Johannes Siapkas

Heterological Ethnicity
Conceptualizing identities in ancient Greece
ABSTRACT

In accordance with the heterological tradition, this study emphasises the determining effect of theoretical assumptions on our conceptualizations of the past. This study scrutinises how classical archaeologists and ancient historians have conceptualized ethnic groups, in particular the Messenians.

Ethnic groups have traditionally been regarded as static with clear-cut boundaries. Each group has also been attributed with certain essential characteristics. According to this view, the Messenian ethnic identity was preserved during the period of Spartan occupation. This view is facilitated by a passive perspective, which regards evidence as reflections of reality and emphasises continuity. This culture historical perspective, which gives precedence to literary evidence and reduces archaeology to a handmaiden of history, has prevailed in classics from the 19th century until today. It can be juxtaposed with perspectives, discernable in classics from the 1960s onwards, which maintain that various parts of culture are manipulated in accordance with contemporaneous socio-political needs. These active perspectives — ranging from systems theoretical, functionalistic to processual models — resemble the instrumentalist model in anthropology which regards ethnicity as a dynamic and flexible strategy. Nevertheless, the instrumentalist redefinition of ethnicity did not influence classics until the late 1990s. According to the instrumentalist perspective, the Messenian ethnic identity emerged as a strategy of distinction in opposition to the Spartans.

Despite the variations, these perspectives can be regarded as part of a dogmatic tradition. Scholars within the dogmatic tradition tend to focus on the evidence and neglect the influence of the scholarly discourse on the conceptualizations of the past. This study, which is influenced by Michel de Certeau’s critique of the dogmatic tradition, elaborates on the discursive constraints of classical archaeology and ancient history.

Keywords: theory, ethnicity, classical archaeology, ancient history, primordialism, instrumentalism, Messenia, helots, heterology, de Certeau.

Johannes Siapkas, Dept. of Archaeology and Ancient History, Uppsala University, S:t Eriks torg 5, SE-753 10 Uppsala, Sweden.

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Small meetings can have great repercussions. At Stanford, I happened to meet another Greek (I am sorry, but I do not remember his name). If my memory serves me correct, he was writing a thesis on Buddhism in Japan at some Department of Religious Studies. Anyway, to make a long story short, over a cup of coffee and needless to say countless cigarettes, we came to express uneasiness with Bourdieu’s ever-presence in our disciplines. This was the first time I heard the name of Michel de Certeau. I literally began to read The Practice of Everyday Life a couple of hours later. De Certeau’s critique of history, finally, made me realise the intrinsic contradictions of my ideas, which resulted in a fundamental restructuring of this study a year ago.

Along the way, I have also met other persons. Gullög Nordquist’s enthusiasm is always inspiring. This work has benefited a lot from Gullög’s encouragement and advice, particularly during the last years when she, in addition to Pontus, served as my supervisor. I would also like to thank, Michael Lindblom, who made a first version of the cover, Lars Karlsson, who helped me decipher the Italian, Brita Alroth, for help with the references, and Susanne Carlsson, for the searches in TLG.
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Leisurely reader: you don’t need me to swear that I longed for this book, born out of my own brain, to be the handsomest child imaginable, the most elegant, the most sensible. But could I contradict the natural order of things? Like creates like. So what could my sterile, half-educated wit give birth to except the history … you’re under no obligation at all, so you can say anything you like about this history, you don’t have to worry about being insulted if you don’t like it or rewarded if you do.

decervantes 1995, 3.

This book is an argument. I find that the metaphor of discussion captures the essence of scholarship. Heterological Ethnicity should, accordingly, be read as a contribution to an extensive and ongoing debate. My fundamental argument is that theoretical assumptions have a determining effect on our image of the past. This concern is rather wide, and in order to make it comprehensible it needs to be limited. The analytical focus is thus delimited by two notions: ‘ethnicity’, and ‘Messenians’. Ethnicity has been a governing topic in classics since the 19th century and can therefore serve to illustrate the effects of theoretical assumptions. However, since ethnicity has received so much attention I have also made a second limitation; the focus is therefore placed on the Messenians in ancient Greece as they have been conceptualized in classics.

The Politics of Archaeology and Classics

Today it is commonly recognised that the humanities are influenced by the social context in which they are practised. The institutionalisation of classics in modern academia during the 19th and 20th centuries occurred during a time when the discourse of nationalism had the world in its grip. The nationalism discourse was one of many external influences on classics, but it was perhaps the most influential one with regards to the conceptualizations of ethnicity. There are several, in part different, facets of this influence. One was the more or less overt aim to establish and trace the origins, deep into prehistory if possible,
of various nations in order to legitimise modern claims according to the principle that the first proven people in a territory had also the right to it.

A second, and perhaps more profound, effect of the discourse of nationalism was how peoples and nations were conceptualized. A fundamental assumption was that peoples were coherent entities. A nation had its characteristics, spoke a language, lived in a specific territory, had its specific culture, and so on. Furthermore, the national identity was regarded as the primary and determining identity, at the expense of other identities. The world was, briefly, conceptualized as a mosaic of nations and cultures. These entities were regarded as stable and fixed, with clear and distinct boundaries. This was occasionally taken one step further and the uniqueness of each unit was ascribed with an explanatory effect. That is, peoples were perceived to have certain characteristic traits that explained the development of their society and culture.

Trigger’s distinction between a universalistic tradition originating in the enlightenment and a particularistic tradition originating in romanticism is perhaps helpful here, since both have influenced archaeology and classics. The universalistic tenet aimed to explain the history of humankind, and paid less attention to the particularities of people’s and cultures. Trigger associates this tradition with the evolutionary model, which governed archaeology until the late 19th century. It was the gradually increasing influence of the romantic interest in the uniqueness of each people’s culture, intimately connected with nationalism, which contributed to archaeology’s adoption of the particularistic tradition. The focus on particularities was developed and formalised into the culture historical model. This model in particular has influenced the conceptualization of ethnicity.1 The past in the culture historical model was conceptualized as a mosaic of cultures, as distinct entities with specific traits. Material artefacts were in turn used as means to obtain the unique traits of a certain people. This assumption, coupled with a tendency to generalize, leads to essentialism. That is, the analytical entities become more important than the evidence, and the complexity of reality is squeezed down into crude analytical categories. This is a rather crude description of archaeology, but it captures a governing tenet, also in classics.2

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1 Trigger 1995, 263, 267-70. See also below Primordial Greeks.
2 Although this perspective came to dominate archaeology, the clear-cut entities were not always elevated. Trigger 1984, has distinguished between nationalist, colonialist, and imperialist archaeologies. In the latter two, archaeology downplays the connection between modern contemporary groups and archaeological cultures due to political and ideological factors. The relation between archaeology and nationalism has become a topical issue in the 1990s, e.g.
Introduction

Classics differ in some respects from the above. A major reason for this is the long tradition upon which the academic discipline was based. In this tradition, antiquity was held as an exemplary ideal, studied in order to furnish the contemporary world with comparative ideals. It focused on the exemplary aspects of antiquity and primarily used the literary record. As far as the material record was concerned, it was the art and architecture of antiquity that was admired above all. Until the late 18th-early 19th century, primarily the ancient Roman Empire was of interest. Ancient Greece generally came into focus first in the early 19th century, although there are predecessors in the 18th century, for example Winckelmann and Schiller. The aestheticised idealisation of ancient Greece that they advocated came to be a dominating feature of the conceptualization of classical Greece.

Morris has indeed discerned a ‘Hellenism’ discourse within which he places the study of ancient Greece. This discourse originates in Winckelmann, peaks in the 19th century, and continues to be influential today in classics. Studies of ancient Greece, within the Hellenism discourse, are text-based and art is the material category studied most emphatically. When archaeology later was incorporated into the Hellenism discourse it was effectively neutralised and adapted to the wider frames already established. The neutralisation meant that the archaeological leg of classics focused on de-contextualized artefactual publications. Archaeology was thus given the function of a handmaiden to philology and history, providing the two with concrete artefacts that could serve as illustrations and examples of their narratives. The focus on the artefactual record and its congruency with the literary record has had the unfortunate effect that practice is opposed to theory in classics. Although we can discern a recent trend that aims to bridge the divide between practice and theory, the legacy of Hellenism still dominates in classics.

From the perspective of the politics of archaeology, this meant also that classical Greece was claimed as the origin of Europe as a whole, and thus the emergent Greek state and its nationalistic claims came, at least in part, in...
conflict with European claims. For modern Greece this became, and still is, a vexed issue. Although ancient Greek culture was idealised, this did not result in a difference as to how ethnic groups in ancient Greece were conceptualized. Ethnic groups in ancient Greece were also regarded as bounded entities, and thus in many respects classics comes close to the culture historical model. Accordingly, the origins of the ethnic groups was a major issue. The proposed northern origin of the Dorians, for instance, can from this perspective on some level be regarded as an articulation of the European claims to the classical heritage.

The realisation that archaeology is influenced by contemporary agendas is not recent. The proposed positivistic rigidity of processual archaeology can be regarded as a response to the political biases and abuses of archaeology during the early and mid-20th century. This was based on the conviction that a methodological rigidity would separate and absolve archaeology from the contemporary social context. Therefore, a rigid, neutral, and ‘scientific’ (so to speak) archaeology can serve as a corrective to various more or less far-fetched claims, according to this view. However, what passes as neutral is also determined by the contemporary social context, but this remained conveniently unaddressed. One effect of the positivistic rigidity was that issues such as ethnicity, race, and identities were avoided since they violated the rules of positivistic objectivity. This was, however, not a solution. In fact, the opposite can be claimed, namely that the avoidance of including these issues in the programmatic re-formulations of archaeology meant instead that earlier assumptions were implicitly reified.

Archaeology’s influence, and dependence, on the contemporary social context is a scholarly topic that received much attention in the 1990s. One aspect of this interest is perhaps of particular relevance here. The overt influence of the contemporary social context on classics has had serious consequences. Ethnic groups long accepted to have existed in reality in the past might actually be inventions that suit contemporary interests. Given argues, for instance, that the Eteo-Cypriots as an ethnic group were invented by the British when Cyprus...
was part of the British Empire, as an attempt to undermine political unrest. In other words, the neutrality of scholarship should not be taken for granted. Whichever way classics turns, in the end it is determined by the contemporary social context.

Structuring the Argument

The structure of the argument depends, of course, on what the argument is. Since theoretical assumptions are my primary concern, it should only be expected that this publication is structured in accordance with theoretical models. The following is a short description of the various parts.

The following chapter, Terminology, is an attempt to clarify some of the analytical concepts that will be used later in the text. Connotations of terms change and differ in part due to theoretical assumptions. While I aim to be sensitive to these nuances, an elusiveness can also easily be regarded as a confusion. Therefore, Terminology will be an attempt to elaborate on some of the terminological peculiarities. In addition, more important terms will be demarcated.

The chapter Practice as Critique evolves around the notion of practice. It consists of two parts. Michel de Certeau, through whose works I have been able to articulate my concern with classics as a contemporary practice, will be presented in Ethnicity Oscillating between Practice and Discourse. His concept of practice differs, however, from the more commonly used theory of practice formulated by Bourdieu. Attempts to conceptualize ethnicity on the basis of Bourdieu’s theory of practice have been formulated in anthropology and archaeology, and I will turn to these in Practice Theories of Ethnicity.

