

SMALL WORLDS: INTERACTION AND IDENTITY IN THE ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN

Ancient and modern encounters

The phrase “the Aegean and the Orient” is familiar shorthand to all who work on the history of the ancient world. Like all such phrases, however, it carries more meaning than simple description: it evokes many generations of historical interpretation, and ultimately also judgements of historical significance which are not unrelated to the realities of the contemporary worlds in which those judgements have been made. At the most basic level, it juxtaposes a geographically specific label for a body of water, the Aegean Sea,¹ with an open-ended term, “the Orient,” whose meaning depends on an assumed standpoint of the observer either within the Aegean, or in territories further west which see their cultures as ultimately rooted within Aegean lands. Such relativistic geographical terms linking incommensurate entities have their role – there is a signpost in Istanbul which points in one direction to Üsküdar and in the other simply to “Avrupa” (Europe) – but in the present context the contrast is more than just one of convenience.² It is intimately related to the stories which one set of polities has regularly told about its relations to another.

The point is not just one of political correctness. Historical interpretation takes place within a milieu not only of contemporary international politics but also of contemporary academic politics, between which there is an evident if indirect relationship.³ Institutional settings reflect the conceptions and motivations of the generations which created them: we sit amongst the monuments of our ancestors no less than the inhabitants of Bronze Age Karnak or Knossos. Rarely is this so explicit as in the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago – a centre of pilgrimage for all who work in the ancient world – whose magnificent sculptured tympanum of 1931, designed by Henry Breasted himself, depicts the encounter between East and West, the lion and the buffalo, in terms of a meeting between rulers of various western Asiatic and Egyptian Empires, and the representatives of a western tradition successively manifested in Herodotus, Alexander, Julius Caesar, a crusader, a field archaeologist, and a scholar with a vase.⁴ The present – or rather the present of 1930s America – is situated within earlier phases of cultural encounter. The same is true, in general terms, for departments of classics, history, or art-history within universities, or Greek and Roman departments within museums; their contemporary research agenda are not necessarily congruent with those of their founders. Nevertheless we are conscious or unconscious inheritors of a tradition in which Plutarch could talk of Alexander as “civilizing Asia” (he taught the Persians to respect their mothers, and not to marry them), and in which “they would not have been civilized if they had not been conquered.”⁵ There is a historical tension in the definition of the question.

1 Itself called after a mythical king of Athens, possibly originally a variant form of Poseidon.

2 There is no escape from such terminology: the Near East (confusingly altered in World War II to the “Middle East,” by the re-structuring of military command-areas) is defined by reference to Europe, as Anatolia/Anadolu is by reference to Greece; or Transcaucasia by reference to Moscow.

3 The point is well made, albeit in polemical form, in E. SAID, *Orientalism* (1978) and M. BERNAL, *Black Athena: the Afroasiatic roots of classical civilisation, volume 1: The fabrication of ancient Greece 1785-1985* (1987). For archaeology specifically, it should be borne in mind that the Excavation Report and the Grant Application have only recently become differentiated as literary genres: for expeditionary archaeologists in the first half of this century, these were often one and the same.

4 M.T. LARSEN, “Orientalism and Near Eastern Archaeology,” in D. MILLER, M. ROWLANDS and C. TILLEY (eds.), *Domination and Resistance* (1989) 229-39.

5 PLUTARCH, *Moralia*.

At the same time, there is also the interpretation of *ex Oriente lux*. The ancient Greeks themselves were not unaware of their indebtedness to lands further east for the origin of many of the crucial arts of civilisation. The medieval doctrine of the Four Empires, rooted in the prophecies of the Book of Daniel, or Hegel's conception of the westward movement of the World Spirit, systematized a view which in more scientific guise was to reappear in the later nineteenth and the early years of the present century in the form of diffusionism, culminating in the 1920s and 1930s in the writings of Grafton Elliot Smith and W.J. Perry.⁶ While some of the basic postulates of diffusionism have been empirically confirmed by archaeological investigation, to the extent that farming and urban life can be shown to have their origins in restricted areas of the world such as the Near East, China, and Mesoamerica, and to have extended outwards from these nuclear regions, the doctrine has consistently attracted a lunatic fringe of writers often concerned with esoteric matters such as the spread of cults and signs – quintessentially associated with ancient Egypt and its arcane knowledge.⁷ Just as with doctrines of Western superiority, such appeals to the wisdom of the East have brought into disrepute the genuine insights which lurk behind such attitudes. What is objectionable about the scientific use of both of them – the idea of the predestined role of “western” cultures, or the inevitable diffusion of knowledge westwards – is their essentialism and uniformitarianism. Both are mechanical models of an organic process of cultural encounter and dialectic.

Each generation of writers concerned with the ancient history of the eastern Mediterranean nevertheless has to define a position within the spectrum of these pre-existing attitudes. Archaeological evidence, partial and ambiguous as it always is, has to be fitted within some framework of interpretation, so that it has meaning within a larger picture. This picture may be called historical, not in the sense that it is subservient to an even more partial documentary record (though it should at the same time be able to accommodate and throw light on this), but in the sense of setting individual pieces of evidence within a comprehensible narrative of historical processes. Who was likely to travel, and in what directions, at different times within the Bronze Age Mediterranean? Such questions are vital in interpreting stylistic similarities in wall-paintings or fine metalwork, or in the distribution of pottery, which in themselves provide no inherent or self-evident explanations. Conscious as we are of the cultural and political meta-narratives which have so often underlain discussions of relations between “the Aegean” and “the Orient,” it is a necessary task to provide a replacement: a larger description of the nature of these interactions, and of the logic (or logics) which underlay them. Such a description is at once both empirical and theoretical, in that it defines repeated patterns, and suggests motivations and models, by comparison with similar phenomena of cultural contact. A principal element of this must be geography, in terms of what is facilitated or rendered difficult by the disposition of land and sea, rivers and winds or ocean currents, or the distribution of resources such as metal ores or desirable organic substances. This is not environmental determinism, but rather a description of the board on which the game is played and the pieces which each player has been dealt: it is the rules of the game which are the most interesting and crucial problem, and it is in the context of contacts between the Aegean and the Orient that these rules have been most hotly debated. For the second millennium BC, these issues have only rarely been made explicit; but for the first millennium, this area has been the cock-pit of discussion.

The rules of the game: oikonomy or chrematistics?

