of commonality with others based on religion, language, profession, or culture without feeling an ethnic attachment. The *technitai* of Dionysus, for example, constituted a distinctive group but were not (in our sense) an ethnic group. In calling rhapsodes an ethnos Socrates is going well beyond the usual usage of the term, in the same way that today one might refer disparagingly to the tribe of lawyers and politicians.

Questions of definition aside, there are more significant problems. Tribal groups are rarely as neatly bounded as was once imagined, so that even if we can find a working definition for the Greek ethnos the entity itself is likely to undergo Protean changes before our eyes, appearing one minute as a descent-based tribe and another as a regional federation, or *koinon*. Furthermore, members of tribal societies, just like members of industrial societies, may define themselves by a variety of identities that overlap in various ways: tribe, clan, guild, brotherhood, team, faction. These multiple configurations of identity underpin social cohesion, and there is a real danger in the study of Greek ethne and ethnicity that we will reduce a complex reality to a neat scheme of oversimplified, self-contained categories.

To avoid the mistake of reducing Greek ethne to Darwinian relics of an evolution that never really occurred there are three steps we should take. The first is to examine the various ways in which the term “ethnos” was used by the Greeks. Layers of meaning and association have to be distinguished before we can analyze the ethnos. Next, since tribes, tribalism, and ethnic identity have all been the subject of wide-ranging anthropological studies in the past generation, we can avail ourselves of a rich supply of comparative data, notably from African studies. There the very notion of the tribe as a straightforward entity with clear boundaries has been brought into question. A much more nuanced interpretation of precolonial tribal society has emerged in recent years in which tribes are seen to be fluid—changing territory, absorbing (to various degrees) other groups, splitting, being absorbed, dying out, or mutating.<sup>14</sup> A good deal of recent anthropological work supplies a theoretical framework in which Greek ethne and ethnicity can be studied. Finally, we can observe ethnogenesis at work in the Archaic period by examining the formation of a specific ethnos, the Phocians.

What was a Greek ethnos? In Homer the term is applied broadly to groups and bands, a usage reflected in expressions such as *ethnos hetairōn* or *ethnos laōn* (Homer *Iliad* 7.115; 13495). Circe advises Odysseus to sacrifice to the *ethnōs nekrōn* so that he may speak to Tiresias (Homer *Odyssey* 10.526). The word remained a popular poetic term for any kind of flock, herd, or other homogeneous group.<sup>15</sup> Outside of poetry, however, it was often used with a more specific meaning, reflected in Thucydides’ account in book 2 of events in

western Greece. In describing the events of 430 Thucydides tells of the campaign by the Ambracians against the inhabitants of Amphilocheian Argos. Argos is singled out as the only polis of any significant size in the region, and Thucydides describes its origins in language appropriate to the description of a colony: it was founded by Argive colonists who brought with them Hellenic manners and civilized at least part of the indigenous population. The Ambracians attacking the city are supported by the Chaones and other barbarians from nearby (*allōn tinōn tōn plesiochoriōn barbarōn*) but are unable to capture the city and disband “tribe by tribe” (*kata ethnē*). The episode is structured around two sets of oppositions: Greek versus barbarian and polis versus ethnos. It is clear from 1.18 that Thucydides regarded this region as something of a Wild West, where men still wore sidearms and saw no disgrace in banditry, living, as he says, in the old style (*palaiō tropō*), and it is hard not to see these elements linked in Thucydides’ mind. For the historian from the advanced polis of Athens, the ethnos, as a political organism, was outmoded and barely Greek. This interpretation of the ethnos has proved deeply influential and underpins the well-known definition of the ethnos offered by Anthony Snodgrass: “In its purest form the *ethnos* was no more than a survival of the tribal system into historical times: a population scattered thinly over a territory without urban centers, united politically and in customs and religion, normally governed by means of some periodical assembly at a single center, and worshipping a tribal deity at a common religious center.”<sup>16</sup>

Yet the term was also employed to describe groups that clearly fall outside of the Thucydidean classification of backward, marginal groups. As contact between Greeks and non-Greeks increased, “ethnos” served as a conveniently loose label equivalent to the vague English term “people.” Xenophon’s work demonstrates the usefulness of this imprecise word when, for example, he classifies the peoples of Asia according to whether they are rulers or ruled: “Of the ethne known to us in Asia, the Persians rule, while Syrians, Phrygians, and Lydians are ruled. On the other hand, in Europe, the Scythians are rulers but the Maeotae are ruled” (Xenophon *Memorabilia* 2.1.10). It is in this sense that the term “ethnos” continued to be widely used, as the *Ethnica* of Stephanus Byzantius demonstrates. Ethne, for Stephanus, are distinct peoples and are always named in the plural: the Carduchi, the Macryes, the Xanthi, the Chadramotitae, and so on. Singular labels, by contrast, are applied to more concrete entities: a city (e.g., Lete), a land (e.g., Caria), a village (e.g., Limnaia), or a geographic feature, such as a river (e.g., Linx), an island (e.g., Macra), or a headland (e.g., Malea). Since Stephanus used sources from different periods, his usage reflects the most common meaning of the term. It may not be very precise, but if the term was used imprecisely it would be a mistake for us to pretend that it had a more specific meaning.<sup>17</sup>