Primordialism is the central notion at heart in the chapter Primordialism. It begins, in The Primordial Model, with a discussion of the primordial model in anthropology. It is followed by Primordial Greeks in which I elaborate on how primordial assumptions have shaped our conceptualization of ancient Greece. Primordial Messenians consists of a detailed discussion of how primordial assumptions have governed the conceptualization of the ancient Messenians. In effect, Primordial Messenians, together with Instrumentalist Messenians, is the case-study of this thesis. The Primordial Model and Primordial Greeks can in some respect be regarded as presentations of wider discourses within which ancient

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8 Given 1998.
Messenia, *Primordial Messenians*, has been conceptualized. *Primordial Messenians* is in turn structured according to chronology. *Messenian Origins* contains elaborations on ancient Messenia for the period between the fall of the Bronze Age Palace at Pylos (exactly when this occurred is a matter of dispute, but it can still serve as an analytical boundary) to around the 470s B.C.\(^9\) *Messenian Survival* begins around the 470s and ends in 369. The last part, *Messenian Independence* covers the period from 369 to 146. The internal structures of the three parts, *Messenian Origins, Messenian Survival* and *Messenian Independence*, differ according to the subjects on which primordial scholarship has focused. Generally, however, they begin with the political history since that has been governing in classics. My intention is also to present the relevant ancient evidence in *Primordial Messenians*. Accordingly the sub-parts, for example *Messenian Origins*, begin with some paragraphs that present the relevant ancient sources. The ancient sources are juxtaposed in my analysis in order to provide a basis for the discussion of the modern conceptualizations of these sources. Lastly, *Primordialism — a reiteration* is a summary and conclusion of the primordial conceptualizations.

*Primordialism*, is juxtaposed by a discussion of instrumentalism, in *Instrumentalism* of this thesis. *Instrumentalist Ethnicity* is a presentation of the instrumentalist model in anthropology. *Instrumentalist Archaeologies* is an elaboration of how the instrumentalist assumptions have influenced archaeology and classics. *Instrumentalist Messenians* is an analysis of how the ancient Messenians have been conceptualized according to instrumentalist assumptions. Since I have been careful to present the ancient evidence in *Primordial Messenians*, the references to ancient sources are less abundant in *Instrumentalist Messenians*. It is overall the same ancient evidence that the instrumentalist conceptualizations are based on. Another difference between *Primordial Messenians* and *Instrumentalist Messenians* is that while the first aims to capture all relevant aspects of ancient Messenia — therefore the need of the chronological structure — the latter is thematically structured. *Strictu sensu*, it is only *Becoming Messenian* that discusses instrumentalist conceptualizations of ancient Messenia. Put differently, in the narrow sense there are only two scholars that have elaborated on ancient Messenia according to the instrumentalist model. Large parts of *Instrumentalist Messenians* thus elaborate on conceptualizations of the ancient Messenians that on some level share theoretical assumptions with the instrumentalist model of ethnicity in

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\(^9\) Henceforth all chronological references to antiquity are B.C., unless otherwise stated.
anthropology. In other words, *Instrumentalist Messenians* is structured around various topics that have received attention from functionalistic, systems-theoretical perspectives. *Instrumentalism – a reiteration* is a summary and conclusion of instrumentalist conceptualizations.

Lastly, the concluding chapter *Heterological Ethnicity* is a laconic return to de Certeau.

**Terminology**

**Terminological Peculiarities**

A wide range of terms, or analytical concepts, will be used in this publication, some of which are more elusive than others. I have an uneasy, not to say outright contradictory, relation to this chapter. On the one hand, we often pay attention to definitions of terms. The definitions are often considered so crucial that we often focus on inconsistencies, omissions, etc. of various definitions. The urge to focus on the definitions of terms is in my view part of a positivistic legacy aiming, on some level, to present an issue as neutrally and objectively as possible. Therefore, the scholarly vocabulary should ideally be as transparent as possible. However, connotations of analytical concepts, as with every word, are interwoven with context, perspectives and theoretical assumptions, amongst other things. For instance ‘ethnic identity’, beyond the straightforward naive meaning, has other implications for a primordialist than for an instrumentalist. Furthermore, my analytical focus revolves to a great extent around these very implications associated with the theoretical assumptions and their consequences. Analytical concepts oscillate thus between a version of them that I consider to capture a phenomenon, and the implications of them as used by other scholars. What I mean by this is that there are negative effects of strict definitions. For instance, the preference to conceptualize the past according to political entities, regarded as clear-cut entities, together with the tendency to present the past in a language that is as objective as possible, is, in my view, one of the reasons for the spread of essentialism. Analytical concepts occasionally replace reality. One of my intentions is to capture complexity without reducing it to essentialism. I do not have one restricted definition of terms to propose. The variability in the use of the analytical concepts in the following text mirrors various facets of the analytical concepts. Terms are to be used in different ways. Accordingly, I will not present definitions of terms or analytical concepts.
On the other hand, turning to a pragmatic level, the choice of not to present definitions of the analytical concepts can also result in confusion. Given the tendency to focus on definitions, and the strong position that positivism still has in my field of study, an attempt not to define terms will certainly receive criticism because of the very lack of definitions. Accordingly, my way of solving this intrinsic contradiction is to present demarcations of terms that do not have the aim to explicitly state the content of the concepts so much as to delimit them from other possible meanings.

The transcription of Greek terms to the Latin alphabet is often commented on by classicists in an initial note. I have not followed a coherent system. I often use conventional, familiar, Latinized transliterations of names, but occasionally I cannot reconcile myself with conventional transliterations and will therefore stick to more literal transliterations. Continuing with antiquity: Messenia, Messene and Messenians will, needless to say, be used often. These terms meant different things during different periods of antiquity (see A comment on the geography and Messenia’s political organisation). By way of demarcation, ‘Messenia’ is used in this publication, as by most scholars, to mean the whole region of Messenia, more or less equivalent to the modern political administrative region of Greece (see Map, p. 124). ‘Messene’ is, of course, the settlement that also functioned as the capital city during some time. Messene and Messenia occasionally overlap since Messene became the dominating settlement in Messenia, which again indicates the futility of proposing strict definitions. The implications of ‘Messenians’ differ considerably depending on the theoretical assumptions. In general, it will be used to denote the inhabitants in Messenia, sometimes Messene. The underlying implications will be clear with the context in which it is used.

Given the fundamentality of the term ‘ethnicity’, terminological aspects will be addressed under separate headings, Terminological Parallels — Race and Ethnos and Demarcating Ethnicity. However, one issue needs to be addressed here. Ethnicity as an analytical concept has only recently begun to be used by classicists. Accordingly, if this study was restricted, in a confined positivistic manner, to elaborate on conceptualizations explicitly dealing with ethnicity then Primordial Messenians and Instrumentalist Messenians would literally revolve around a handful of publications. There is a conceptual overlap between ethnicity and a variety of other analytical terms, such as race, tribe and nation. Since these terms resemble each other I will also include conceptualizations that use these terms in my analysis. Thus, for instance, I will
read the occurrence of ‘the Messenian nation’ as the Messenian ethnic group, or identity.

Let me turn to another category of analytical concepts. Classics, archaeology and history, together with the occasional use of anthropology and classical archaeology, are other terms employed in a variety of ways. One meaning is the academic disciplines. For instance, archaeology can denote the academic discipline, often in the sense of prehistoric archaeology. I find classics to be more convenient than ‘Classical Archaeology and Ancient History’, which is the correct name of my discipline. Thus, classics denoting an academic discipline should be read as the discipline of Classical Archaeology and Ancient History and/or the equivalents in other countries. For readers not familiar with the institutional settings in Sweden, it might be helpful to know that the philological part of classics in Sweden is not included in Classical Archaeology and Ancient History.

However, classics, archaeology and history are also employed to denote discourses both outside and within classics. Archaeology can accordingly also refer to the practice of doing archaeology both inside as well as outside classics. The official name as such, ‘Classical Archaeology and Ancient History’, indicates that classics rests on two major tenets, one archaeological and one historical. Archaeology can thus be used to denote the practice of archaeology within classics; that is, a practice — excavations, preliminary reports, interpretations, etc. — revolving around the material record from antiquity. History, in addition to the discipline history, accordingly denotes practices founded on the ancient textual evidence. My analytical focus has a ‘social’ side to it, and other major discourses within classics will not be treated in their own right in this thesis. For instance, the art historical part of classics will be regarded as part of the archaeological.

Another kind of elusiveness that needs to be clarified is between various terms for theoretical models or assumptions. We classicists often take pride in the fact that our discipline is devoted to a specific time and place, which is studied from a variety of perspectives. These perspectives are often found in other academic disciplines. Thus, some of us come close to art history, others to archaeology, anthropology, history, or religious studies. Accordingly, models and terms developed in other disciplinary settings are often used in classics. This can, of course, be a strength, but for me, in this study, it has some profound effects that are problematic. Culture historical archaeology for instance is a model originating in prehistoric archaeology. The use of ‘culture historical’ to denote the archaeological part of classics does not cause any major
problems. However, in want of a better term I also use culture historical to characterise studies within the historical part of classics. Furthermore, culture historical scholarship shares many assumptions with the primordial model in anthropology, and they are occasionally equated. The term ‘19th-century model’, used primarily in *Primordial Greeks*, is also more or less equivalent to the above terms. I am well aware that there are differences between these models; however, the deep-seated similarities between them, particularly in their theoretical assumptions, will result in an almost interchangeable use of them.

Scholarship in the above-mentioned models, or discourses, interprets in particular evidence in a very similar way. Put bluntly, scholarship in general within these models has a positivistic perspective. In general, evidence is interpreted to transmit reality in a straightforward way. In order to characterise this fundamental assumption, and when there is no need to distinguish between primordial or culture historical tenets, I use the term ‘passive’, which is juxtaposed with ‘active’ (see below). ‘Passive’ should read ‘has a view on culture as passive’, in general. Another example of my use of passive is ‘passive readings’, which should be understood as ‘reads, or interprets, the evidence according to a passive perspective’. ‘Active’ is used in the same way. This terminology could in some instances have been rephrased. In other instances, however, the rephrasing would have resulted in a syntactical awkwardness. I have therefore made the choice to stick to phrases such as ‘passive view on culture’, ‘active view on culture’, ‘passive readings’ and ‘active perspective’.

Various theoretical perspectives — such as instrumentalism, processualism, functionalism and systems theory — are all grouped together under ‘active’. Scholarship in these different models shares a view whereby the evidence is conceptualized to have been used for some purposes. Often they hold political conditions to be determining, and other features are regarded as used in accordance with the political conditions. For instance, ethnicity is for many instrumentalists a strategy within a socio-political system, which individuals or groups can use in order to improve their conditions. Material culture, from single artefacts to cults, can thus be used, invented, disregarded, etc. in accordance with socio-political needs. The relation between reality and evidence is complicated, since the evidence is no longer simply transmitting reality.