In the 1960s and 1970s a debate took place in economic anthropology between two schools, one of which called itself “formalist” and the other “substantivist.” The first school argued that formal methods of economic analysis, involving price-maximisation, were

6 On earlier manifestations, R.G. COLLINGWOOD, *The Idea of History* (1946) 57; on recent diffusionism, G. DANIEL, *The Idea of Prehistory* (1962) 82-101.

7 Such cults were indeed spread, of course, in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods; but this is no model for earlier times. Yet megaliths and mummification have consistently attracted Egyptocentric hyperdiffusionists, some of whom have cheerfully traced ancient routes even across the Atlantic.

applicable to “primitive” (small-scale, pre-literate) societies, so long as non-material benefits were appropriately quantified; although not using the term, the attitude might broadly be described as what has come to be known as rational choice theory.⁸ The other school asserted that such societies were inherently different from those capitalist societies whose behavior could be described by formal economic analysis; such societies had to be analyzed in their own terms, by reference to the prevailing mechanisms of distribution: the exchange of gifts, centralized chiefly redistribution, and only in certain cases market transactions.⁹ With hindsight, both had their good points and their faults: while it is wrong to treat pre-capitalist economies as any more “irrational” than capitalist ones, formal economics offers no insight into why certain goods are thought valuable (in capitalist as much as in pre-capitalist ones, it might be added); and while economic transactions have varying degrees of “embeddedness” in social institutions, the profit motive is rarely absent from social life. One school runs the risk of ignoring motivation, the other of ignoring competition. In anthropology, the debate is largely over, but it continues in ancient history and more especially in classical archaeology.

The continuing *Auseinandersetzung* within Aegean studies should not be surprising, for that is where the debate began. The predecessors of substantivism were the “primitivists,” who asserted the radically different nature of the ancient Graeco-Roman economy, by comparison with the “modernizers” who interpreted it in terms of conventional economic motivations.¹⁰ The immediate ancestry of the 1960s debate goes back to Max Weber and Johannes Hasebroek (primitivists) and Michael Rostovtzeff (modernizer) in the present century, and beyond that into the 19th century with the *oikos* debate begun by Karl Rodbertus, and continued by Karl Bücher and Eduard Meyer (primitivists and modernizer respectively). At issue was the self-sufficiency (autarky) of the primary unit of consumption, the household (*oikos*), as a model not only for the Roman estate but also for the national economy: for it was on this model of prudent household management (*oikonomia*) that the discipline of economics (then “political economy”) had its origins and to which it owed its name. Nineteenth-century writers were captivated by evolutionary ideas:¹¹ up to the medieval period, Bücher believed, no community had progressed beyond the stage of *geschlossene Hauswirtschaft*. That rulers had attempted to accumulate supplies of precious metal was not doubted, but this belonged to a quite different sphere of activity, *chrematistics* – the negotiation of valuables, which was seen as quite unrelated to subsistence (and hence the substantivist economists’ emphasis on separate “spheres of exchange” for food supplies and primitive valuables like stone axes or shell bracelets). What we now regard as “the economy” was not thought of as an integrated system of exchanges. The idea of a “commercial” production of commodities such as textiles, wine or olive oil (in exchange, for instance, for metals or precious stones) was not considered a possibility in the ancient world. With hindsight, we can now see that the principle was an important one but the dating was wrong. Long-distance exchange does indeed begin with rare and precious items, exchanged one for another; and in the course of time there is indeed an increase in convertibility, through the differentiation of production and the emergence of standard media of exchange (usually metals): but any urban economy has a manufacturing component which requires some mobilization of commodities in response to demand, and the primitivist description even of Bronze Age economies is quite anachronistic. In principle, if not in scale, the modernizers were right.

Nor should this debate be seen as a purely nineteenth-century *problématique*, for in essence it is much older: indeed, it was an indigenous debate within the first-millennium BC Aegean itself. One of the clearest and earliest protagonists of substantivism would appear to

8 See, for instance, M. NASH, “‘Reply’ to reviews of *Primitive and Peasant Economics*,” *Current Anthropology* 8 (1967) 249-50.

9 K. POLANYI, C. ARENSBERG and H. W. PEARSON (eds.), *Trade and Market in the Early Empires* (1956) – critically reviewed by G. E. M. de STE CROIX in *Economic History Review* 12 (1960) 510; M. SAHLINS, *Stone Age Economics* (1972).

10 H. W. PEARSON, “The secular debate on economic primitivism” in POLANYI *et al.* 1956 (*supra* n. 9) 3-11.

11 Nor is it accidental that Marshall SAHLINS was the co-author (with Elman SERVICE) of a book entitled *Evolution and Culture* (1960).

be Hesiod. It is in *Works and Days* that one finds the *polis* of the just, an agricultural elysium whose people flourish in an uncontaminated self-sufficiency of plenty where seaborne commerce and external intercourse are both unnecessary and undesirable – echoing attitudes already manifested in Homer in the antipathy to maritime traders expressed by the inhabitants of the similarly “ideal” horticultural paradise of the Phaeacians and in the deprecating portrayal of Phoenician maritime activities.¹² It is this opposition between “the grain-giving earth” and the “ill-gotten gains” of maritime trade which has thereafter so consistently characterised the overt attitudes of landed gentry towards the vulgarity of commerce. (Not for nothing did the Romans call trade *negotium*: the opposite of a leisured existence.) The corrosive effects of unfettered exchange on established interests and an unspoilt countryside are issues which remain current today; indeed, the current debate on the globalization of the economy catches much of the flavor of Hesiodic Greece. What is perhaps remarkable is that the agrarian ideal should have persisted into periods when worldly goods undoubtedly circulated and were accumulated in great abundance: pseudo-Aristotle’s *Oeconomica*, for instance, deals with the moral desirability of maintaining the self-sufficiency both of the *oikos* and the *polis*, condemning trading for gain and the flow of *chremata* as corrosive influences on society. Indeed, such attitudes were the basis of all discussion of “the economy” down to the 18th century.¹³ Trade was a hidden area of life from the point of view of the literati, whose discussions were solely concerned with administration – but this does not mean that it did not take place, either in 16th century England (when it clearly did) or in sixth century Greece (when it has been claimed not to have done). Ironically, precisely such a prejudice against trade and a prevalence of landed values was invoked not long ago as a reason for Britain’s recent industrial decline.¹⁴ Trading as an activity has only recently re-acquired the positive moral connotations which now surround it.