Stephanus’ work is particularly revealing because it shows that the Thucydidean antithesis of polis and ethnos was not universally maintained. The very first lemma of the *Ethnica* reads: “Abai, a Phocian city (polis), from the nominative singular, Abes. It takes its name from the hero Abas. Herodian says that the name Abas, when it signifies the community (ethnos), is always inflected with an extra syllable (i.e. Abas, -antos, pl. Abantes), but when it is a proper name (*kyrios*), it is declined with either the same number of syllables or one more (i.e. Abas, -ou, or Abas, -antos)” (Stephanus Byzantius s.v. “Abai”). According to this explanation, the Abantes were the ethnos that inhabited the polis of Abai, a use of the term “ethnos” that clearly contradicts the view that all ethne were, by definition, communities scattered over decentralized areas. Stephanus, in fact, frequently uses the term *to ethnikon* to signify what we would call an individual’s civic identity. For example, Dascylium is described as a Carian city from which derives *to ethnikon* Dascylites. At the same time, however, Stephanus distinguishes between the ethnic label and the formal term for a citizen of a polis. Thus, a citizen (*politiēs*) of Daulis is called Daulieus, but there is also an ethnic label derived from Daulis, Daulidios. In such cases Stephanus appears to be distinguishing between a technical term properly applied only to citizenship and a more general term expressing affiliation or association with a community. Furthermore, despite the use of “ethnos” to describe communities that resided in poleis, there are also cases where Stephanus seems to use it to describe communities very like Snodgrass’s nonurban folk. Neither the Illyrian Dassaretai nor the Thracian Datulepti are associated with a city. What these tribes have in common with ethne that also exist as poleis is that each has a group identity that is not tied to a specific set of institutions. Athenian *phylai* or demes may be clearly defined by administrative structure, religious and political functions, or territory, but the ethnos is not marked out in this way. It may possess a formal shape sufficiently well articulated to engage in interstate diplomacy—the treaty between the Elean and Heraean ethne is, in fact, earlier than any comparable treaty between poleis—but there is nothing essential to the definition of the ethnos other than that an ethnos should be a group that thinks of itself as a people.<sup>18</sup>

Ironically, the elasticity of the Greek ethnos was better understood by Herodotus than by many modern historians. This emerges in his account of the Ionians. Herodotus arranges his information under the same four headings as appear in his definition of Greek ethnicity: common blood, common language, shared religious practice, and shared customs (Herodotus 8.144). He reports that there are twelve Ionian cities because the Ionians founded twelve, just as there were twelve segments (*merea*) in the Ionian Peloponnese prior to their expulsion by the Achaeans. This detail was used by the inhabitants of these

cities to bolster the claim that they were more genuinely Ionian than anyone else. For Herodotus, in contrast, it is simply a detail of political geography, and he comments that it would be foolish to claim that these twelve cities were somehow more Ionian or better-born than other Ionians. It is especially interesting that the claims of purity being challenged by Herodotus were directed not against non-Greeks (Persians) or non-Ionians (Dorians) but against others who identified themselves as Ionians. The absurdity of this, for Herodotus, arose from the fact that so much non-Ionian blood had been added to the Ionians. Herodotus lists the other tribal groups that contributed to the Ionian settlement of the eastern Aegean: Abantes from Euboea, “who are not even called Ionian,” Minyans from Orchomenus, Cadmeians, Dryopes, Phocian seceders (*Phokeōn apodasmoi*), Molossians, Pelasgian Arcadians, Dorians from Epidaurus, and many others (*alla te ethnea polla*) (Herodotus 1.146). Each of the tribes he names is associated with territory north of the isthmus, outside of the pre-Achaean, Ionian Peloponnese, with the exception of two groups: the Pelasgian Arcadians, the aboriginal inhabitants of the Peloponnese, and a Dorian component from Epidaurus. For the skeptical Dorian from Halicarnassus, “Ionian” was a contested status: one could not point to a tribal homeland from which all “real” Ionians ultimately derived.

Nevertheless, Herodotus appears to recognize two straightforward criteria for Ionian legitimacy when he observes that the truly Ionian are descended from Athenians and celebrate the Apaturia (Herodotus 1.147). But even this is undercut. He concedes that the Ionians are those who are born legitimately, but only after deflating the claims of those who came “from the heart of Athens” and claimed to be the best-born of the Ionians. In fact these Athenian-born Ionians had not brought women with them but had taken Carian wives. These Carian women bound themselves and their daughters on oath not to sit at table with these men or to address them by name because their new Athenian husbands had slaughtered their Carian parents, husbands, and sons. What did it mean to concede that latter-day Ionians who were descended from Athenians were pure (*katharoi*) when their grandmothers were Carian and their grandfathers were killers? In both senses of the word *katharos*, both by bloodline and by bloodshed, these Ionians were anything but pure.