The complication reaches a new level with post-processualism, but also with post-structuralism more generally, since the relation between scholarly representation and reality is also complicated. Although there are profound differences between post-processualism and the above-mentioned models on
some level, from another angle post-processualism can be regarded as a widening of the ‘active’ perspective to include also the relation between scholarly production and its objects. I therefore occasionally also include post-processualism under the terminological umbrella ‘active’.

Terminological Parallels — Race and Ethnos

In particular two other analytical concepts, race and ethnos, are often conflated with ethnicity. Ethnic groups are in content often perceived to be adjacent to racial groups. The conceptualization of the world as a mosaic of peoples and the implications that these social units were bounded and fixed was articulated through the analytical concept of race. Fundamental for ‘race’ is that biological similarities profoundly influence, not to say determine, the actions of humans. Thus, a (biologically) coherent group of humans was conceptualized as an entity and its society and culture was primarily explained by the intrinsic characteristics corresponding to the physical traits. In other words, with the concept of race constancy is assumed. Likewise, a common origin, and thus shared biological traits, is perceived to be the determining factor. The credibility ascribed to the neutrality and objectivity of the natural sciences was certainly a contributing factor to the conflation of the analytical concept of race with reality, which meant that the analytical constructs came to replace the complexity of reality.

The magnitude of biological differences between human groups, on which the concept of race rests, has recently been questioned. Several studies have shown that the genetic variability among all humans is so small that differences among human groups cannot be explained by biological factors. Contrary to what many believe, the genetic variability is often larger within human groups than between them. Although the biologically proven ‘facts’ of human variability, on which the race discourse is founded, might be questioned, ‘popular’ notions of ethnic groups are often conceptualized through physical traits. Another contributing reason for the conflation between race and ethnicity is that members of ethnic groups often firmly believe and accept a continuity of their group from time immemorial. In other words, an important facet of ethnic

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10 See Gates jr. 1990, 322, quoting Albert, et al. 1986, 26. This is also the position of Craig Venter (one of the leaders of the human genome project that tries to map the human DNA), and Cavalli-Sforza, see Snapsrud 2002. This does not exclude the possibility that differences are conceptualized through physical traits (read biological differences). The salience and which physical trait is singled out is, however, culturally constructed, cf. Hall 1997, 19-21. See also below The Primordial Model, p. 42f.
identity is often to regard one’s own ethnic group as stable and fixed — which is a basic tenet in the race discourse.\textsuperscript{11}

Through a broad distancing from biological explanations and the increasing use of social and cultural explanations, the inadequacy of the concept of race was realised in anthropology during the 1950s. Although Weber used the terms ethnic and ethnicity in 1922 for instance, it was with Leach’s study from 1954 that ethnicity became an important issue for anthropology. In other words, the adoption of the analytical concept of ethnicity can be regarded as a way to undermine the essentialism of the race discourse.\textsuperscript{12}

‘Ethnos’ is the second term occasionally conflated with ethnicity by classicists.\textsuperscript{13} Ethnicity stems etymologically from this ancient Greek word. Some scholars, for instance McInerney, argue that there is no essential difference between the two terms and use them interchangeably.\textsuperscript{14} Ethnos had a variety of meanings in antiquity (one of them was nation or people), and its connotations undoubtedly changed.\textsuperscript{15} Ethnicity, in the modern contemporary sense, was not a concept used by the ancient Greeks, and our conceptualization can therefore not be equated with ethnos, or any other single ancient Greek term. In other words, a conflation of the terms serves only to restrict our discussion to a search for the ancient term, which in any case does not cover the range of meanings of ethnicity. To complicate the issue even further, ethnos is in classics often used to denote a state organisation different from the more dominating form of polis. Ethnos is, accordingly, often employed by classicists focusing on political history to denote a political organization.\textsuperscript{16} This discussion is occasionally conflated with the issue of ethnicity, for example by Morgan. Illustrative is Morgan’s article *Ethnicity* in the 3rd edition of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*. She includes both a description of the use of the term in modern social sciences, and a description of ethnos-states in ancient Greece. The consequence of this conflation is that the discussion in classics is restricted by the dominating

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\textsuperscript{11} See also below n. 664.
\textsuperscript{12} Weber 1968, 389; Leach 1954. See Jones 1997, 64; Bentley 1987, 24f.; Malkin 2001b, 15; Eriksen 1993, 9f. As always in the humanities one model or analytical concept does not simply replace an earlier, e.g. Banton 1987, continues to cling to race. However, as Banks 1996, 94, points out Banton criticises the earlier race discourse.
\textsuperscript{13} I will ignore one aspect here. ‘Ethnos’ is also used in modern Greek, and anthropologists studying ethnicity in modern Greece often elaborate on ethnos, e.g. Just 1989.
\textsuperscript{14} McInerney 1999, 24. Compare 124 with 125 for the conflation of ethnos with ethnic group.
\textsuperscript{15} See Chapman, et al. 1989, 12. 1-17 for the etymological development until present day. For instance, Homer (Il. 2.28, 4.59-69, 12.330) used it to denote ‘swarms’ or ‘flocks of animals’. Sophokles (Ant. 344) to denote ‘wild animals’. While Herodotos’ (1.101) use of ethnos to mean ‘nation or people’ comes close to ethnicity.
\textsuperscript{16} E.g. Larsen 1968. See below n. 490.
\end{flushleft}
interest in political history. This is not to deny that ethnicity is related to political organisation, but to suggest that we should distinguish between ethnos and ethnicity.

Demarcating Ethnicity
A fundamental aspect of ethnicity studies concerns the definition of the term, and when ethnicity as a phenomenon emerged in reality. These two aspects are of course connected; which definition a scholar follows will also affect his/her view on when ethnicity as a phenomenon emerged in reality, and vice versa. Ethnicity studies can be characterised by a tension between two theoretical models. At one end of the continuum we can place an analytically abstracted primordial position, and at the other an instrumentalist position. Scholarly contributions on ethnicity can be placed on this continuum, somewhere in between. Occasionally it can be difficult to decide exactly which model is governing for a scholar, since aspects from both models can be detected in his/her contribution.

Scholarship with predominantly primordial assumptions conceptualizes ethnicity as a universally salient phenomenon. Furthermore, a person’s ethnic identity is determined at the time of birth, and cannot change. Accordingly, ethnic identity is viewed as static and can be determined through the cultural traits of a group, which correspond to the ethnic identity. Since identities can be analysed from outside, by scholarly observation, the primordial model can also be situated in the broader etic tradition of the social sciences. In a sense, primordialism shares many assumptions with the race discourse and therefore can be regarded as a continuation of it. On the other hand, we have scholarship governed by the instrumentalist perspective. Instrumentalists regard ethnic identity as a social strategy. The relevance of the ethnic identity depends on the social context. Ethnic identity is also conceptualized as flexible; people can change identity. This makes it impossible for instrumentalists to determine ethnic identities through cultural traits. The instrumentalists can be situated in the emic tradition and emphasise that which a person himself perceives to be correct. They emphasise the subjective perception of ethnic identity. The two models can be said to focus on different dimensions of ethnicity also on another level. Primordialists focus on the aspect of inclusion — ethnic identity is in

17 Morgan 1996, 558f. A third aspect, that ethnos in Hellenistic and Roman times denoted various outsider groups (e.g., Jews), is also accounted for. The conflation between ethnos and ethnicity is also present in Morgan 1991; Morgan 2001, esp. 77-80.
particular studied within groups. Instrumentalists, on the other hand, focus on exclusion — ethnic affiliation is directed against, and determined in inter-action with, others.

These theoretical positions diverge considerably on the issue of when ethnicity emerged in reality. Since primordialists argue that ethnic identity is universally salient, they also hold that ethnic identity has determined human actions from time immemorial. Ethnicity as an analytical concept may be recent but the phenomenon is not, according to primordialists. Instrumentalists have more varied opinions about this issue. Since they hold the relevance of ethnic identity to differ, they can also delimit ethnicity as a real phenomenon in time and space. Glazer and Moynihan perhaps epitomize the extreme instrumentalist position when they argue that ethnicity as a phenomenon emerged only after the Second World War.\(^{18}\) Classicists, and archaeologists, would not go as far as Glazer and Moynihan. But also classicists, and archaeologists, influenced by instrumentalism restrict ethnicity to certain periods of human history. The current position among classicists, and archaeologists, seems to be that ethnicity can only be fruitfully studied from the times and places that have left us a literary record.\(^{19}\) Ethnic identity, emically, is in other words revealed in the literary evidence, according to several scholars that have adopted the instrumentalist perspective.

Ethnicity as a concept and phenomenon has an intrinsic elusiveness. Ethnic identity is one of many kinds of identities, and an ethnic group is one of many kinds of social groups. There is a wide variety of proposed definitions. However, again, the definitions are dependent on the theoretical positions. Perhaps the easiest way to dismantle this nested issue is to begin with the primordial position. Since ethnic identity and ethnic groups are considered as stable and fixed, ethnicity for primordialists is a relatively straightforward concept. They focus on the cultural traits pertinent to ethnic identity. Ethnic identity is thus defined according to a set of cultural traits. For instance, Smith has proposed the following traits: (1) a collective name; (2) a common myth of descent; (3) a shared history; (4) a distinctive shared culture (which may be articulated through language, religion, customs, institutions, laws, folklore, architecture, dress, food, music, art); (5) an association with a specific territory;

\(^{18}\) Glazer and Moynihan 1975, 1, 5. See also below pp. 181f., esp. n. 638.

\(^{19}\) Trigger 1995, 273, 277; Hall 1997, 142. See also below pp. 202f. An interesting parallel to this is the discussion of nations and nationalism within political sciences. A major issue is when nations as a phenomenon emerged. The ‘modernists’ argue for an emergence of the nation-states, as we know them, in the 19th century, e.g. Anderson 1983; Gellner 1983. Smith 1986 argues against them. Smith also restricts ethnicity to the horizons of literary records. See Banks 1996, 129.
and (6) a sense of solidarity. Ethnic identity can be articulated through these traits. Ethnic groups are groups whose membership is based on one, some, or all of these features. Definitions of this kind have considerable drawbacks on a comparative level. For every ethnic group one can point to that bases its identity on one or several traits, one can also point to several other groups which undermine such reductionistic definitions of ethnicity. Ethnicity as a phenomenon and concept can accordingly not be restricted to an etic categorization. If we turn to the other perspective, the instrumentalists tend to avoid definitions of ethnicity by pointing to cultural traits. The cultural traits are in any case manipulated, according to the instrumentalists. Ethnicity is instead defined as a process within larger social systems. Ethnicity is defined in a variety of ways according to the specific situation that instrumentalists studied. A specific behaviour and a mode of subsistence are two examples of how instrumentalists define ethnic identities.

A crucial aspect is, of course, the comparability of the terms. The definitions of ethnicity are often proposed as comparatively valuable. However, this is also a problem. That is, since ethnicity is such an elusive phenomenon, strict definitions become easily comparatively invalidated. On the other hand, weak definitions that are comparatively applicable to a variety of situations tend to become tautological statements, and thus their analytical value may at best be marginal. Some scholars, such as Eriksen, have accordingly argued that the issue of definitions is a dead end, while others, such as Hall, have argued for strict definitions. Although I can appreciate the pragmatic, analytical, value of strict definitions, I am inclined to follow Eriksen on this. Accordingly, I will contend with elusive demarcations, which unquestionably are tautological.