It is even more ironic, therefore, that this debate should have been re-cycled, from ancient authors via Karl Polanyi to anthropology, and from anthropology back to ancient history and classical archaeology. Polanyi’s own motivation was to define alternatives to capitalism, which he saw as an immoral and inefficient system; and from 1953-58 he co-directed (with Conrad Arensberg) a research project on economic institutions at Columbia University, exploring other modes of economic organisation. Two Columbia graduate students at this time were the anthropologist Marshall Sahlins and the ancient historian Moses Finley; through them these ideas were propagated in their respective disciplines.¹⁵ Finley built up a powerful school at Cambridge,¹⁶ and his ideas entered classical archaeology through Anthony Snodgrass and his pupils¹⁷ – fortified both by indigenist ancient history¹⁸ and by its congruence with the autonomist position of processual archaeology.¹⁹ In a recent statement of this autochthonist stance, it has been argued that “the investigation of the material culture of any region (Greek, Italian or Western European) from a starting point of trade or exchange inevitably impedes understanding of local material behavior and social development,” and the

12 S. SHERRATT, “Commerce, iron and ideology: metallurgical innovation in 12th-11th century Cyprus,” in V. KARAGEORGHIS (ed.), *Proceedings of the International Symposium “Cyprus in the 11th Century BC” organised by the Archaeological Research Unit of the University of Cyprus and the Anastasios G. Leventis Foundation, Nicosia 30-31 October, 1993* (1994) 80-83; Eadem, “With us but not of us: the role of Crete in Homeric epic,” in D. EVELY, I.S. LEMOS and S. SHERRATT (eds.), *Minotaur and Centaur: studies in the archaeology of Crete and Euboea presented to Mervyn Popham*. BAR International Series 638 (1996) 91-94.

13 K. TRIBE, *Land, Labour and Economic Discourse* (1978) 82.

14 M. J. WIENER, *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit, 1850-1980* (1981). This is, of course, also both the root and result of antisemitism amongst European populations.

15 POLANYI *et al.* 1956 (*supra* n. 9) xi.

16 M. FINLEY, *The Ancient Economy* (1973): critically reviewed by M. FREDERIKSEN in *JRS* 65 (1975) 164-71; P. GARNSEY, K. HOPKINS and C. R. WHITTAKER (eds.), *Trade in the Ancient Economy* (1983).

17 A.M. SNODGRASS, *An Archaeology of Greece: the present state and future scope of a discipline* (1987); I.A. MORRIS, *Burial and Ancient Society* (1987); J. WHITLEY, *Style and Society in Dark Age Greece* (1991).

18 A. J. GRAHAM, *Colony and Mother City in Ancient Greece*. 2nd ed. (1983).

19 C. RENFREW, *Before Civilisation: the radiocarbon revolution and European prehistory* (1973).

authors question whether trade between Athens, Massalia and the Hallstatt chiefdoms even took place at all.²⁰ This is perhaps an extreme (though not atypical) example, and other recent accounts of the period by ancient historians²¹ show that – like the anti-diffusionist reaction in European prehistory – this attitude marks a passing phase. It has to some extent been overtaken in anthropological and historical disciplines by a more subtle concern with the nature of consumption, simultaneously both material and expressive, and the meanings which often exotic commodities have for those who acquire and use them.²² (One aspect of this is the broadening social range of consumers of imported goods, corresponding to the increasing convertibility of goods mentioned above.) This brings together the perceptions of central, innovating societies and the “native” populations with whom they came into contact, without the uniformitarian transfer of culture inherent in diffusionist models such as “Hellenization” and “Romanization.” It fulfils the need for an interactionist and dialectical model of cultural encounter. Nevertheless it still remains to describe the ideologico-economic dynamic behind the processes of expansion which undoubtedly occurred, and the asymmetric relationships which were a fundamental part of their structure: this is where world-system theory offers an appropriate perspective.²³

In summary, therefore: the economic systems of the ancient world were just that – ancient, not primitive. Primitivist and substantivist accounts of the ancient world are a misleading application of nineteenth-century *Stufentheorie*. Ancient economies differed in scale, organisation, transport and technology from those which appeared after AD 1600, but shared with them the common properties of urban systems. They were “agrarian” in the sense that all societies were, before the Industrial Revolution; but they were not *ipso facto* incapable of economic expansion or concerned solely with supplies of food. They (or rather their elites) were capable of acquiring regular supplies of exotic, high-value materials, and at the same time of mobilizing agro-pastoral surpluses in specific commodities for the purposes of manufacture. The “rules of the game” in the Iron Age world, and arguably also in the Bronze Age, are ones recognizable to historians of subsequent centuries. Only the artificial distinctions between “economics,” “culture” and “ideology” need to be obliterated.

The properties of space: geography, identity and ethnicity

The concern with a temporal succession of stages has, however, disguised a crucial variability in space. Evolutionists took their evidence from the Graeco-Roman world and generalized from it to the ancient world as a whole, considered as representing the same stage of development. In the context of our discussion of “the Aegean and the Orient,” it is therefore noteworthy that the whole debate on the nature of the ancient economy in fact has its roots in regional contrasts, and in attitudes initiated in the early first millennium BC by cultural contacts between East and West. The corrosive influences (including “black” iron) of

20 K. ARAFAT and C. MORGAN, “Athens, Etruria and the Heuneburg: mutual misconceptions in the study of Greek-barbarian relations,” in I. MORRIS (ed.), *Classical Greece: ancient histories and modern archaeologies*, (1994) 130. For a critique, see A. SHERRATT, “*Fata Morgana*: illusion and reality in Greek-barbarian relations,” *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 5/1 (1995) 139-56. ARAFAT and MORGAN offer the following perspective on the ancient Mediterranean: Phocaeen colonists were refugees (p. 127), and western exploration in general was exceptional, and only given historical prominence because it supplied a fund of good stories (p. 121); Athenian trade began only when local grain supplies were exhausted (p. 129). On Attic pottery manufacture they remark: “The basic unit of production was probably the extended family, the *oikos*, whose wealth lay primarily in land, and who supplemented its income by craft production” (p. 109). In its attitude to the pollution of foreign contacts, it is uncommonly close to its Hesiodic roots.