In other respects, too, Herodotus treats the Ionians as a deliberate self-creation rather than a primordial group. He acknowledges that Ionians share the religious practice of the Apaturia but immediately notes an exception: the Ephesians and Colophonians do not celebrate this festival because of an act of bloodshed. He denies the Ionians’ linguistic unity by explaining that their dialects fall into four separate groups. As for common practices (*ethea*), Herodotus goes out of his way to explain that the origins of the Panionion lay not in a decision to include all those who called themselves Ionian, as we might

expect given the name, but rather from a decision taken by the twelve cities who were not ashamed of being called Ionian to exclude other Ionians (Herodotus 1.143). That there were other Ionians outside the inner circle is confirmed for Herodotus by the request of the men of Smyrna to be admitted to the Panionion, presumably after the city was lost by the Aeolians (Herodotus 1.15). A similar story of switching ethnicity is recorded by Pausanias, who says that the Phocaeans petitioned for entry to the Panionion and were initially rebuffed because they were “by blood and by descent” from Phocis and hence not Ionian (Pausanias 7.3.5). They were admitted only when they agreed to accept kings of the blood of Codrus. What these stories underscore is the fact that the Ionian ethnos was defined by the affiliation of its members. It was the claims of common blood, ancestral territory, and shared custom much more than the reality of these that created the ethnos. Many must have believed these claims for them to have carried weight, but it was not difficult even in the fifth century to find reasons for skepticism.

Herodotus’ emphasis on the fictive quality of Ionian ethnic identity fits very well with recent approaches to ethnic groups, most of which derive from Fredrik Barth’s groundbreaking *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*. Barth rejected static definitions of ethnicity and argued against the view that separate ethnic groups exhibited distinctive features because they had evolved in isolation. Ethnic boundaries, in his view, result from social interaction, with the result that ethnic groups are dynamic. Ethnicity, the sense of belonging to a particular group, is not a matter of biological inheritance or ancient attachment to fixed groups but a conscious process of identification with a particular social group.<sup>19</sup> For Barth this is a political act, a process of differentiation between one set of people and another. It proceeds, as Sharp points out, “by appealing to the *idea* of ineluctable cultural difference. . . . In fact, people can readily invent cultural differences if it is in their political interest to do so. Ethnicity is the pursuit of political goals—the acquisition or maintenance of power, the mobilization of a following—through the idiom of cultural commonness and difference.”<sup>20</sup> According to this approach, ethnic identities are “essentially changing, flexible, multiple and negotiable.”<sup>21</sup> So too are the boundaries between ethnic groups. They are not stable or fixed but, in Cohen’s words, “multiple and include overlapping sets of ascriptive loyalties that make for multiple entities.”<sup>22</sup> Ethnicity, as Cohen defines it, is situational. It creates group cohesion by clarifying inclusion and exclusion.

Approaching ethnic groups from this perspective has opened up new avenues for the interpretation of “traditional” tribal societies and may suggest to Greek historians ways of revising the essentialist view of Greek ethne. Work in African anthropology has been especially productive in recent years, exploring three aspects of ethnicity that can be applied to the Greek data: the

processual nature of ethnogenesis, the contradictions between the image and the reality of a group's ethnic identity, and the mechanisms by which an ethnic identity is articulated. In the first of these areas Aidan Southall's work on the Alur of central Africa has broken new ground.<sup>23</sup> Examining their oral traditions, Southall has effectively undermined the notion that the Alur are a static and homogeneous group. In fact, they have undergone continuous change for hundreds of years. Other groups have been brought into the Alur sphere of influence as a result of migration, conquest, intermarriage, peaceful absorption, the founding of new communities only partially Alur in origin, and even arbitration between non-Alur groups. New subclans have formed, changed allegiance, and died out. Fighting and feuding between groups have ebbed and flowed, but all the while the slow process of incorporation has gone ahead and the Alur tribe has taken shape. Even so, because the Alur have been formed by centuries of incorporation, there remain different levels of identification in Alur society. Some groups maintain traditions of separate ethnic origins but have adopted the Alur language, some have accepted Alur rule but speak their own languages, and some have been assimilated completely.

There is evidence of a similar pattern of accretion, assimilation, and incorporation among Greek ethnē. Triphylia in the Peloponnese, for example, was a district composed of three distinct groups, just as its name, the Three Tribes, suggests. All three groups maintained quite separate traditions concerning their origins: some were indigenous Epeians, others were settlers from Mynan Orchomenus in Boeotia, and still others were Elians from farther north in the Peloponnese (Strabo 8.3.3). Yet the three banded together, and Triphylia eventually became a region with a single group identity. The Triphylians were among the groups swallowed up, along with the Pisatans and Caucones, by the territorial expansion of Elis as far as the border of Messenia, and Xenophon speaks of Triphylian towns winning their independence in 397 B.C. (Xenophon *Hellenica* 3.2.30). Hence, the Eleans of Strabo's time included among them some who still asserted a Triphylian identity, and some asserted yet other layers of identity characterized by quite distinct traditions concerning their origins. In some cases incorporation into the Elean ethnōs was total, as in the case of the Caucones, of whom, says Strabo paradoxically, "not even the name survived" (Strabo 8.3.30). Another well-known ethnōs, the Aetolians, was also made up of at least three lesser tribes, the Apodotes, the Eurytanes, and the Ophiones. Thucydides (3.94) refers to each of these simply as a *meros*, and it is unclear when they first asserted a common ancestry. Since the only children of Aetolus to appear in Hellenic genealogies are Pleuron and Calydon, the eponyms of Aetolian cities, the heroic genealogy of the Aetolians may be a late development, in which case it is probable that the three subdivisions of the Aetolian ethnōs regarded themselves as Aetolian by ascription rather than by

blood descent.<sup>24</sup> To other Greeks the Hellenic identity of the Aetolians remained open to doubt. Livy's Achaean ambassadors remark that "the Aetolians have only the tongues of Greeks, just as they have only the appearance of men" (34.24.3).<sup>25</sup>