An ethnic group is a group in which members identify with each other, and against others, on the basis of a perceived notion of a common past. Ethnic identity is an identity based on the affiliation with other persons, and exclusion of others, on the basis of a perceived common past. Ethnicity is the associated phenomena and processes by which identities and affiliations are articulated.

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20 Smith 1986, 22-30. Smith holds a common myth of descent to be the most important feature. It should however be noted that Smith (reconciling the primordial and instrumental positions) stresses that which cultural traits is considered to be the most determining is highly variable. See also below p. 44.
22 See below The Primordial Model and Instrumentalist Ethnicity.
24 See Jones 1997, xiii, 84, for similar definitions.
Ethnicity as an issue is surrounded by some controversy that needs to be addressed. There is a legacy in archaeology, and classics, to refute ethnicity as an appropriate issue. There are a few facets of this criticism: (1) ethnicity as a concept is so elusive that it is analytically useless; (2) ethnicity is dismissed since archaeology cannot recover the ideas of past peoples (and ethnicity is after all a subjective identification); and (3) studying ethnicity contributes in the end to contemporary political claims and violence. It is hard to deny the elusiveness of the concept of ethnicity. However, ethnicity shares this with many other terms often used in our studies. Who, for instance, can point to a strict and universally valid definition of culture, which is not contested? This criticism can be associated with the positivistic tradition, according to which the scholarly vocabulary should be as neutral and objective as possible. Thus, concepts that do not fulfil these demands should be abandoned. I do not subscribe to this view (see also above Terminological Peculiarities). Ultimately, writing about the past is a matter of trying to comprehend and illuminate it in a present. In order to do this, we have to use a contemporary language and analytical concepts.

This brings me to the second point, namely that since archaeology cannot verify the ideas of peoples in the past, and since ethnicity is subjective identity, archaeology should abandon these issues. Again, this is interwoven with the theoretical point of view. That is, with the introduced rigidity of processualism, archaeology abandoned many aspects that were not considered scientific enough. The issue is fundamental for archaeology and at stake is what archaeology ultimately should be all about; a neutral description of the archaeological material, or an attempt to understand the past? There are, however, also other problematic facets of this criticism. The analytical concept of ethnicity is dismissed since archaeology cannot verify ethnicity in the past. Ironically, however, it is the culture historical, and primordial, tradition that aimed to determine identities through straightforward analyses of cultural traits, that is refuted. This criticism was voiced at a time when instrumentalists, with similar theoretical notions as processual archaeology, also criticised the primordial model. Ethnicity as a topic was re-formulated to focus on the processes and manipulations of cultural traits within social systems, which

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25 See also Holistic Helots, esp. p. 229.
26 The debate on trying to establish a neutral conceptualization of archaeological cultures is long, see Shennan 1989, e.g. Clarke 1968; Hodson 1980. See also below n. 158.
resembles processual concerns. However, instead of noticing the anthropological re-formulations of ethnicity, archaeology refuted the issue of ethnicity defined in a primordial way.\textsuperscript{29}

The third point identified above, that studying ethnicity contributes to contemporary political atrocities, is also dismissive of the primordial approach. Ethnicity studies, in the view of the critics, continue the tradition of verification of bounded peoples in the past, thus furnishing political claims with tangible origins. However, the opposite is claimed in the ethnicity literature. A major motive for holding on to the issue of ethnicity has, from Leach onwards, been to undermine the essentializing notions of the primordial and culture historical traditions.\textsuperscript{30} The only way to undermine these dominating notions is to scrutinise them, not to avoid them.

\textsuperscript{29} Olsen and Kobylinski 1991, 10. See also below p. 188.

Practice as Critique

... In that Empire, the Art of Cartography attained such Perfection that the map of a single Province occupied the entirety of a City, and the map of the Empire, the entirety of a Province. In time, those Unconscionable Maps no longer satisfied, and the Cartographers Guilds struck a Map of the Empire whose size was that of the Empire, and which coincided point for point with it. The following Generations, who were not so fond of the Study of Cartography as their Forebears had been, saw that that vast Map was Useless, and not without some Pitiessness was it, that they delivered it up to the Inclemencies of Sun and Winters. In the Deserts of the West, still today, there are Tattered Ruins of that Map, inhabited by Animals and Beggars; in all the Land there is no other Relic of the Disciplines of Geography.

Borges 1988

Ethnicity Oscillating between Practice and Discourse

Introducing de Certeau

My primary concern is with the effects of theoretical assumptions on the conceptualizations of the past. The articulation of this concern has been inspired by concepts that Michel de Certeau developed in his critique of history, which will be presented in this chapter. I find it fruitful to verbalise a concern through a juxtaposition of it with novel analytical concepts.

Michel de Certeau (1925–1986) pursued a variety of issues that ranged from theology, history, to anthropology. Although regarded as a historian, his interests included reflections on the writing of history, literary theory, cultural criticism and studies of contemporary everyday life.31 De Certeau has received relatively sparse attention in the humanities so far.32 It should be mentioned,

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31 Ahearne 1995, 2, 4, 9; Chartier 1997, 39, 45f. In addition, see Buchanan 2000; Ward 2000a, for introductions to de Certeau’s work.

32 There are of course exceptions. De Certeau has been used in Anglophone ‘cultural studies’, see Buchanan 2000, for references. Tilley 1994, 27-34; Bender 1999, in archaeology. Hartog 1992, Hitchcock 2000, 196, Dougherty 2001, 92-101, are the examples I have noticed in classics.
initially, that de Certeau never developed and presented a coherent system of thoughts, or theoretical model, ready to be applied to case-studies. Instead, he emphasised and characterised his work as an unfinished project, that opens possibilities for further research.\textsuperscript{33} Thus, influenced by de Certeau, this study should not be viewed as an attempt to apply his theories \textit{strictu sensu}.\textsuperscript{34} Instead, what follows is my appropriation of de Certeau’s work. To anticipate one of the main tenets in de Certeau’s works — this is my space. I appropriate, quote, and refer to his work in order to invoke an authority, but I also displace de Certeau’s ideas and incorporate them in my argumentation.\textsuperscript{35} I will accordingly focus on two major issues in de Certeau’s works: (1) his elaboration on practice, and in particular the development of the analytical concept ‘tactics’; and (2) his discussion of the limitations and problems of writing history.\textsuperscript{36}

The essential issue in de Certeau’s production is the ‘Other’. The Other in this context should be understood as the rather elusive, interpretative Other — the object(s) of discourses.\textsuperscript{37} There are a couple of facets of this. De Certeau is concerned primarily with the ordinary man, in some sense, or put differently with marginalised groups in the past as well as the present. He focuses on how people appropriate and evade the dominating strategies in a society and culture. Following de Certeau, we cannot assume that hegemonic representations capture the life of ordinary people or reality (in its entity). The analytical aim for de Certeau is what people do — the practice of everyday life. What they do should, however, not be conflated with the representation of it. In other words, a fundamental concern for de Certeau is the limitations of scholarly representation.

De Certeau has basically a practice approach. His concern with the Other is indicated by the development of the concept tactics. However, de Certeau’s practice was not confined to the ordinary man in the present; it also included the practice of doing history. In short, everything is conceptualized as practice. De Certeau regarded the writing of history as something determined by

\textsuperscript{33} de Certeau 1984, xi; Ahearne 1995, 3; Buchanan 2000, 97.
\textsuperscript{34} Parenthetically, urges to apply theoretical models in humanities are misplaced in my view, if the aim of scholarship is to understand the past then every study develops — however implicitly — its specific model. Also Ahearne 1995, 39, 47; Frijhoff 1998, 93.
\textsuperscript{35} See Schirato 1993, 283, for a similar claim.
\textsuperscript{36} Thus, contra Buchanan 2000, who stresses the continuity and coherence of de Certeau’s works. I follow Ahearne 1995, 1f., 5, who characterises de Certeau’s oeuvre as prismatic.
\textsuperscript{37} The ‘Other’ of de Certeau, should not be conflated with the ‘other’ in the instrumentalist model. De Certeau’s ‘Other’ is the ‘Other’ of strategic practices. The instrumentalists ‘other’ is the ‘other’ with which a specific social, or ethnic, group interacts in a social system, see \textit{Instrumentalist Ethnicity}.  

\textit{Boreas} 27
practising history in a disciplinary setting. That is, what determines our conceptualization of the past is to a great extent determined by the discursive limits of the discipline and the specific institutional conditions in which it is produced. De Certeau, like many others, reacts against the prevailing liberal and Marxist traditions in history. Indeed, Godzich has situated de Certeau in a heterological tradition, a scholarly tradition in opposition to the hegemonical tradition which has dominated western intellectual thinking. Scholars in the heterological tradition relativise scholarship and point to the constraints enforced by the contemporary social context on the production of truth. Other aspects are their devotion to marginalised groups, and the ethical aspects of scholarship. The heterological tradition can thus, in sum, be regarded as an endeavour that attempts to practise scholarship that respects the Other.

**Tactics — Other’s Practices**

An axiomatic position taken by de Certeau is that everything is practice. Practice as an analytical concept is by no means a novelty introduced by de Certeau, but he employs it differently. He distances himself from adoptions of practice that use it as a means to analyse other ends. These kinds of conceptualizations regard practices as delimited acts by (homogeneous) subjects, and reduce practice (as an analytical concept) to a second-order level, incorporating it in the totalizing hegemonic tradition. De Certeau, instead, conceptualizes everything — the self, theory, discourse, belief, etc. — as practice and relations. Put differently, everything is relation(s) in perpetual flux — the doing/making constitutes both the object and analytical aim for him. Culture is appropriated (how intended receivers make things their own, through a transformation) by people, and it is the operations and logics of everyday practices that constitute the essence for de Certeau. Culture can thus not be reduced to discourse, doctrines, or for that matter constructed homogeneous entities (i.e., class, ethnic group, etc.), but consists of a wide variety of heterogeneous, diverging, practices. It is a perpetual *poiesis*, production.

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38 Ahearne 1995, 22.
39 Godzich 1986, esp. viii, traces a heterological tradition in western thinking, with advocates such as Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Derrida. See also, Giard 2000, 19; Ahearne 1995, 3, 166-8; Chartier 1997, 41-5.
40 de Certeau 1984, xi.
42 de Certeau 1984, xii, xv.
Appropriation, however, is performed on something. Practices, culture, are in a sense conflicts of meaning, however silent and evasive. For de Certeau there is a distinct political aspect to everyday practices. This includes also the scholarly interpretative act which is perceived as a violent act. Viewing everything as constituted by activities has also its consequences. Practice is determined by the internalization of structures, which in part influence the conscious and/or unconscious activities. However, since people appropriate things differently, they also act differently. At heart thus in de Certeau’s works is a difference — not only a difference between different persons, but also a difference between ‘the representation of reality’ and ‘reality’. He attempts to capture the heterogeneous and diverging meanings of culture.

In order to illustrate what scholarship fails to capture, but also introduce a way to conceptualize this, de Certeau develops the concept tactics. Tactics is not an isolated concept, but should be understood as a complement to strategy. It is important to note that these two notions are not bipolar, mutually exclusive, concepts, but rather two facets of practice. Indeed, Ahearne has characterised de Certeau’s thoughts as oscillating. That is, de Certeau often places two analytical concepts, idealistically as extremes, in order to describe a phenomenon which is conceptualized as oscillating inbetween the extremes. Practices should, accordingly, not be reduced to either tactic or strategy, but encapsulate both facets in an oscillating movement between them.