21 E.g. R. OSBORNE, “Pots, trade and the archaic Greek economy,” *Antiquity* 70 (1996) 31-44.

22 From a growing literature: M. DOUGLAS and B. ISHERWOOD, *The World of Goods: towards an anthropology of consumption* (1978); A. APPADURAI (ed.), *The Social Life of Things: commodities in cultural perspective* (1986); D. MILLER, *Acknowledging Consumption* (1995); J. GOODMAN, P. LOVEJOY and A. SHERRATT (eds.), *Consuming Habits: drugs in history and anthropology* (1995).

23 A. G. FRANK and B. K. GILLS (eds.), *The World System: Five hundred years or five thousand?* (1993).

the maritime commerce for which Hesiod displays such a marked distaste were introduced into Greece from the east Mediterranean (often by way of Crete);²⁴ and the advocacy of autarky as the kernel of indigenous values was a rhetorical response to the challenge of increasing contacts and competition between the Aegean and the Orient: suspicion of commerce and suspicion of the East (specifically the Phoenicians) were part of a single assertion of identity. These attitudes have been echoed in their interpreters: primitivists have been local autonomists, concerned with the Aegean itself rather than its wider oriental setting; modernizers like Meyer and Rostovtzeff painted on a wider canvas and were more sympathetic to the kinds of cultural influences brought by the Phoenicians. This division of opinion has been echoed further in reactions to Polanyi: while received sympathetically in the classical world, his interpretation was initially treated with suspicion by orientalists, and then systematically rejected by them in a series of trenchant studies.²⁵ These differing responses relate in part to differing research traditions (and not least to the cultural roles of “classics” and “oriental studies”);²⁶ but they are also symptomatic of differing attitudes within these civilisations themselves. The West has always been suspicious of the ostentation, luxury and *kaka kerdea* which it associates with the East (John Boardman’s “showy orientals” and “controlled Greeks”);²⁷ as Jane Schneider has perceptively expressed it:

*“Surely the confident ideologues of a core-area like Byzantium would not have felt the need to stigmatize luxuries... but in Western Europe which, although peripheral, was propitiously located to resist predation, vigilance would have made sense [in order to conserve capital]. If so, then Wallerstein’s categorical claim that luxuries are non-essential – read dangerous and corrupting – originated as the ideological aspect of a secular movement from import restriction and import substitution [leading] to eventual industrial development.”*²⁸

Critical to a model of the Bronze Age and Iron Age Mediterranean, therefore, is a spatial (often zonal) differentiation between very different forms of economy, organised in different ways and articulated by different mechanisms.²⁹ It is the consistent flow of certain desirable goods across the boundaries of these different systems, through many different polities and peoples and by many different modes of transmission, which is one of the most striking features of the ancient economy to be revealed by archaeologists. Moreover it is this ecology of actors and ethnic groupings within the system that gives individuality to local cultures.

24 S. SHERRATT 1994 (*supra* n. 12); *Eadem* 1996 (*supra* n. 12).

25 From a large critical literature: W. R. CONNOR, “Homo lucrans?,” *Arion* NS 1/4 (1973-74) 731-39; S. HUMPHREYS, *Anthropology and the Greeks* (1978); J. RENGER, “Patterns of non-institutional trade and non-commercial exchange in ancient Mesopotamia at the beginning of the second millennium BC,” in A. ARCHI (ed.), *Circulation of Goods in non-palatial Contexts in the Ancient Near East*, (1984); M. SILVER, *Economic Structures of the Ancient Near East* (1985); J. R. LOVE, *Antiquity and Capitalism: Max Weber and the sociological foundations of Roman civilisation* (1991); D. RATHBONE, *Economic Rationalism and Rural Society in Third-Century BC Egypt* (1991). See now M. HUDSON and B.A. LEVINE (eds.), *Privatization in the ancient Near East and Classical World* (1996).

26 BERNAL (*supra* n. 3).

27 J. BOARDMAN, *Pre-Classical: from Crete to Archaic Greece* (1967). This contrast also at times had purely political motives: see, for instance, Sarah MORRIS’s masterly analysis of the way in which 5th century Athens absorbed eastern fashions while at the same time inventing an entirely negative picture of decadent oriental despotism: S. MORRIS, *Daidalos and the Origins of Greek Art* (1992).

28 J. SCHNEIDER, “Was there a pre-capitalist world-system?,” *Peasant Studies* 6/1 (1977) 20-29. Ironically, both Immanuel Wallerstein and Gordon Childe shared the puritan West’s suspicion of corrosive luxury: A. SHERRATT, “Who are you calling peripheral? Dependence and independence in European prehistory,” in C. SCARRE and F. HEALY (eds.), *Trade and Exchange in Prehistoric Europe* (1993) 245-55.

29 Sketches of this revised world-systems model of the ancient world, both in the Bronze Age and the earlier Iron Age, have already been put forward: A.G. SHERRATT and E.S. SHERRATT, “From luxuries to commodities: the nature of Mediterranean Bronze Age trading systems,” in *Bronze Age Trade*, 351-86; E.S. SHERRATT and A.G. SHERRATT, “The growth of the Mediterranean economy in the early first millennium BC,” *World Archaeology* 24/3 (1993) 361-78.

If economic attitudes and issues of identity are so closely related, then how does this relate to ethnicity? Here, too, it is necessary to clear the field of preconceptions. Ethnicity is not, like Herder's *Volksgeist*, a constant quality attached to a particular group of people; it is a voluntary identification with a group, dependent upon situation.³⁰ Many ethnonyms bear witness to its ad hoc character, often forged under historical exigency (like *les Allemands* – the Alemanni, “all men” who appeared as a confederation in the second century).³¹ Since ethnicity is situational, no one form of ethnicity is ever like another; each is defined according to a different referent. Typically, ethnic definition arises from contact, and increasingly sharply defined entities result from encounters on an increasing scale and over increasing distances – nowadays on an intercontinental (and hence often ‘racially’ defined) scale. This mobility and encounter is often associated with specialised sub-groups carrying out a specific economic role – and such differentiation is itself nested within processes of economic expansion and particularly those of growing urban communities and networks. Consciousness of ethnic differences becomes heightened in periods of political and economic flux (as opposed to stability and growth), when ethnic divisions are newly created or re-mobilized in forming new political units (cf. Serbs in Bosnia); otherwise the tensions are largely latent. It is not by accident that there is a renewed interest in ethnicity (in archaeology, as in the real world) at the present time, which is characterised by the breakup of large, centralized political structures. In such circumstances, ethnicity is mobilized or actually created: there is no need to find age-old “territorial” origins for groups like the Sea Peoples, for instance.³²