A second aspect of ethnicity explored in recent work has been the contradiction between, on the one hand, the image that a particular ethnic group projects to others and to itself and, on the other, how the ethnic group is actually constituted. The Maasai, for example, are a well-documented case of an ethnic identity bolstered by a powerful set of ideological associations—in this case, the notion that the Maasai have been exclusively warrior-herdsmen from time immemorial—concealing a much more complex and even contradictory reality. The emergence of a Maasai identity in the nineteenth century entailed the absorption of earlier identities such as Sirikwa and their reassertion in a new guise as either Maasai or some other more recent identity: Nandi, Keiyo, or Marakwet.<sup>26</sup> At the same time, while the modern Maasai identity emphasizes only pastoral exploitation, casting the Maasai as "People of Cattle," paradoxically, some of the most important Maasai groups have been Okiek hunter-gatherers and Arusha farmers. The latter, in particular, participate in central Maasai institutions such as the Maasai age system yet have successfully resisted assimilation into a pastoral system or ideology.<sup>27</sup>

Dorian ethnicity reveals a similar pattern of complexity and contradiction behind a mask of uniformity. Not unlike the Maasai, the Dorians present the appearance of a single people whose distinctive institutions recur wherever Dorians are to be found. In particular, Dorian cities frequently display the same tripartite tribal division of Hylleis, Pamphyli, and Dymanes. Similarly, the cult of Apollo Karneios was recognized in Thucydides' time as characteristically Dorian (Thucydides 5.54.2). The repetition of such *nomima* points to a powerful sense of Dorian identity operating well beyond a single state as early as the Archaic period. Yet this is a constituted identity, not a fixed inheritance. The name of one of the three Dorian *phylai*, Pamphyli, suggests that it existed specifically for the assimilation of non-Dorian populations.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, as a number of scholars have noted recently, shared customs such as the cult of Apollo Karneios have to be viewed in the context of the appropriation of territory, first within the Peloponnese and then again as part of the process of colonization.<sup>29</sup> The stages through which Dorian ethnic identity expanded across the Peloponnese can be traced. First came the fusion of Dorian and Heraclid traditions in Laconia, possibly as late as the ninth century, followed by the more comprehensive tradition according to which Messene, Argos, and Lacedaemon had once been ruled by three Dorian brothers, Temenus, Cresphontes, and Eurysthenes.<sup>30</sup> The relationship between Sparta and the Messenians underscores the negotiations behind the acquisition of Dorian

ethnicity. According to Pausanias it was because of the generous policies of the Heraclid king Glaucus that the native Messenians came to accept Dorian suzerainty, a process helped by the decision of the Dorians to honor the pre-Dorian cult of Zeus on Mt. Ithome (Pausanias 4.3.9). The result of this fusion was that the Messenians came to regard themselves as thoroughly Dorian, a belief reflected in Pausanias's remark that the Messenians were the only Dorians besides the Laconians to have a share in the cult of Artemis Limnatis on their border (Pausanias 4.4.2). Accordingly, when the First Messenian War broke out, the Messenians sought arbitration from the Argives, who they asserted were related to both sides, and castigated the Spartans for attacking fellow Dorians and committing sins against the Dorian gods.<sup>31</sup> The Messenians, whose myth-history went back to the age before the Return of the Heraclids, were quite capable of assuming the same ethnic identity as their foes.<sup>32</sup>

The reverse of such fusion of ethnic identities (although never carried through to completion, since Messenian identity was capable of resuscitation in the fifth and fourth centuries) is a process of fission whereby part of an ethnic group physically removes itself from a "parent" community and reconstitutes itself as a new and independent community. This is a common pattern in interaction between East African tribes and has been linked to competition over pastoral resources.<sup>33</sup> A similar process can be glimpsed in Greek traditions concerning colonization, particularly in the case of the Spartan Partheniae. Disenfranchised for the disgrace of their fathers' nonparticipation in the Messenian Wars, the Partheniae form a distinct subset of the Spartan population. Their relocation to Taras affords them the opportunity of a fresh start in a colony on which they impose their ethnic identity, reclaiming both the legitimacy and the wealth denied them at Sparta.<sup>34</sup>

The third area in which African studies have opened new ground has been in the study of the mechanisms by which an ethnic identity is promoted and legitimized. In the case of the Acholi of Uganda, some of the ways in which a dominant ethnic identity emerged will look strikingly familiar to the Greek historian. For example, king lists (*rwodi*) were manufactured to connect lesser tribes such as the Patiko with more highly esteemed groups such as the Lwo, a Nilotic people whose migrations from the north were thought to have been responsible for the founding of the Patiko chiefdom. Typically these lists culminated in historically documented Patiko chieftains, but they tended to begin with names that were clearly archetypal, just as Athenian heroic genealogies go back to names like Melanthus or Erechtheus.<sup>35</sup> The Salaminian saga is a particularly clear example of the appropriation of another body of myth and heroic genealogy, in this case from Aegina, in order to legitimize a distinct ethnic identity.<sup>36</sup> Just as Aegina, the daughter of Asopus, bears the child