The concept of strategy, initially, is described thus: “I call a strategy the calculation (or manipulation) of power relationships that becomes possible as soon as a subject with will or power (a business, an army, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated. It postulates a place that can be delimited as its own and serve as the base from which relations with an exteriority composed of targets or threats (… objectives and objects of research, etc.) can be managed.” In other words, a strategy is a practice, manipulation, on an exterior object (other). A fundamental aspect of strategic practice is to isolate and distinguish a place of its ‘own’ — a place of its own power. In short, this place is an environment delimited from its object, from where the strategies are acted out and authorised. It should be emphasised that de Certeau associates strategic practice with modern science, including the humanities, and politics. Strategies

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43 de Certeau 1984, xvii, xviii; Ahearne 1995, 184f.
44 de Certeau 1986a, 135; Ahearne 1995, 135.
45 Ahearne 1995, 158; Ward 2000b, 7, 10
and tactics are also associated with the notions of time and place. Since strategies are issued from proper places, they are not dependent on time. A strategy is planned and can be executed when it is suitable and convenient. In a sense strategies control and manage time. Power, another of de Certeau’s fundamental concerns, is not only an effect of strategies but also a precondition for them. The delimitation, as such, of a proper place establishes power.48 Put differently, strategies are the practices of the producers. In addition, hegemonic scholarship has equated strategic practices with reality. The analytical aim for hegemonic scholarship has been the intended meaning of strategies.

As a contrast to strategy, de Certeau developed the analytical concept of tactics: “a tactic is a calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus. ... The space of a tactic is the space of the other.” 49 A tactic is thus not distinguishably delimited from where it originates; it insinuates itself on the other’s place. It does not have an exterior object. A tactic re-interprets somebody else’s things. Neither can it be planned (from a delimited place), and therefore it is dependent on time. Tactical practices seize moments, opportunities, in the strategies that are used and manipulated. If strategies are practices of the producers, tactics are the operations of the users. A tactic has no foundation, place, where it can capitalise on its activities. A tactical practice does not produce tangible results. It is an ephemeral activity, operating in isolation, which comes and goes. To use de Certeau’s vocabulary again, “In short, a tactic is an art of the weak.” 50 Tactics do not have any power; in contrast, they are determined by the absence of power. Tactics articulates de Certeau’s fundamental concern. It illuminates that the meaning of culture is elusive and in a sense indescribable since users re-interpret — appropriate — culture. The intended message sent by the producers is not received passively, but appropriated in accordance with the singularity of the agent’s situation.

Although de Certeau admittedly presents tactics briefly, he elucidates the concept with a couple of tropes. The art of ‘la perruque’ is one example of tactical practice. ‘La perruque’, literally ‘the wig’, are the activities whereby workers make things for themselves at work. They use scrap material at the working-place and construct private things during working hours. A typical example would be a carpenter taking leftover timber to, say, make a table for his home. In the art of ‘la perruque’ it should be noted that the agent is not so much taking the material (which anyway is scrap material) as time from the

48 de Certeau 1984, 36, xix-xx, 38.
50 de Certeau 1984, 37, xix, 38f., 32. See Ahearne 1995, 157-64, for strategies and tactics.
employer. When indulging in it, the agent creates a space for his needs; he
seizes an opportunity in the strategy. ‘La perruque’ is a tactic. Order is tricked
by the art of ‘la perruque’. This is not done in a futile attempt of resistance with
the intention to overturn and revolt against the system. Rather it is an evasive
activity, an appropriation and use of the dominant order for other means, not
intended by the producers (strategy), which serves to illustrate the elusiveness
of everyday practice. As Colebrook points out, tactics is a matter of
perspective. A practice is not tactics unless it is perceived as such. That is, from
a strategic point of view the tactic facet of the ‘la perruque’ may even pass
unnoticed, or be perceived as a compliance with the strategic order.

Another illustration of tactics is the essay de Certeau devotes to walking in
the city. Through an elaboration of how people use the strategy (discourse) of
the city (i.e., the planned itineraries that the city planners conceive and
construct), de Certeau illustrates the elusiveness of practice. The walkers,
following their individual paths and evading the planned routes, construct their
own sense of space through the tactical operation of walking. The plurality of
the trajectories of the walkers encapsulates the ephemerality of tactics. The
tactical trajectories are invisible, as it were, from the proper place of strategy.
However, tactics should not only be regarded as individual practices; group
practices can also be regarded as tactics. For instance, another trope de Certeau
employs is the use of Christian cults by Indians in Brazil to articulate their own
belief. In other words, forced into a discourse by political and economic
conditions, they construct a space of their own. Unable to escape the strategies
they use part of them to articulate their belief. Again, tactics are not a revolt but
a quite evasive act of turning the imposed discourse to one’s own needs. De
Certeau also conceptualizes reading as tactical practice. The reader understands
and re-employs what he reads into his meaning. Reading is an appropriation
that insinuates itself on the presented, strategic, discourse. It is an active art of
understanding which constructs meaning out of the text. What is essential is not
what the text says, but how the reader understands, uses, the text. Reading is
poaching, to use de Certeau’s vocabulary.

Walking, poaching, ‘la perruque’, are all various activities through which
culture is re-interpreted. It is these kinds of uses that have been marginalised in

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51 de Certeau 1984, 24-9, esp. 25f. There is a dimension of resistance to tactics. In my view, it is a low-
key evasive resistance rather than a violent form, cf., however, Ahearne 1995, 185f.
52 Colebrook 2001, 547.
hegemonic scholarship, which has focused on the strategic products. De Certeau’s perspective on culture is developed in reaction to, and critique of, modern scholarship. Tactics from this perspective should be viewed as an abstraction encapsulating activities that evade scholarly discourse. It illustrates the limitations of scholarship, and articulates a difference between ‘the representation of reality’ and ‘reality’. De Certeau also elaborates on how these constraints are constructed and upheld. It is time to turn to his critique of the writing of history, which is intimately interwoven with his development of tactics.

**Historiography**

De Certeau, focusing on the Other, excluded from the hegemonic tradition, attempts to formulate a discourse of non-discursive practices. Before I turn to de Certeau view on historiography, it might be fruitful to consider briefly his relation to Foucault and Bourdieu.56  

De Certeau is not content with Foucault’s perspective, which focused on the discursive constraints of practice.57 Beginning in the present and tracing the development backwards, Foucault presented the emergence of a discourse through the spread of certain practices (e.g., the panoptic gaze). In other words, practices existing in various domains of society reinforced and influenced each other. These practices developed slowly to an all-encompassing discourse of power (read strategy), in Foucault’s scheme. In order to present this, Foucault isolated certain practices that later constituted the discourse; in a sense Foucault focuses on coherence and unity.58 In short, Foucault neglects de Certeau’s tactics and obscures appropriation. The interpretative Other is not present within Foucault’s discourse but displaced on the other side of the discursive rupture.59 De Certeau inverts this and places the individual against discourse. Tactics, and appropriation, construct meaning, and through these activities discourse is reorganised, or in the words of de Certeau: “I suggest that these

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58 de Certeau 1986d, 185f.; Frijhoff 1998, 95f., 103. Frijhoff 1998, 98-102, elaborates on how historians, in particular Ginzburg and Burke, have received Foucault’s works.  
[i.e., tactics] secretly reorganize Foucault’s discourse, colonize his “panoptical”
text, and transform it into a “trompe-l’oeil.”

Bourdieu, too, aimed to articulate a discourse of non-discursive practices. De Certeau’s issue with Bourdieu’s theory of practice is, essentially, that there is no place for evasive practices in Bourdieu’s explanatory scheme. Habitus is an all-encompassing concept, which through the bridging of the divide between practices and structures, explains everything. Although Bourdieu focused on practices, he managed, according to de Certeau, to construct a hegemonic, totalizing, theory where actions are governed by a rationality conforming to the discourse. Practice is strategy, not tactic, in Bourdieu’s system. Put differently, Bourdieu focused on what produces practices while how they are tactically appropriated remained unexplored, according to de Certeau. In sum, de Certeau’s critique of both Foucault and Bourdieu is founded on their negligence of the notions of appropriation and tactics. Their discourses beg the question of the evasive appropriations and re-formulations of the strategies they present.

However, de Certeau’s endeavour can also be regarded as a reaction to scholarship in a wider sense, since it is the limits and failures of scholarship that initiate his thoughts. De Certeau distances himself from both the Marxist and liberal tradition of scholarship. In contrast to these traditions, de Certeau regards the historian and the practice of scholarship as something unstable — on the move. In his effort to illustrate the shortcomings of history, he develops a way to conceptualize the historian, or the subject, as a flexible relation, and not as stable and unitary. In other words, he destabilises the subject. De Certeau conceptualized the writing of history as a practice — the past is a discourse determined by the enterprise to conceptualize it. History as practice is a relation delimited by three aspects: the institutional settings (social place), the analytical procedures, and the logics of narrativity. On another level, history as a practice oscillates between the notions of past/present, and

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62 de Certeau 1984, 50-60, esp. 58f.
63 de Certeau 1984, 63.
65 de Certeau 1988, 64. It is in particular with their perspective of the historian as a homogeneous subject that de Certeau has issues. See also Kinser 1992, 81; Poster 1992, 101; Ahearne 1995, 10f., 62.
dogmatism/ethics. However, somewhere between these heuristic polarities de Certeau situates also a rupture — a fissure that opens possibilities for the individual historian.

For de Certeau the individual historian is a liminal figure found at the edge of modern rationality. The historian initiates his endeavour on the edge of knowledge, also in a concrete sense. The historical text fills earlier lacunae of knowledge. The position of the individual historian is determined by the discourse and practice of historiography in the present. The discursive practices that de Certeau emphasise are not necessarily conscious choices of the scholars, but rather rules or traditions within the institutional place that are taken for granted. The historian’s attempt to understand the Other is governed by discursive constraints of the place. Accordingly, earlier practices, within a discourse or strategic place, influence scholarship; earlier practices lurk in the shadows and haunt the practice of history. However, although de Certeau stresses the effects of the discursive constraints, he does not regard history as unaffected by the past. Put differently, de Certeau does not reject the existence of an independent past — reality beyond representation. Although de Certeau regards the narrative constraints as an important part of strategic scholarly practice, he is not content with explanations emphasising primarily these aspects. In other words, for de Certeau ‘reality’ is axiomatically larger than the discursive reality of history. Thus, the historian is inevitably caught between the scholarly discourse, and the traces from the past, in de Certeau’s view. There is a fatalistic side to de Certeau’s works, since the past can never be fully captured by the representation of it. However, the past was nevertheless there, beyond the representations. History for de Certeau is “permanent anticipation”.