Much of our own notion of “ethnicity” is derived from the same set of encounters as those responsible for ideas of *oikonomia*: the meeting of Greek and east Mediterranean maritime populations (particularly Phoenicians) during the first half of the first millennium BC. Iron Age Levantine traders had visited Greece (and certainly Crete) since the 10th and 9th centuries, probably in search of metals, before the establishment of colonies further west;³³ and during most of the 8th century (when so much oriental culture was absorbed) Greeks and Levantines together participated in trade with Italy.³⁴ By the 7th century, however, many forms of east Mediterranean goods seem to have been bypassing the Aegean, although turning up in some numbers further west;³⁵ and it seems likely that some degree of “import restriction and substitution” (along with other forms of cultural resistance) was taking place. At the same time, by the later part of the 8th century, evidence of a growing panhellenic consciousness in Greece itself, defined specifically in relation to a Phoenician “other,”³⁶ combined with the rush to found overtly political colonies in the west, marks the initial conception of the two distinct ideological, cultural and politico-economic spheres which were to dominate Greek relations with the east for millennia to come: the literary topos of the Trojan war, with its Achaean army united by one language against the linguistic diversity of the Trojan allies, continued to be played out in later Greek encounters with Persians and Turks.

Elements of this panhellenism include not only the creation of the specifically Homeric epics themselves in the form which they have come down to us,³⁷ but also the phenomenon of the supra-regional sanctuaries such as Olympia, participation in whose games (founded, according to tradition, in 776 BC) came to form a quintessential touchstone of “Greekness.”

30 F. BARTH (ed.), *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (1969).

31 Like “Anatolia” and “the Orient,” these often have names given by outsiders, like the Siberian Samoyed (Russ. “cannibals”) – as, indeed, is the name “Phoenician.”

32 S. SHERRATT, “‘Sea Peoples’ and the economic structure of the late second millennium in the eastern Mediterranean,” in S. GITIN, A. MAZAR and E. STERN (eds.), *Mediterranean peoples in transition: thirteenth to early tenth century B.C.E.* (in press).

33 This seems more logical than that a “Euboean warrior-trader” (M. POPHAM and I. LEMOS, “A Euboean warrior trader,” *OJA* 14 [1995] 151-57) should himself have visited, let alone initiated contact with, the Levant.

34 SHERRATT and SHERRATT 1993 (*supra* n.29) 364-69.

35 *Ibid.* 370.

36 S. SHERRATT 1994 (*supra* n. 12) 80-85; *Eadem* 1996 (*supra* n. 12).

37 Cf. G. NAGY, *Pindar's Homer: the lyric possession of an epic past* (1990); *Idem*, “Homeric questions,” *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 122 (1992) 17-60.

It is probably no coincidence that the main panhellenic sanctuaries grew up at strategic points along long-distance maritime routes where they initially served the needs of international mariners. Precisely this sort of context, in which frequent and intimate contact with “foreigners” is combined with the arguably potent role of the sanctuaries as economic powerhouses, might be expected to provide a fertile seedbed for the growth of territorially based identity.³⁸ The use of language itself (both Greek in general, and in time more specific dialects such as Doric or Ionic) came to be a touchstone for identity in a way that it had not been before. The development of the Greek alphabet, as a means of visual representation of a single Greek language, should probably be seen as another early manifestation of panhellenic consciousness.

How, then, are we to approach the tangled issue of cultural identity in the Bronze Age of the eastern half of the Mediterranean? It is clear that a simple “territory = people” approach is hopelessly inadequate, and that the perceptions which different actors had of each other were dependent both on their own standpoint and on a changing pattern of relations between them. What is at issue is not just a dynamic picture of cultural contact, but an evolving structure of economic and social interdependencies. We may begin, therefore, with the outline of a cultural geography, and then proceed to sketch the properties of the system as it evolved over the course of the Bronze Age.

Position and role: a shifting configuration

As the Mediterranean trading system enlarged, both during the second millennium and again during the first, so the “personalities” of different regions emerged, depending on their positions in the network. Such propensities might continue over many generations: the Levantine populations of the second millennium (“Canaanites”) played a comparable role to the Phoenicians of the first millennium BC; and to some extent also to the Jews and Syrians of the first millennium AD. The basins of the great rivers where urban life began, with their intensive systems of agriculture and dense populations, had the longest histories and were the largest centres of consumption; they were also the largest blocs politically. After their early “colonial” phases³⁹ in the fourth millennium, however, they were not characterised by external entrepreneurial activity, which was more usually undertaken by their better-placed neighbors.⁴⁰ The Levant, with its narrow coastland strip backed by mountains and desert, was always conscious both of Mesopotamia and Egypt, and from this interstitial and coastal position pioneered both trading activity (cross-desert as well as maritime)⁴¹ and technological innovation. (This included both boat-building, facilitated by abundant supplies of timber, and “high-tech” innovations such as glassmaking – a classic form of import-substitution – and *metallmalerei*.) Such areas lived by their wits. The Levant was famous for its cosmopolitanism and syncretism, then as now, though it was often politically subservient to more powerful neighbors. Cyprus, at first isolated from these developments, came to be an intimate and increasingly important part of them; though by the same token it maintained its political independence for longer.⁴² The long south coast of Anatolia was the arterial route to the west: Cilicia gave access inland, and had sufficient lowland to be a demographic and political centre (and is archaeologically perhaps the least-known area of the ancient world in relation to its socio-economic and cultural importance); while other parts of the Anatolian coastline had more the character of a much-visited corridor – the name Pamphylia (*pan-phylia*, all peoples)

38 S. SHERRATT 1996 (*supra* n. 12) 91 with n.13.

39 G. ALGAZE, *The Uruk World System: the dynamics of expansion of early Mesopotamian Civilisation* (1993); P.R.S. MOOREY, *From Gulf to Delta and Beyond*. Beer-Sheva VIII (1995).

40 This is especially true of Egypt, with its sometimes ambivalent relationship with ‘Asiatics’ (and, in the first millennium, Greeks).

41 M. ARTZY, “Incense, camels and collared-rim jars: overland trade-routes and maritime outlets in the second millennium,” *OJA* 13 (1994) 121-47.