Aeacus to Zeus, so too Salamis, the daughter of Asopus, bears the future king Cychreus to Poseidon. And just as Aeacus is given ant-men, the Myrmidons, to show that his people are autochthonous, so Cychreus as dragon slayer or as the serpent himself is associated with the earth. In this guise Cychreus also recalls Athenian myths of autochthony, especially the story of Cecrops. The Salaminians first copied the figures of Aeacus from Aegina and Cecrops from Attica, then forged a genealogical link with the Aeacid house by making Telamon a son of Aeacus and the founder of their community. The Aeacids, then, confer respectability.

If, then, Greek ethnicity is not fixed but subject to continuous change, we are forced to ask why and how the various ethnic identities of the Greeks came into being. What caused them to identify themselves as Thessalian or Arcadian, and how were these identities articulated? No single answer will explain such complex phenomena, but by examining one region we may be able to chart the phenomenon of ethnogenesis. We can trace this process in the epichoric myths of Phocis, where many distinct strands of myth had to be reconciled or rejected before a single Phocian identity could emerge. Despite their presence as a single ethnos in as authoritative a text as the Catalogue of Ships, the people of Phocis pointed to origins from all over the Greek world. The Elateians claimed to be descended from the Arcadian eponym Arcas; the people of Abai linked themselves to the Argive hero Abas and Homer's Euboean Abantes, while the inhabitants of Panopeus perversely saw themselves as descendants of the lawless Phleggyans who had burned Delphi.<sup>37</sup> Other origins and layers beneath a common Phocian ethnicity can be glimpsed. The people of Hyampolis claimed to be descended from Hyantes from Boeotia, while the myths of Daulis centered on the time when the city was ruled by the Thracian king Tereus.<sup>38</sup> Another strand of myth connecting various Phocian communities to Athens and persisted until the time of Pausanias, who was told that the people of Stiris were descended from Athenians of the deme of Steiria (Pausanias 10.35.8–10).<sup>39</sup> At some time other Phocian communities must have advanced similar claims, since Polemon composed a work in the third century entitled "On the Founding of the Cities in Phocis and Concerning their Relationship (*syngeneia*) to the Athenians."<sup>40</sup> We cannot say when the Athenian connection became a central feature of Phocian myth making, but the legend of Tereus and Procne was already being read by Thucydides in the late fifth century as evidence of an alliance. This and the story of Cephalus and Procris, another marriage in mythology that linked the two regions, may date to the mid-fifth century, when Athenian influence was at its height in central Greece.<sup>41</sup> Given this rich array of epichoric traditions, each distinct from the rest, the emergence of a single regional ethnic identity in Phocis can only be viewed as a deliberate construct.<sup>42</sup>

Even more remarkable, the Phocians invoked two eponymous heroes. The steps by which the two heroes named Phocus helped to create a single Phocis illustrate both the method of ethnogenesis and its impetus.

The first eponym was the son of Ornytion and grandson of the Corinthian hero Sisyphus. According to Pausanias, "It is well known that the part of Phocis around Tithorea and Delphi received the name of Phocis at a very remote time from a man of Corinth, Phocus, son of Ornytion" (10.1.1). The date of his arrival and the naming of Phocis is difficult to fix, but it may correspond to the period of Corinthian trade expansion to the northern side of the Corinthian Gulf in the eighth century.<sup>43</sup> There is a noticeable shift at this time as goods coming into central Greece begin to enter in greater quantity from Delphi. At the same time, Medeon, a site on the Bay of Anticyra that flourished in the tenth and ninth centuries, declines in importance.<sup>44</sup> A more important feature of the story, however, is that the eponymous hero was not remembered as a progenitor. The Phocians were not blood descendants of Phocus but the inhabitants of a region named by him. Rather than being a divine ancestor, Phocus is an *archegetes*, making the creation of Phocis a process analogous to the founding of a colony.<sup>45</sup> The significance of this lies in the fact that many of the colonial narratives of the Greeks addressed the absorption of an indigenous population by the colonizing power. They were necessarily concerned with articulating a new identity. When this involved non-Greeks the solution was the substitution, as Carol Dougherty writes, "of erotics for politics," framing the act of colonization as either a rape or a marriage.<sup>46</sup> The arrival of Phocus is also framed as a colonizing act, but the dialectic is different. The opposition here is not between Greek colonizer and aborigine but between the urge within various neighboring communities to remain autonomous and separate from each other, expressed through their clinging to epichoric myths, and the need to unite and form larger, more powerful sociopolitical units, expressed in their adoption of a Phocian identity. Accordingly, through sharing a hero the communities on the north side of Parnassus took the first steps toward constructing a regional ethnic identity. As the scholiast put it, "Ornytos was victorious and became the ruler of the country. His son Phocus succeeded him, and from Phocus the Phocians took their name" (Schol. ad Homer *Iliad* 2.517). Phocus was buried and received cult honors at Tithorea, and his adoption as *ktistes* by other communities in the upper Kephisos Valley may correspond to a nascent Tithorean hegemony throughout the district.