De Certeau’s position is, however, more complex. Since history is regarded as practice, the ‘real’ for history is not the past but the doing of history in the

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67 Another pair of notions is science/fiction. ‘Science’ comes close to dogmatism, and ‘fiction’ close to ethics. This pair concerns the historical texts as such, cf. Ahearne 1995, 14.
68 de Certeau 1988, 87.
71 Chartier 1997, 44f., mentions that de Certeau does not whole-heartedly accept the position of Ricoeur 1984, White 1973, who emphasise the narrative aspects of history.
72 De Certeau has an idiosyncratic language. The ‘real’, for instance, means, Ahearne 1995, 23, “that which resists direct symbolization, and which strains all representations and systems of knowledge.” See also Conley 1988, xvi-xviii.
73 Ahearne 1995, 21, who quotes Martin’s characterisation of de Certeau’s view on history. Similarly, Ungar 1992, 63, (quoting Vidal-Naquet): “In short, de Certeau makes us aware that history is a perpetual lack”.

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present. De Certeau introduces a paradox of history here. The past is presented as the real by the historical discourse; but the real, the discursive practice of history, is disguised. In de Certeau’s view, historical representation constructs a fictitious place. This construct is ultimately based on the disguising of the ‘real’.74 To present the real (discourse, strategies) would mean that the illusion of history is shattered. The presence of reflection in historical texts shatters the reality effect of the narrative, according to de Certeau.75 The never-ending development, and discussion, of new analytical methods does not count as reflection. The methods aim to further improve the ability of the strategic power to capture the Other. These methods are directed outwards; they are part of strategic practices, and are not turned inwards on the strategic place of history.76 These features are characteristic of ‘dogmatic’ history, a notion that can be associated with the ‘hegemonic’ and ‘strategic’. Another feature of dogmatic history is that the past is perceived to be passively recovered. Dogmatic history is, furthermore, associated with the notion of guarding the ‘right’ past. It also aims to recover one coherent past.77

The neat dichotomy between the past and the present practices, hinted above, is fundamental for dogmatic history. This has also consequences for how time is conceptualized. Time is used as a functional device by which the past is categorized. That is, dogmatic history is only sensitive to the passing of time in the past, outside the strategic place. However, the passing of time in the present — inside the strategic place — is conveniently ignored. Since the dogmatic place of history is separated from its own time, it is also depoliticized, according to de Certeau. History has resigned from the role of expressing criticism of contemporary society.78 Although dogmatic history is characterised by the aim to keep the past separated from the strategic place of history, this aim is bound to fail in de Certeau’s view. Dogmatic history ambivalently introduces the Other in its own place through the very practices upon the ‘source’ material.79 If we keep in mind that de Certeau posits tactics and appropriation as universal aspects, than the mere introduction of the Other facilitates different versions of the past in the strategic place. Accordingly, the dogmatic striving to present a coherent past epitomizes the suppression of the Other.

74 de Certeau 1986c, 203, 205, 208, 214; de Certeau 1988, 87f.
76 de Certeau 1986c, 211; Poster 1992, 98.
77 de Certeau 1986c, 201.
The dogmatic tradition is contrasted with the ethic, or heterological, tradition by de Certeau. This should be viewed as an ideal space that history should aim for. It is a plea for a re-figuring of history; a position which facilitates a possibility for an epistemological self-awareness. The heterological aim to recognise the Other can be achieved in a couple of ways, according to de Certeau. One is to recognise that history is fundamentally determined by the present discourse. The ‘real’, the discursive practice, should not be disguised, but ought to be present in the representation of the past. For instance, the dogmatic emphasis on time only outside the strategic place, should be complemented with a sensibility to time inside the strategic place. That is, one way to create a rupture within the strategic place is to be sensitive to the passing of time inside the discourse. Another way is to recognise the inability to capture tactics. Accepting, or indeed endorsing, the rupture (between reality and the representation of it) makes it possible for the Other to enter the discourse. The practice of history in itself transforms the materials into history — the past is constructed in the present. The practice is an active manipulation (i.e., processing of records and fragments from the past) subject to the disciplinary ‘noises of production’. Viewing the past as a construct of strategic discourse in turn facilitates the view that the historian should disarm and dismantle analytical models. There is one last facet of this. To include the discourse in the representation also means that history can resume a position of contemporary criticism. As long as the past is separated from the present as it is in dogmatic history, history as a discursive practice is also turning away from the contemporary context — history is de-politicized. In a sense, what de Certeau does is to question and change the conditions of scholarly referentiality. That is, whereas the dogmatic tradition excludes reference to its own reality, he argues that the present discourse should be included in order to make the limitations of scholarship, or representation, explicit.

80 de Certeau 1986c, 199f. Also de Certeau 1986c, 207; de Certeau 1988, 57.
82 Ahearne 1995, 27.
84 de Certeau 1988, 82-5. Ideally in de Certeau’s view a historical study can contribute to a reorganisation of contemporary society, Ahearne 1995, 25. However, there is an ambivalence here, since de Certeau 1984, 41, realises that the effect of criticism has more modest results, namely to create a distance for the individual scholar. The overall effect on the dogmatic place is often negligible.
Heterological Ethnicity

Although the view that ethnic groups are static and monolithic has been invalidated in social sciences for a couple of decades now, this view still prevails in classics, perhaps in particular among scholars focusing on other issues than ethnicity. The other perspective — arguing for a dynamic and flexible view on ethnicity — has lately been introduced into classics, and elaborations that focus on ethnicity nowadays tend to have an instrumentalist perspective. In my view, however, there are still a couple of issues left uncomplicated in these dogmatic traditions. Although the representation of ethnicity has become an issue in discussions concerning the politics of archaeology — i.e. how the past has been used in modern times to construct a past — the representation of ‘past ethnicities’ (so to speak) is still a relatively uncomplicated issue. In other words, the post-structuralist critique, which focuses on the problems of representation of reality, has only partially influenced the discussion of ethnicity.

With heterological ethnicity, I want to indicate a focus on particularly the limitations of scholarship. Accepting de Certeau’s criticism of the dogmatic tradition, I think that a concern emphasising the conceptual assumptions illuminates the limitations of scholarship. Our conceptualizations of the past are bound by the representation of it. However, the representation of the past is one of the issues that dogmatic scholarship pays the least attention to. Accordingly, I find it necessary to shift the focus from the past per se to the representation of the past. In accordance with de Certeau, thus, this is an attempt governed by a concern not to exclude but include the discursive conditions of writing history.

Accordingly, with heterological ethnicity the present discourse is regarded to be more determining for our conceptualization of the past than the past as such. Thus, ethnicity as a topic in the first place is an issue only because it is relevant for us. Ethnicity is regarded as a heuristic device through which I conceptualize the past. Furthermore, by way of alluding to de Certeau’s oscillation, ethnicity in my view is a heuristic dimension located somewhere in between a couple of points, individuals, groups, time, place, power, ideology, etc. It is a relation, and as such elusive and flexible. The structure of my representation is, needless to say, associated with my basic view on culture. The bulk of my analysis of the conceptualizations of ethnicity will be structured according to two major theoretical perspectives: the primordial, and the instrumentalist. These analytical constructs should be regarded as two
analytical extremes between which the individual scholarly representations oscillate.

To make representation an issue, and thereby dismantle the dogmatic tradition, is thus a way to allow for the evasiveness of life. This is not to say that the presented narrative structure will be able to capture the evasiveness; rather it should be regarded as a way to present a less dogmatic past, since, by restraining our representations of the past it creates space for insinuating diverge meanings. In essence, heterological ethnicity is a critique of the prevailing tradition. It is not an attempt to replace a dogmatic form of scholarship with a new dogmatism, but rather a critique that attempts to underline the fundamentality of representation. Heterological ethnicity has no other aim than to humbly create a distance to the tradition.86

**Practice Theories of Ethnicity**

Before I turn to the primordial and instrumentalist models, it might be fruitful to address conceptualizations of ethnicity influenced by theories of practice. I am not aware of any such attempts in classics, and this chapter will therefore focus on anthropological and archaeological contributions. It is primarily Bourdieu’s version of practice theory that has been influential in ethnicity studies. Therefore, after an initial description of the notions of Bourdieu’s theory that have been utilised, I will turn to some early attempts to conceptualize ethnicity as a practice. Jones’ adoption of practice theories from 1997 is perhaps the most intriguing example of an attempt to formulate a theory of ethnicity in archaeology, and this chapter will revolve primarily around her theory.

With the adoption of practice theories, a new level of complexity was introduced in ethnicity studies since the relation — ignored in both the primordial and instrumentalisists perspectives — between agents and culture, or society, was placed in the forefront.87 Ethnicity studies in general thus lacked a discussion of one of the more crucial aspects, namely how people conceptualize ethnic identity, how it is mediated through culture, and why it is articulated. In short, the relation between individuals and structures, the surrounding world, was conveniently taken for granted and left uncomplicated. The primordial and

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86 As de Certeau 1984, 41, points out, criticism does not change the tradition, institutional setting, but rather creates a distance to it — a place within which a scholar can function.

87 This is a general feature of practice theories, see Ortner 1984, 153.
instrumentalist perspectives can be associated with the long-standing traditions of objectivism and subjectivism in social sciences. Practice theories in general were developed in order to bridge the divide between these two traditions. Accordingly, the shift in ethnicity studies to practice theories can be regarded as an attempt to bridge the divide between primordialism and instrumentalism.88

It should be mentioned, initially, that Bourdieu never paid much attention to ethnicity.89 In the rare instance that he addressed ethnicity he, like many others who avoided the concept, conceptualized ethnic groups as bounded entities equated with regional identities. Furthermore, Bourdieu is critical of scholarly conceptualizations of ethnicity since they furnish ethnic movements with legitimate claims, in his view. This resonates, of course, with the criticism mentioned in Demarcating Ethnicity that questions ethnicity as a concept, but fails to take into account the instrumentalist re-definition of the concept, thus in effect questioning primordially defined ethnicity.90

Fundamental for Bourdieu’s theory of practice is the analytical concept ‘habitus’, which he defines as follows:

The structures constitutive of a particular type of environment (e.g. the material conditions of existence characteristic of a class condition) produce habitus, systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representations which can be objectively “regulated” and “regular” without in any way being the product of obedience to rules … 91

The habitus explains how and why agents act the way they do, and it mediates the relation between the individual and the world. In other words, it consists of principles through which life is ordered. Habitus can thus be regarded as a notion whereby new experiences are structured in accordance with earlier experiences. Early experiences of an agent are thus more important since they constitute the foundation for later experiences. Perceptions, practices and structures are in other words embodied, internalized, and affect agents as parts of the habitus. Thus structures are, (1) delimited to be valid to the specific social context, and (2) internalized by the individuals. Structures exist only as the

88 Jones 1997, 87f., 90; Bentley 1987, 24-7; Postone, et al. 1993, 3; emphasise this. Bourdieu states this as his aim, Jones 1997, 88 n. 1, collects the passages. Cf., however, Jenkins 1992, 91, 175f.
89 See Yelvington 1991, 159; LiPuma 1993, 29.
91 Bourdieu 1977, 72. Emphasis in original.
result of practices. The world is socially constructed, and it appears as natural through the habitus. The observable aim of the theory is the unconscious practices of people. Structures are revealed by the unconscious everyday actions, generated by the habitus. From another perspective, the habitus also limits practices. Although it resides within every agent, a group of people can have similar habitus. Since certain fundamental structures structure the habitus, people living under similar conditions have similar habitus.