42 It thus had a crucial role both in initiating the technological change from bronze to iron, yet also in continuity and expansion of economic activity from Bronze Age to Iron Age.

suggests as much. Central Anatolia, partly isolated behind its mountain barrier, was also important in relation to an important inter-regional route: the overland trails, either from Cilicia or Assyria, to the plateau and onwards to the Aegean or the Black Sea and so to the Danube and Europe's inland entry-point; but its protected plateau position also made it a potential focus for territorial expansion. At the narrows between these two last-mentioned seas, one or other of the Bosphorus or the Dardanelles was occupied by a major city, from Troy to Byzantium, and one may imagine both as equally cosmopolitan and polyglot. The islands of the Aegean, beautiful but bare, came into prominence whenever they were axial to longer-distance traffic; and island peoples, familiar with the sea, often pioneered the linkages between regions which made such traffic possible. The Greek peninsula also offered a land-area much of which was easily accessible by sea, and it also funneled any traffic going further west into two routes: a trans-isthmian connection via the Gulf of Corinth, or a more purely maritime route via Crete and the west coast of the Peloponnese. These restrictions and landfalls picked out areas destined for a wider role – especially when (initially in parallel to the Black Sea/Danube route, then as an alternative to it) the route to Italy gave access to a larger hinterland in trans-Alpine Europe. Central Italy and the Tyrrhenian Sea thus parallels the Sea of Marmara as a gateway to the continent beyond; and in later millennia, and on a larger scale, the two cities at these articulation-points between Mediterranean sea-routes and trans-European routes, Rome and Constantinople, were to provide the foci for rival segments of empire and rival versions of Christianity. Thus do geography, identity and ethnicity interact.

Underlying these manifestations was a pattern of growth from East to West. The language of “core” and “periphery” may suggest an active role for the former and a passive one for the latter; yet the relation between them was creative and dialectical. If cores create peripheries, peripheries also create cores: this conception is radically different from simplistic diffusionism. The lands of the West were not poor; on the contrary, they were the source of desirable riches – if not El Dorado, the land of gold, at least El Plateado, the land of silver. Moreover, peripheries may grow up into competing cores (with their own, new peripheries), so that the topology is constantly changing, and creating interstices within which new roles can emerge. Each successive increase in scale altered the pattern of connections by shifting the routes to longer and more direct passages between the interacting areas, and altering the relative volumes of traffic which passed along them. As marine methods of transport could cope more easily with increased bulk, so maritime routes prospered at the expense of overland ones; and these arterial maritime routes themselves provided new intervening opportunities for the areas en route. It is thus artificial to treat the history of the different component areas in isolation from the evolution of the network as a whole; individual areas co-evolved within it.

An important consideration in the development of long-distance trading-systems – which are not only cross-cultural but “trans-zonal” in that they integrate societies at different levels of development – is security, both from the point of view of foreign travellers and also their hosts: the encounter has to be controlled at a local level. One of Polanyi's lasting contributions was his emphasis on the port-of-trade as a characteristic feature of interaction between an advanced (but not militarily dominant) power and a “native” hinterland; the foreign traders require security, but the indigenous inhabitants (or their leaders) fear the destabilizing effects of contact. It is possible that classic “ports of trade” (e.g. on offshore islands such as Mochlos) actually existed in the later third millennium Aegean. Moreover, local rulers desire to monopolize such trade, or at least to tax it, and a separation of facilities for external trade from those for internal administration is a characteristic not just of the initial phase of inter-regional trade but of its early organisation.⁴³ Egypt (with the important exception of the Amarna period) typically strove to confine foreign traders to the Delta, and to specific ports within it; the large, land-based empires both of the second and first millennia (the Hittites,

43 Note, for example the “wic” settlements of 7th-century Saxon England: e.g. Southampton (Hamwih) near Winchester, Aldwych near the core of old London. These kept foreign (in this case probably “Frisian,” ie Rhenish) merchants under control.

and, later, Assyria) similarly used whole city-states like Ugarit or the Phoenician cities as a buffer between their heartlands and the maritime Mediterranean world. Like China, their often cosmologically-based view of their social universe allowed only “tribute” (usually from the four quarters of the known world) to be brought to an imperial ruler: foreign nations were described within a strictly defined conceptual canon.⁴⁴ Smaller polities, on a more intimate scale, also attempted to regulate intercourse with foreigners; indeed, the Bronze Age palatial system itself was such an organizational framework, dependent upon appropriate contacts with the ruling families, and provided a highly controlled environment for inter-regional encounters. The centralized nature of Bronze Age polities would thus have amortized potential cross-cultural conflicts, by confining them to the cosmopolitan context of the palace and its port. This would have avoided the most threatening aspect of the 8th/7th-century situation, which was the uncontrolled contact between “dangerous” foreigners and local populations. The Bronze Age Aegean was thus a mosaic of small, palace-centred statelets, each with its own centralized organisation, whose controlling elites (so long as they were truly in control) are likely to have perceived eastward contact as an opportunity rather than a threat.⁴⁵

Increased contacts therefore brought new forms of consciousness of a world beyond the Aegean. Yet even if the larger and denser populations of the older urban civilisations were the major consumers of wealth generated in a larger system, it is likely that the newly-emergent Bronze Age polities perceived them only indirectly, through intermediaries. In the expansion of inter-regional (and thus inter-cultural) trade, a particularly important role has been played by certain minority peoples. With pre-industrial transport technology, trade inevitably took place in relays, often over extended periods of time. While core cultures might establish colonial settlements at crucial nodes along important routes, the desired resources were often some distance away even from these. Intervening populations, especially coastal or nomadic communities, could link producers and consumers, bridging both the distance and the cultural gap. Such linking populations and trading diasporas are a common feature of expanding pre-industrial economies.⁴⁶ Yet such systems are inevitably temporary, and foreign merchants are ultimately replaced by indigenous traders – much as the Jews maintained international links from the sixth to the tenth centuries AD, after the disintegration of the Roman Empire and before the emergence of an indigenous European merchant class. (Or, indeed, as Greek merchants replaced Phoenicians in certain areas of the 7th-century west Mediterranean: two crucial episodes in the growth of European anti-semitism.)

In the Bronze Age expansion of east Mediterranean trade, several groups appear to have played such a role. In the third millennium, coastal west-Anatolian or Cycladic communities seem to have done so in relation to the interface between overland Anatolian routes and maritime routes in the Aegean and Black Sea. In these circumstances, some measure of cultural syncretism, and even of linguistic convergence⁴⁷ is probable, but the assumption of a single, regional culture and ethnicity is inherently unlikely; and both the ambiguities of EH

44 Our perception of the “Sea Peoples,” from the end of the Bronze Age when stable relations both between states and within them were breaking down, bears the stamp of Egyptian attempts to impose such categories on a more fluid situation.