Territorial conflict stimulated the expansion of Phocus's influence. Tradition maintained that Ornytion and Phocus crossed from Corinth to help the inhabitants of Hyampolis in their fight against the Locrians over the strategically important port of Daphnous (Schol. ad Homer *Iliad* 2.517; Schol. ad Euripides *Orestes* 1094).<sup>47</sup> To the Locrians, whose territory stretched along

the shores of the Euboean Gulf to the east and west, the loss of Daphnous meant the splitting of their territory in two; to the people of Hyampolis and other communities south of Daphnous, its loss meant losing control of access to the Euboean Gulf and the Aegean. It was near Daphnous, in fact, that the coastal road from Thermopylai turned south. It lay, therefore, at a nodal point on one of the major arteries from northern to central Greece. For the people of Hyampolis, which was situated at the southern end of the pass from Daphnous, there were straightforward strategic reasons for forming an alliance with communities "behind" them.

Once Phocus was adopted as the hero of the Tithorea-Hyampolis district, the heroic genealogy that he brought with him invited further accretions. The Drymaeans, for example, claimed descent from Naubolus, the brother of Phocus (Pausanias 10.33.12). Like the Hyampolitans, the Drymaeans were vulnerable to attack and lived close to a pass entering the upper Cephisos Valley.<sup>48</sup> Communities at either end of this valley could now point to a common *ktistes*. The vulnerability of their location encouraged them to form alliances with Tithorea, which, situated under the looming cliffs of Mt. Parnassus's north face, was an ideal place of refuge in times of crisis.<sup>49</sup>

Closely associated with Corinthian Phocus was a second set of panregional genealogical connections centered on another hero descended from the same Corinthian line: Schedius, grandson of Naubolus and leader of the Phocian contingent in the Catalogue of Ships. As in the case of Corinthian Phocus, the catalyst for expanding genealogical connections may have been a territorial dispute with Locris over Daphnous, but in the case of Schedius communities other than Hyampolis, Tithorea, and Drymaea were involved. Marking the claim that Daphnous was Phocian, Schedius was said to be buried there (Strabo 9.3.17). He enjoyed a second tomb at Anticyra on the Corinthian Gulf, where he was buried with his brother, Epistrophus (Pausanias 10.36.10). Schedius was also said to have resided at Panopeus (Homer *Iliad* 17.307–308). As a result, he was eventually associated with three different Phocian towns, Anticyra, Daphnous, and Panopeus, which together controlled the two ends and the middle of a corridor extending from the Corinthian to the Malian Gulf.<sup>50</sup> In the cases of both Corinthian Phocus and Schedius, then, heroes and their cults supplied the common element necessary for any community wishing to affiliate with the burgeoning ethnos. As a result, mythology helped to define a space identified as Phocian. This is not a dialectic of center and periphery, since no single community dominated the region. Rather, the capacity of myth and genealogy to expand infinitely suited a region consisting of peer polities.<sup>51</sup>

The second hero called Phocus comes from a distinctly different lineage. After mentioning Corinthian Phocus, Pausanias continues, "and not many

years afterwards, when a body of Aeginetans under Phocus, son of Aeacus, had sailed to the country, the name came into general use as the designation of the whole region now known as Phocis" (10.1.1). On Aegina, however, Pausanias was shown the tomb of Phocus, who was believed to have been killed there by his jealous half-brothers, Peleus and Telamon (Pausanias 2.29.2-9).<sup>52</sup> Why should a hero otherwise exclusively attached to Aeginetan myth fortuitously appear in the Parnassus region, where a hero of the same name had already been appropriated for the first stages of ethnogenesis? Part of the reason for this reduplication is surely that Aeacid Phocus carried a more impressive genealogy than Phocus from Tithorea. Like the Salaminians, the Phocians were using the more impressive Aeacid genealogy to attach their emerging ethnos to the web of Panhellenic genealogies. Even so, Phocis and Aegina are much further apart than Aegina and Salamis.<sup>53</sup> The riddle of Phocus and his doppelgänger may be solved if we consider the possibility that Phocus was originally a single mythological character from the Parnassus region who was carried from there to Corinth and to Aegina. There is some evidence to suggest that both places relied on an earlier stratum of myth from central Greece. Wilamowitz observed that Peleus's name means "the man of Pelion," and he inferred that the original homeland of Aeacus and the Myrmidons was not Aegina but Thessaly.<sup>54</sup> In this first stage of the Aeacid cycle of myth Endeis, the wife of Aeacus and mother of Peleus, is not the daughter of Sciron, as she becomes later, but rather the daughter of the centaur Cheiron (Schol. ad Homer *Iliad* P 14; Schol. ad Pindar *Nemean Odes* 5.12). The myth of the Myrmidons as companions of Aeacus then becomes an attempt by the Dorian nobility of Aegina in historical times both to justify their claims of autochthony and to give themselves a heroic pedigree.<sup>55</sup>