Bourdieu’s concept of habitus influenced Bentley who in 1987 argued that ethnic identity should be equated with habitus. According to Bentley, ethnic affiliation results from common experiences generating similar habitus. Ethnic identity is thus associated with the un-reflected practices, and is objectively expressed through symbols resonating with the shared experiences, according to Bentley. Ethnicity, and culture, can therefore not be manipulated without consideration for the agent’s perceptions, as the instrumentalists claim. Bentley’s practice theory of ethnicity was met with scepticism. There are two serious points in this criticism. Firstly, he does not manage to explain why and how shared experiences generate ethnic identities in particular. There are examples, on the one hand, where shared habitus does not result in the same ethnic identity and, on the other hand, where persons with different habitus maintain the same identity. The equating of ethnic identity with habitus is unfortunate, since it mediates all aspects of life in Bourdieu’s theory, but ethnicity is not always a significant factor. Secondly, Bentley fails to address the issue of differentiation, or the other (in the instrumentalist definition). He focuses on similarities between individuals and ignores one of the fundamental contributions of the instrumentalist model, namely that ethnicity is articulated in relation to others.

Although Bentley’s naive equating of habitus with ethnic identity has been criticised, habitus nevertheless remains central to practice theories of ethnicity. According to Jones, for instance, ethnic affiliation ultimately originates from similar habitus, and occasionally the correspondence between ethnic identity and habitus might be high, for example, when ethnicity is a very salient factor.

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92 The situating of structures inside a community was not only restricted to the theories of practice, see Ortner 1984, 146f. However, practice theories differ from symbolic interactionism and transactionalism, since they stress the constraining aspects of the system.
93 See Jenkins 1992, 74-6.
94 Bentley 1987, 32f.
95 Bentley 1987, 26f.
96 Bentley 1987, 40-3, 47. See below Instrumentalist Ethnicity.
in a social context. However, this is not to equate ethnicity with habitus, since the habitus allows for certain flexibility; the dispositions are transposable. That is, an agent carries them with him from one social field to another. Ethnicity is an articulation of differentiation, and the expression of ethnic affiliation is to a great extent dependent on the specific situation. According to Jones, therefore, ethnic identity is the result of active processes of differentiation.

The concept of habitus might explain how agents interact, but it does not provide us with any particular explanation of ethnicity. In order to anchor the crucial aspect of differentiation concerning ethnicity in Bourdieu’s theory, Jones turns to the concept ‘doxa’. The habitus tends to correspond to the conditions of existence. That is, the subjective habitus is influenced by life experiences, and the particularities of one’s own conditions are perceived as natural. The ‘natural’ is the doxic mode of knowledge, a social experience on another level than habitus. The dominant order of society is naturalised and reproduced, since the world is conceptualized according to it. These doxic schemes are often unnoticed by agents inside them since they are unaware of other, rival, schemes. However, when a way of life is confronted and questioned, for instance by contact with others, than a doxic field undergoes an essential change. This results in ‘orthodox’ or ‘heterodox’ forms of knowledge. Both recognise and are aware of the existence of different ways of life, that is, other forms of doxic schemes. The orthodox form, however, attempts to deny the possibilities of alternatives on a conscious level while the heterodox acknowledges a choice between different forms of knowledge. Interaction across doxic limits causes a reflexive mode, which results in a realisation of the arbitrariness of one’s own doxic world-view. This generates a re-conceptualization, or change, on a doxic level. Elements of the doxic schemes are re-interpreted as symbols of the differentiation to others. Identities, in this case ethnic, emerge during this re-conceptualization of the doxic scheme. During the emergence the objectifications of ethnicity are contested. It is only with the passing of time that ethnic affiliations become part of the habitus. This scheme was developed by Bourdieu to explain the emergence of class-

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98 Jones 1997, 97, 120.
99 Jones 1997, 90f., 96f., 99. Jones 1996 and Jones 1999, repeat the same basic arguments as Jones 1997. Eriksen 1991, Eriksen 1992 and Eriksen 1993 theory of ethnicity, which in addition to Bourdieu is also influenced by Wittgenstein, is very similar to Jones’. He stresses the fundamental role of the social context for how interaction is determined perhaps more than Jones, e.g. Eriksen 1991, 128f.
consciousness, and Jones uses it to explain the emergence of ethnic identity. She emphasises differentiation between groups. Furthermore, ethnicity is analytically separated from both habitus and culture. The articulation of ethnicity is determined by the logics of the specific oppositional relations, in Jones’ view. These basic psychological processes of ethnicity are also universally valid according to Jones. She refutes, in other words, the delimitations of ethnicity to the contemporary world, which above all instrumentalists have advocated; these scholars have confused modern articulations of ethnicity with ethnicity as a phenomenon.

Turning to archaeology, Jones argues that material culture is not a passive reflection of a society or culture. She has an active perspective on culture. The meanings of artefacts are neither given nor fixed. Rather, meaning is ascribed to artefacts by the agents, and may thus differ from context to context. In short, Jones argues that material culture is polysemous. Furthermore, material culture plays an active role in the reproduction of identity. However, in contrast to the instrumentalist perspective, which also can be characterised as having an active view on culture, Jones argues that the manipulation of culture must also correlate with the habitus in order to be perceived as authentic and accepted by the receivers. Manipulated objectifications become naturalised through continued use and repetition.

In Jones’ view, then, ethnicity is expressed through the active utilisation of material culture. Since the relevance of ethnic identities is determined by the social context, the articulation of ethnicity in material culture varies; artefacts or styles signifying ethnicity in one context need not do so in another. Accordingly, spatial distributions of artefacts, or whole material cultures, can never be equated with ethnic boundaries. The objective existence of ethnic groups per se as bounded distinguishable entities may in fact be questioned, according to Jones. Ethnic groups are no more than conceptual objectifications of ephemeral practices. They exist only on the conceptual level in order to

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102 Jones 1997, 100f., 102-5. Most notably, Glazer and Moynihan 1975, see below pp. 181f.
104 See Jones 1997, 121f. She argues against Sackett’s equating of ethnicity with passive stylistic variation. See the debate between Sackett and Wiesnner summarised in Sackett 1991. See also below pp. 189f.
105 Jones 1997, 120f.
106 Jones 1997, 122.
justify and explain practices. Accordingly, archaeology should shift focus from ethnic groups to ethnicity. It is the practice of ethnicity that is represented in the archaeological record in Jones’ view. Since ethnicity is a realisation of difference we should expect disruptions in the distribution of artefacts relating to ethnicity. This may result in a complex pattern of overlaps of material categories, rather than in one discrete entity.107 Jones proposes a ‘diachronic contextual’ approach. Ethnicity can only be properly understood through a broad understanding of the context in which ethnicity is articulated. She emphasises that through an analysis of the chronological development of the context it may be possible to identify changes in the material record that can be interpreted as variations in practices and active articulations of ethnicity.108

The following quote captures, in my view, the essence of Jones’ practice theory of ethnicity:

Consequently, the dichotomy between primordial and instrumental approaches to ethnicity can be transcended. The cultural practices and representations that become objectified as symbols of ethnicity are derived from, and resonate with, the habitual practices and experiences of the people concerned, as well as reflecting the instrumental contingencies of a particular situation. … The particular form that such objectifications of cultural difference take is constituted by the intersection of the habitus with the prevailing social conditions in any given moment. … there is rarely a one-to-one relationship between representations of ethnicity and the entire range of cultural practices and social conditions associated with a particular ethnic group. On the contrary, the resulting pattern will be one of overlapping ethnic boundaries by context-specific representations of cultural difference, …such a theory provides arguments about similarities … it also allows an understanding of differences in the manifestation of ethnicity.109

Jones’ practice theory of ethnicity shares many of the characteristics of the post-processual archaeology that has emerged in the last decades. Her proposal for a diachronic contextual approach resonates heavily from Hodder’s proclamations. Another aspect of post-processualism present in Jones’ analysis is the governing notion that the relation between agents and material culture is active. In accordance with the contextual approach, she is also eager to advocate

107 Jones 1997, 123f. See also below p. 194, esp. n. 700.
108 Jones 1997, 125f.
a universally applicable model for ethnicity. In other words, ethnicity is regarded as an objective phenomenon in reality, and Jones aims to explain these processes in the past.\textsuperscript{110}

Criticism of the prevailing normative tradition is one of the hallmarks of post-processualism. This is evident in Jones’ account, when she underlines the strong influence of contemporaneous ideas on archaeology. In other words, the prevailing perception of archaeological cultures as bounded monolithic entities owes a great deal to the fact that archaeology was conducted within nationalistic frameworks, which conceptualized the contemporary world as such. One of her major aims is to undermine these essentialistic notions.\textsuperscript{111} An important aspect of post-processualism is also that scholarly production is both dependent on its social context and produces science for the contemporary context. That is, the past is re-enacted and reproduced in the present, the two being inseparable. Jones’ approach is at odds with this definition of post-processualism, since she, despite the convincing scrutiny of normative archaeological conceptualizations of ethnicity, nevertheless presents us with a universally applicable theory of ethnicity. That is, contemporaneous ideas explain earlier archaeological assumptions, but conveniently not hers. I cannot resist the temptation to quote Tilley’s pertinent remark: “The ‘con’ in Hodder’s context is to talk about a politics of archaeology on the one hand, and an act of contextual archaeological interpretation on the other, but not in the same ‘context’ in his text. While a dialectic between past and present is claimed little, in fact, exists.”\textsuperscript{112}

The ‘diachronic contextual’ approach Jones argues for emphasises an active view on culture. However, archaeology in general has been practised with a passive perspective, according to which, for instance, artefacts are considered to have one fixed meaning which can be objectively determined. The passive perspective underlies, furthermore, the widespread methods of seriation and typologization, according to which archaeology dates and locates artefacts on the principle of gradual variation. Jones’ proposal for an active view on ethnicity is a serious criticism of these assumptions in the normative tradition of archaeology. However, I am afraid that adopting Jones’ approach results in a fundamental methodological contradiction, since the “use of relative typology for dating and interpreting site histories serves to obscure the very kind of variation that is of interest for the analysis of ethnic identities and indeed of

\textsuperscript{110} Jones 1997, 124.
\textsuperscript{111} Jones 1997, 136f., 140-3.
\textsuperscript{112} Tilley 1993, 9.
past cultural processes in general.” Put differently, I wonder if not the discursive constraints of archaeology, after all, invalidate the possibilities to use Jones’ proposed method. The consequence of Jones’ approach would be that material culture published in accordance with passive assumption, is by default useless for conceptualizations of ethnicity.