45 Even in the 14th century BC, therefore, when the southern Aegean was occupied by a multitude of Greek-speaking polities, there is little suggestion of a collective, panhellenic consciousness constructed in opposition to an oriental other. Ahhiyawa may have been the name given to itself by a single land-based polity rather than anything more collective (as Achaeans appear to be in Homer); or it may have been an ethnonym used initially by others, like “Phoenician.” In any case, in the form in which it appears in the Hittite records, it seems likely that it was tailored to the rhetoric of Hittite political geography.

46 P. CURTIN, *Cross-cultural Trade in World History* (1984).

47 The emergence of a coastal koine or trade language around the shores of the western Black Sea and north Aegean may have been an important context for the formation of a common proto-Indo-European: A.G. SHERRATT and E.S. SHERRATT, “The archaeology of Indo-European: an alternative view,” *Antiquity* 62 (1988) 584-95.

II/III ceramic classification,⁴⁸ and the presence of “Near Eastern” (ultimately north-Mesopotamian, but proximately via Syria and Anatolia) sealing-systems at Lerna⁴⁹ hint at the complexities of pattern at this time. This phase saw the spread of consumption-habits such as the use of wine and woollen textiles which were to predispose local populations to adopt other forms of oriental luxuries, and to welcome trading contacts in order to acquire them.

By the early centuries of the second millennium, however, interaction was already taking place on a larger scale: introduction of the sail on the south-Anatolian coastal route between north Syria/Cilicia and the Aegean in the later third millennium both increased the scale and altered the pattern, with the emergence of palatial centres in Crete and probably elsewhere within the south-Anatolian corridor. It is a moot point whether this process can be conceptualized in terms of the evolution of any single polity within it, rather than in terms of the interacting system as a whole and its common elite culture. The spread of Levantine Egyptianizing or para-Mesopotamian iconography must be seen in this light. Such a situation might be compared with the early integration of similar island-worlds: the Indianization of south-east Asia (and the later spread there of Islam) involved a similar pattern of political evolution associated with the adoption of politico-religious symbolism from an adjacent core region. A suitable model for the early second-millennium Mediterranean might thus be the trading states of medieval Indonesia, with Cretan and south Anatolian coastal polities as “emirates” within a common cultural and ideological koine. Such rulers were less conscious of the geographical entities which appeal to a modern, map-reading observer in a world of territorial nation-states, used to giving names to whole islands and treating them as entities: they only rarely ruled whole islands, and typically controlled only nodal points such as river-mouths or other critical points on access-routes. Beyond their own polities, such rulers are likely to have been conscious of the whole chain of similar small units of which they formed part (and with which they were both to some extent interdependent and in competition). If there was a collective ethnonym used of the people involved in this process, it is likely to have referred not to individual territorial components but to the sea-linked community as a whole. “Keftiu” (like “Phoenician” or “Viking”) may indeed have been such a term.⁵⁰

By the middle of the second millennium, however, as the network “matured” by the addition of new consuming populations in the Aegean (and an expanded western periphery), the system is likely to have segmented into regionally dominated cycles of exchange. Precisely such a pattern of development may be discerned – on a rather larger scale – within the Indian Ocean, when a pattern of single voyages across the expanse of sea from south China to the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, typical of the period from AD 700-950, was replaced in the period from 1000 to 1500 by a “triple segmentation” of interlocking cycles (in the South China Sea, the Bay of Bengal, and the Arabian Sea), articulated by major emporia located at their intersections.⁵¹ Analogies in the Aegean and the east Mediterranean are not far to seek: Tell Abu Hawam, Enkomi, Rhodes (probably Ialysos), Kommos. Ships the size of the one wrecked off Uluburun (crewed, no doubt, by crews recruited in half-a-dozen ports and speaking as many languages)⁵² plied an arterial route between these major entrepôts, carrying cargoes on a scale that would then break bulk and be offloaded onto smaller vessels supplying other circuits and provisioning palatial polities throughout the Aegean, where smaller vessels could better cope with the complexities of winds, currents and shoals.

By the 13th century, another configuration was emerging: even longer-distance routes (pioneered especially by Cypriots), which extended from the east Mediterranean all the way to Sicily and Sardinia, were coming into existence. This new topology threatened the interests

48 J.B. RUTTER, “Some observations on the Cyclades in the later third and early second millennium,” *AJA* 87 (1983) 69-76.

49 J. WEINGARTEN, “Another look at Lerna: an EH IIB trading post?,” *OJA* 16/2 (1997) 147-66.

50 It would be wrong in these circumstances to think of autonomous local cultures (e.g. the Minoans) sending “their” craftsmen to foreign parts: the elite style was international in its origin – “route-centred” more than originating in any one territory.

51 K. N. CHAUDHURI, *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean* (1985); compare Maps 8 and 9.

52 Perhaps with a common *lingua akkadika*?

of the established pattern of Bronze Age polities as it had developed in the course of the second millennium; and it was combined with new modes of trading which outflanked their patterns of centralized control. Such growth began to exceed the limits of the traditional Bronze Age framework, and together with the technological changes to which it gave rise – notably the development of utilitarian iron – undermined the production and circulation patterns on which political power had rested. A major re-structuring of power-relationships and economic roles, in which the initiative passed from older centres and established authorities, was accompanied by widespread destruction, unrest, and movement of populations, and accompanied the transition from the Bronze Age to the Age of Iron.⁵³

Scale, centralization and individual enterprise

It remains to draw together some of the threads of this discussion. The period under review was characterised by a massive increase in the scale both of population and of economic activity. These two were intimately related, in a process to which the twentieth century has given the name of “growth” or “development.” This process, essentially one of urbanization, was initiated in Mesopotamia and Egypt in the fourth millennium BC, and spread contagiously along the Mediterranean sea-lanes in subsequent millennia. Such a bare description, however, gives a false sense of uniformity to the series of individual encounters, opportunities, choices, and conflicts to which it gave rise. Fueling the process was a diversification and increase in the consumption of meaning-laden material goods; and the repertoire of consumables was itself not static, but grew as a widening range of resources was brought into circulation and further diversified by technological change and artistic embellishment. Materials circulated as a concrete manifestation of ideas: ideas about the nature of the world, of the place of men and women within it, and the differences between individuals and groups and their respective social prerogatives. Artistic representations captured some of these meanings in iconic form; but equally important were regular flows of material goods and their consumption within prescribed forms of performance, ritual, and display in appropriate architectural settings. Such elaboration of lifestyle, within a diversity of cultural forms, provided a continuing material discourse which complemented the more evanescent forms of cultural creation in poetry and music – some of whose echoes lingered long enough to be permanently immortalized as part of Homeric epic.