The first stage of the Aeacid cycle, therefore, came not from Aegina but from Phthia. The story of Phocus's death at the hands of his brother Peleus rendered in narrative form the regional rivalry of Phocis and Thessalian Phthia. Since this rivalry was at its height in the sixth century, when Thessalian influence extended into Locris and intermittently into the upper Cephisos Valley, it is probably at this time that a panregional Phocian identity was finally forged.<sup>56</sup> What better expression of the implacable hatred of these two peoples than a fraternal blood feud in the heroic past? This is corroborated by Antoninus Liberalis's story of the exile of Peleus. Although the story begins with the death of Phocus on Aegina, the punishment of Peleus takes him north of the Isthmus, where he inadvertently kills his host Eurytion. The cycle of blood guilt is finally broken when a flock of Peleus's sheep is killed by a wolf that "was transformed by a spirit into a rock that for a very long time was between Locris and the land of the Phocians" (Antoninus Liberalis 38.5). According to Ovid, the wolf rock stood somewhere in the vicinity of Trachis, close to the northwestern border of Phocis (*Metamorphoses* 2.269). The story is

clearly a local myth being used to mark the boundaries between Phocis and its northern neighbors. Since boundary formation is itself a reliable indication of state formation, the story offers a glimpse of the early emergence of a Phocian identity.<sup>57</sup> Just as Corinthian Phocus created the first web of connections and established the limits of Phocis at Drymaea and Hyampolis, so Aeacid Phocus affirmed the borders of Phocis with his blood and provided the key to a common regional identity.

The Phocian *koinon* would come into existence only a generation before the Persian War, after the overthrow of Thessalian sovereignty. Thereafter the Phocians' federal body met at the Phocicon, minted federal coinage, and celebrated its victory over the Thessalians at the festival of Artemis Elaphebolos.<sup>58</sup> But before this final political transformation could take place a Phocian identity had to be constructed. This was done through the myths associated with both heroes named Phocus, rendering in narrative form a process of state formation marked by territorial conflict and the establishment of borders. The adoption of Phocus made possible the emergence of Phocis.

#### Notes

1. Definitions of ethnicity vary. See Cohen 1978:387: "Ethnicity then is a set of descent-based cultural identifiers used to assign persons to groupings that expand and contract in inverse relation to the scale of inclusiveness and exclusiveness of the membership." Toland 1993a:3 is more direct: "the sense of peoplehood held by members of a group sharing a common culture and history within a society." See also de Vos 1975:9; de Vos and Romanucci-Ross 1975b:363-364; Reminick 1983:8-13; and Rex 1987.
2. Sells 1996:13 notes that Bosnian Serbs, Croats, and Muslims all speak the same language, though they refer to it by different names. On recent ethnic conflicts see Horsman and Marshall 1994:77-90.
3. See Danforth 1993:3-10.
4. Cohen 1978:385.
5. Fustel de Coulanges 1980 (1864):134.
6. Meyer 1907:72-197 (on exchange and reciprocity) and Meyer 1910:223-224 (on the early tribal phase of Greek culture).
7. For the most explicit rejection of Müller's views see Musti 1985:xii-xiv.
8. Schachermeyr 1984:236 n. 12.
9. Sakellariou 1989:39. For earlier versions of the same approach see Hermann 1913:3-11, but see also the criticisms of Morgan 1990:4.
10. On similar assumptions in the anthropological literature, see Epstein 1978:1-5.
11. Atkinson 1994:14.
12. Onians 1979:21.
13. Against this view see Cabanes 1989:72.

14. Southall 1970 (Alur); Iliffe 1979 (Tanganyika); Ranger 1983 (southern Africa); Atkinson 1994 (Acholi); Tapper 1989 (Afghanistan); Spear and Waller 1993 (Maasai).
15. See Liddell and Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th ed., s.v. "ethnos." Homeric ethne include bees (*Iliad* 2.87), birds (*Iliad* 2.459), and flies (*Iliad* 2.469). Other groups referred to poetically as ethne include beasts (Sophocles *Philoctetes* 1147), women (Pindar *Pythian Odes* 4.252), and mortals (Pindar *Nemean Odes* 3.74).
16. Snodgrass 1980:42.
17. The late date of Stephanus's work makes it dangerous to rely on him for conclusive evidence for the Classical usage of the term "ethnos." Even so, the distinctions employed by Stephanus are surely those found in his sources, not his own creation, as the lemma on Abai makes clear. On the importance of collective names to the definition of an ethnos see Smith 1986:21–24.
18. Treaty between Elis and Heraea: Meiggs-Lewis, *Greek Historical Inscriptions* No. 17.
19. Geertz 1963a; Rex 1986:ch. 2.
20. Sharp 1988b:80. For other definitions see Reminick 1983:8–13.
21. Tapper 1989:232–234.
22. Cohen 1978:387.
23. Southall 1970.
24. Strabo 10.2.1 mentions another Aetolian ethnos called the Agraioi, who may have fitted into Hellenic genealogy as the descendants of Agrios, grandson of Pleuron. On the Aetolian heroic tradition see Antonetti 1990:45–68.
25. See also Philip V's criticisms of the Aetolians (Polybius 18.5.2).
26. Sutton 1993:38–60.
27. Spear 1993:120–136.
28. Walter 1993:152.
29. Burkert 1985:234–236; Dougherty 1993:113–117; Malkin 1994:143–158.
30. Malkin 1994:33–43; Plato *Laws* 684–685.
31. For Argive arbitration see Pausanias 4.5.2; for *syngeneia* of Messenians and Laconians see Pausanias 4.8.2.
32. For a much fuller treatment of the evolution of the Messenian identity see Figueira 1999.
33. Galaty 1993:76–79.
34. Malkin 1994:139–142; Nafissi 1999.
35. Atkinson 1994:65.
36. Prinz 1979:42.
37. Elateians descended from Elatus, son of Arcas (Pausanias 10.34.2). When the Elateians were expelled by Flaminius in 200 B.C., they were taken in by the Stymphalians, who traced their descent from Stymphalus, son of Elatus. The Stymphalians treated them as fellow citizens and lobbied the Achaean League and Rome on behalf of their "cousins." See *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* 25.445 and the discussion in Habicht 1985:67–69. For Abaian origins see Pausanias 10.35.1 and Stephanus Byzantius s.v. "Abai." For Panopeus and the Phlegyans see Pausanias 10.4.1.
38. For Hyantes see Pausanias 10.35.4, placing their origin in Thebes, and Stephanus Byzantius s.v. "Hyampolis," putting them at Boeotian Alalcomenae. For the Thracian connection to Daulis see Schol. ad Homer *Iliad* 2.59 and Thucydides 2.29. Sources for the myth of Tereus and Procne are collected in Graves 1955:165–167.
39. See also Plutarch *Cimon* 1; Vanderpool 1971:439–443.
40. See *Suda* s.v. "Polemon."
41. For Cephalus and Procris see Apollodorus 1.9.4, 2.4.7 (where Cephalus is an Athenian friend of Panopeus), 3.15.1. One last connection in myth between Athens and a Phocian community involved the greatest Athenian hero, since, according to Hesiod, Theseus abandoned Ariadne because of the passion he had conceived for Aegle, the daughter of Panopeus. See Plutarch *Theseus* 20.
42. On the survival of epichoric traditions see Leschhorn 1984:333–344.
43. On Corinthian trade on the north side of the Gulf see Morgan 1990:106–148. A second period of Corinthianizing influence in central Greece has recently been identified by Winter in her study of Archaic roof tiles. After 570 various regions of central Greece display a tendency toward roofing systems based on an Argive model modified by Corinthian decorative motifs (see Winter 1993:188). This material evidence for Corinthian influence in Phocis as late as the sixth century is especially provocative in that it occurs not long before the critical events of ca. 510, when the Phocians took the decisive step of throwing off Thessalian hegemony and asserting their political independence as a *koinon*. It is possible, then, that Corinthian Phocis entered central Greek heroic genealogy only as late as the sixth century.
44. See Vatin 1969.
45. For the cult of the *archēgetēs* in Phocis see McInerney 1997.
46. Dougherty 1993:76.
47. On Daphnous, see Strabo 9.3.1, 9.3.17. See also Pritchett 1982:149–151.
48. On the roads and passes leading from Thermopylae into Phocis, see Pritchett 1980:227–232; 1982:123–175; Buckler 1989:34.
49. Herodotus 8.32 reports that the Phocians took refuge from Xerxes on the mountain behind Tithorea. In more recent times a cave there was used by one of the *klephtes armatoli*, Odysseus Androutsos, in 1823–24, first against Omer Pasha and later against the forces of the Greek government.
50. The same corridor was garrisoned by Flaminius in 198–197 (see Livy 32.18.) In 31 Marc Antony funneled requisitioned grain from central Greece down to Anticyra. It is this swath of territory, not the so-called Great Isthmus Corridor, that constitutes the natural overland route from the Corinthian to the Malian Gulf.
51. See Renfrew 1986:8–9 on symbolic entrainment and noncompetitive interactions between peer polities.
52. For genealogy and versions of the myth see Hesiod *Theogonia* 1003–1005; Pindar *Nemean Odes* 5.15 with scholia; Euripides *Andromache* 687; Callimachus frg 136; Apollodorus 3.12.6; Ovid *Metamorphoses* 11.268–270 and 379–381; Antoninus Liberalis 38.5. See also the discussion in Prinz 1979:47.
53. Winter 1993:202 does offer some material evidence of cultural contact between the two regions. Similar stamped tiles from the Dabycus-Pricon workshop have turned

up at the sanctuary of Artemis Elaphebolos at Calapodi in Phocis and at the site of Colonna on Aegina.

54. Wilamowitz-Moellendorf 1931:220. See also Lesky *Paulys Realencyclop ädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*. Ed. G. Wissowa et al. Stuttgart 1904–. 19.1 s.v. Peleus, col. 272.
55. On the Myrmidons as autochthonous, see Schol. ad Pindar *Nemean Odes* 3.21.
56. Herodotus 8.27–28 recounts two famous battles between the Phocians and the Thessalians, one of which certainly took place near Hyampolis. So deep was the hatred between them that Herodotus even claims (8.30) that the Phocian resistance to Xerxes was entirely due to the fact that the Thessalians had Medized.
57. On boundary formation as a sign of state formation see Trinkhaus 1987: 239.
58. See Ellinger 1993.

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