The contrast between the scale of such activity at the end of the third millennium, and at the end of the second, is striking. At the start of the palatial period in the Aegean, only a few, precious, items travelled between the east Mediterranean and a few centres in what (from their point of view) we might call the Near West. By the middle of the millennium, a single ship might contain a cargo of standardized copper ingots numbered in hundreds, together with ingots of blue glass and amphorae of organic commodities. This increase in volume was an index both of the enlarged spatial scale of trading activity, now pulling in both Baltic amber and Nubian ebony,⁵⁴ and also of the greater participation of Aegean populations in its consumption. The glass itself – *ersatz* lapis lazuli – is symptomatic of this broadening, even bourgeoisification, of the consumer base. As well as a “top drawer” elite, there were also relatives and retainers who were also locked in to these commodity flows. The scale of production and trade in pottery, that most bourgeois of products, shows that there were sufficient opportunities to copy the elite lifestyle in cheaper materials.

It is here that we may return to the insight of the primitivists and substantivists. The process did, indeed, begin with the exchange of valuables, *chremata*; but fundamental to the growth of indigenous urban economies was the development of locally-made products which were also in demand within the wider system. Textiles, as so often, provided a medium in which value could be added to raw materials through a manufacturing process; and clothing – the presentation of the body in social interaction – is one of the most eloquent modes of material expression. Crete had the advantage, not only of good sheep-raising country, but also

53 S. SHERRATT 1994 (*supra* n. 12); *Eadem* in press (*supra* n. 32).

54 One of the few words of Egyptian origin in English.

the vertical loom and a range of dyestuffs, of which saffron (with its own culinary, medicinal and indeed potentially psychotropic properties) came to have special cultural and religious properties, as the Thera frescoes show.⁵⁵ Dyed woollen textiles were desirable commodities for instance in linen-using (and horizontal loom-using) Egypt, as Elizabeth Barber has demonstrated. Other comparable organic products were scented olive oils, as Cynthia Shelmerdine has described,⁵⁶ and possibly also wine. (Cyprus went further, and bottled opiates.)⁵⁷ What all these forms of commodity production show is the ability to mobilize an agrarian surplus (and obtain specific additional materials) for the purpose of manufacture and exchange. These multilateral exchanges secured metal supplies, other semi-manufactures (like raw glass), and the high-value exotic luxuries which circulated amongst elites. There was one economy, not two separate spheres of chrematistic and oikonomic activity.

Yet the substantivists have one more point to make: the embeddedness of the economy. The pseudo-evolutionary notion of centralized redistribution as a stage between gift-exchange and the market is a red herring; but the fact that inter-regional exchanges were monopolized by an elite is an important characteristic of Bronze Age economic activity. The palace-centred system was essentially a command economy, organised on the principle of a household or estate and probably run effectively by a “royal family.” This centralization was actively maintained, rather than simply occurring as an evolutionary necessity. Such elites had common interests, one of which was not to let valuable (and convertible) materials like metal supplies get into the hands of the general population, other than as allocated items for specific purposes. Hence the general employment of a language of gift exchange between brothers in the negotiation of high-level transfers of bodies of important commodities. The movements of such materials were closely supervised. On the other hand, the growth of a trade in an unimportant material like pottery, for instance – never mentioned in diplomatic exchanges or shown in wall-paintings of “tribute” – was allowed to take place as an incidental and informal element of voyaging whose principal purpose was the transfer of high-value commodities. The expansion of such forms of trade, which was a natural consequence of the widening range of sub-elite consumers, nevertheless had dangerous consequences for elite monopolists; for it raised the possibility that strategic materials, too, might begin to circulate in this informal way. One such possibility lay in the circulation of scrap metal. Such unsupervised circulation was particularly dangerous when combined with an entrepreneurial drive to find new markets and to tap new sources of supply, and to deal in large quantities of substitute and lower-value materials. These propensities were combined in the Cypriot city-states, who supplied large quantities of pottery (first Aegean-made, then imitation) to the Levant, and whose commercial diversification began to undercut established channels of distribution. Combined with the exploration of new, long-distance routes, these factors led to a radical re-structuring during the 13th century which essentially spelled the end of the old palace monopolies.

So radical were the consequences that the whole system effectively collapsed, even if only temporarily so: a collapse which involved the “oriental” polities as much as the Aegean ones. Nothing so dramatically demonstrates the economic integration of the Aegean and east Mediterranean worlds, and their mutual interdependence, as the scale on which depression and confusion engulfed the entire region – at least from the point of view of record-keeping elites, who saw their privileges disappear in the process. When economic life quickened again in the following centuries, its overall geographical pattern was in many ways a re-run of the previous cycle: but the basis of its bulk metal circulation was now not bronze but iron; and its

55 E.J.W. BARBER, *Prehistoric Textiles: the development of cloth in the Neolithic and Bronze Ages* (1991); *Eadem*, *Women's Work: the first 20,000 years* (1994). Thera itself may well have pioneered a fine textile tradition, capitalizing on its locational advantages within early short-haul exchange-routes; and the intriguing recent suggestion of a Late Bronze Age industry using wild silk (and potentially also cotton) shows how continuing product-innovation could maintain such an initial advantage. See E. PANAGIOTAKOPULU, P.C. BUCKLAND, P.M. DAY, C. DOUMAS, A. SARPAKI and P. SKIDMORE, “A lepidopterous cocoon from Thera and evidence for silk in the Aegean Bronze age,” *Antiquity* 71 (1997) 420-29.

56 C. SHELMEERDINE, *The Perfume Industry at Pylos*. SIMA Pocketbook 34 (1985).

57 R.S. MERRILLEES, “Opium Trade in the Bronze Age Levant,” *Antiquity* 36 (1962) 287-92.

economic organisation was one of decentralized commercial enterprise, not centralized palace monopoly. The agrarian communities of the Aegean were subjected to the full corrosive force of commercialism; and the ambivalence it generated made trading an object of suspicion among traditional elites in Europe for another two millennia.

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