Jones’ adoption of Bourdieu’s theory of practice is in a sense quite expected if we keep in mind that ethnicity studies in general, have left unexplored the psychological aspects of how people conceptualize ethnicity. Yet Jones’ dependence on and reading of Bourdieu’s theory is not without its problems. She uses Bourdieu’s theory of practice in order to anchor contextual elusiveness in a universal social theory. This reading can be contrasted with interpretations of Bourdieu’s theory by social scientists, who present another image. According to these critical social scientists, a basic issue in Bourdieu’s theory is the reproduction of prevailing modes of domination. There is a deterministic tendency in his theory. Although structures are embodied, and thus, ideally, perceptions differ between agents, people with the same habitus experience the world in the same way and tend to reproduce the modes of domination. Social change is another problem in Bourdieu’s theory. It is caused unintentionally when agents go about their business as usual, or by external factors. The possibility that agents do not accept their conditions and initiate actions that are different from prevailing schemes, remains unexplored in Bourdieu’s theory (that is, de Certeau’s tactics). The slight possibility for change allowed in Bourdieu’s scheme is through ‘rational action theory’, that is agents pursue power, wealth, etc. rationally through calculated choices. They try to maximize their interests. However, this is based on the totalizing assumption that agents, universally, are guided by the same needs and ideas. Furthermore, society is divided into fields in Bourdieu’s theory. A habitus is structured according to the conditions of a particular field — a person growing up, say, in the working class, regarded as one field among several, appreciates other things and has a different world-view than a person from the elite. The agents try to master practices within the fields. Put differently, agents reproduce the logics of a field. It is within the various fields that people share habitus — but there are also tensions and stratifications within them. There is an aspect of power inside,

113 Jones 1997, 130f., 134. She recognises the difficulty of using earlier publications on 131.
115 Jenkins 1992, 72f., 79, 90; Ortner 1984, 150f.; Calhoun 1993, 70-2. The urge to maximize interests is, incidentally, also fundamental for instrumentalist explanatory schemes. See Instrumentalist Ethnicity.
as well as between, the fields. Powerful fields influence to a high degree the other fields. Field, as a concept, is a fundamental delimitation in Bourdieu’s theory of practice.\textsuperscript{116}

In sum, then, Jones focuses on the parts of Bourdieu’s theory that elucidates the psychological processes. Habitus and doxa, however, are only elements of a wider all-encompassing theory. Since other aspects such as field, power, capital, and social reproduction remain unexplored, Jones manages to invert Bourdieu’s theory to a practice theory of ethnicity stressing change and elusiveness.\textsuperscript{117} She shifts the focus to the active relation between structures and agents and reduces the constraining aspects of culture and society — crucial in practice theories — to a second-order level. Despite the urge for a contextual approach, Jones de-contextualizes the concepts of agent and habitus.

\textsuperscript{116} Jenkins 1992, 78, 84-91; LiPuma 1993, 16f., 23, 28; Postone, et al. 1993, 5f.; Calhoun 1993, 64.

\textsuperscript{117} Stressing intentionality and individual choice in practice theories seems to be a widespread phenomenon among archaeologists. This is one of the main issues David 2001 raises against Dobres and Robb 2000a. See Dobres and Robb 2000b, for an overview of agency and practice theories in archaeology.
**Primordialism**

Once the cultural character of a nation has been established, one has only to follow its progress or its changes ... It is true that the second operation is more difficult than the first. The tastes of one people differ from those of another as clearly as the primary colours differ from each other, while the variations in national taste in different centuries can be viewed as the very subtle shades of one colour.

*de Caylus 1752, viii.*

**The Primordial Model**

Shils and Geertz introduced the term primordialism in anthropology. When describing the special bonds of inherited kinship affiliations, Shils argued that these qualities are in reference to ties of blood. The strong bonds cannot be explained as a function or result of social interaction and are therefore primordial attachments. Shils was primarily concerned with small kinship groups. Geertz 1963 developed this concept and applied it to larger social groups. Social affiliation is determined by the sharing of the same ‘givens’ of social life — such as common blood, language, territory, religion, etc. — which results in primordial attachments. The givens of life determine which group people belong to. The ties are natural, strong and unchangeable in the sense that they are universal and all people have them. Ethnic identity is thus an innate and universal identity — determined by the specific culture.

There are a number of features introduced in Geertz’ article that are typical of the primordial model. Ethnic groups are considered to be stable and durable in a changeable world. The primordial attachments are, in other words, regarded as persistent — continuity is stressed. These are contrasted with political and/or civic affiliations, which are perceived to be more elusive.

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118 Schnapp 1996, 241, for quote and translation.
120 Geertz 1963, 109; Jones 1997, 65; Scott 1990, 150.
Ethnicity is already here connected with violence. Ethnic groups are depicted as threats to nations. Geertz also stresses another common feature in the primordial model, namely the identification of characteristic cultural traits of specific ethnic groups. He lists assumed blood ties, race, language, region, religion and custom. Geertz is primarily attempting to describe ethnic groups by identifying certain cultural traits.

A strong tenet among primordialists is the focus on the psychological processes related to ethnic identity. One of the strongest advocates of the primordial position is Isaacs. He argues in 1975 that an individual has a 'basic group identity' attained at the moment of birth. A person acquires the cultural stuff — such as language, history, customs and religion — that is characteristic of the family into which he/she is born. The basic group identity derives from the ethnic group, composed of primordial attachments, to which he/she belongs. The individual is trapped in this identity, and, according to Isaacs, no one can take it away from him/her. The identity is furthermore intimately entangled with the body. The role of the individual is thus to transmit these features to future generations. Isaacs used his concept basic group identity to explain, in contrast to Geertz who merely described, the persistence of the affiliations governed by the givens of birth. The strong unbreakable attachments are due to a universal need to belong.

A distinct group of scholars within the primordial model are the socio-biologists, among others van den Berghe writing in 1978. They share the fundamental assumptions of primordialism but differ in that they explain the ethnic attachments with biological models — sociobiology is a systematic application of Darwinian evolutionary theory. Ethnic affiliations are regarded as an extended form of kinship. Ethnicity as a process and factor in human interaction is equated with kin selection. That is, humans prefer and aid others in their group due to a biological predisposition to secure the survival of their group. A basic assumption is that groups are coherent and compete with each other — in-group amity and out-group enmity. Ethnic groups are regarded as endogamous, and an important part of the argument is that humans during the bulk of history have lived in small, endogamous, isolated groups with hostile relations to other groups, competing for resources. Ethnocentrism is thus a natural phenomenon that has evolved during this long period of human evolution.

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121 Geertz 1963, 111, 155.
123 Isaacs 1975, 30-3, 35, 40; Banks 1996, 39f. Isaacs' model has influenced many, for instance Blu 1980, esp. 218-35.
Van den Berghe’s model rests on a number of assumptions. Ethnic identity is taken for granted. Inter-ethnic relations are also a priori regarded to be hostile. Ethnicity results in inter-group hostilities and conflicts, and due to the innateness of these sentiments, ethnicity is regarded as a savage trait in the modern world. Ethnicity is seen as a natural, biological phenomenon, and culture can at best be a proximate explanation of it. However, the assumed isolation of human kinship groups in the long period of human prehistoric evolution, on which van den Berghe’s theory rests, has been refuted; even primates co-operate when resources are scarce and they do not compete. Lastly, van den Berghe assumes that genes and other scientific models are objective, true, and real, and he fails to recognise that even these are cultural constructs. Science, and in the end culture, has constructed genes to explain the world, not the other way around. Genes do not produce culture.

A substantial number of scholars in the primordial model focused on the sentiments of the individuals, the psychological processes. They aimed to explain and describe why and how people feel such a strong affinity with their ethnic group. It is perhaps in this respect that primordialism has been most successful. However, the primordialists beg the questions as far as the relation between the individual and the collective is concerned. The individual has a straightforward and uncomplicated relation to the collective. At best, he/she is passively transmitting the collective characteristics. Culture is furthermore regarded as a fixed, durable, and stable entity; it determines people, but they do not influence culture. Ethnic groups are assumed to be the universal and natural social unit, and thus there is no need to consider the historic and social particularities. In other words, the primordial model can be related to the tradition of nationalism (originating in romantic conceptualizations), which regarded the world as determined by national demarcations. This is well illustrated by primordialists who have elaborated on ethnicity on collective levels, among others Connor in 1978. He argues that the essence of nations, and ethnic groups, is the discourse of nationalism, most strongly articulated through the notion of shared blood and kinship. In Connor’s view, ethnic affiliations rest on primordial attachments that underlie the strong sense of kinship but also the perceived sense of uniqueness of one’s own group.

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124 van den Berghe 1978, esp. 402-5.
The primordial model was also strong among anthropologists in the former Soviet Union. It is primarily the work of Bromley, from 1974 and 1975, that has been noticed in the West.\textsuperscript{128} Bromley and his colleagues focused on the collective aspects of ethnicity. It is conceptualized as a universal phenomenon throughout history. They focused on identifying characteristics of ethnic groups, which were considered to be stable and fixed despite a superficial admittance that articulations of ethnicity may differ between periods.\textsuperscript{129}

Primordialism as a theoretical school stands in opposition to instrumentalism. A major dividing line between the two models is that, whereas primordialists ignore the context of ethnic groups, the instrumentalists accredit it a major role. These models can also be regarded as extreme opposites, and many scholars can be placed somewhere between them. There are also scholars who have explicitly attempted to integrate the two models, amongst others Smith 1986.\textsuperscript{130} He regards ethnic groups as proto-national groups and traces their development through history. Instrumentalist features are visible in his studies, since he considers organisational aspects of ethnic groups. He also carefully considers the socio-political context. However, his publications could mainly be regarded as primordial in the sense that he posits a number of criteria and indicia by which we can identify ethnic groups in pre-modern times.\textsuperscript{131} He comes very close to the list of Geertz here. Smith is also anxious to point to the continuity of ethnic groups. Despite his consideration of the context, he basically regards ethnicity as a universal phenomenon. Although ethnicity is triggered by social and political conditions in modernity, ethnic identity is not constructed in a modern context. There is a continuous core of the ethnic group that is re-awakened by modern conditions. The collective past of the group is the most important facet of ethnicity, in Smith’s view. Ethnicity is too complex to be reduced to either primordial or instrumentalist assumptions, according to him. It is both persistent and flexible.\textsuperscript{132} Smith tries to trace ethnic groups through history, establish the continuous core of ethnic groups, and in this he comes very close to the primordial position.\textsuperscript{133}

The primordial model can from one point of view be regarded as a continuation of assumptions and ideas that governed the humanities in the

\textsuperscript{128} Bromley 1974; Bromley 1975. For instance by Renfrew, see below n. 189, and Stefanovich, see below p. 57.
\textsuperscript{129} Dragadze 1980. Also Banks 1996, 17-24, esp. 18f.
\textsuperscript{130} Smith 1986, 13, 18. McKay, 1982, is another example.
\textsuperscript{131} Smith 1986, 22-30. See also above pp. 14f.
\textsuperscript{132} Smith 1986, 211.
early 20th century.\textsuperscript{134} With the conceptual shift of focus from nations to ethnicity, the bulk of studies in this field stressed the importance of the environment and context. Primordialism was in other words, already from its introduction as a model in opposition to instrumentalism. Primordialists can be regarded as a stubborn minority clinging to ideas that seem more or less obsolete. Put differently, the primordial position has been extensively criticised. It is mainly instrumentalists that have articulated this criticism, and Jones has conveniently summarised it. There are four major points in this criticism.

Firstly, the primordial model explains ethnic sentiments by reference to human nature. Ethnic identity is assumed to be universally salient, due to psychological needs or processes. Since ethnic is regarded as an innate aspect of human life, primordialists paid little attention to the issue of emergence of ethnicity or ethnic groups. Exactly how these processes work remains obscure, however. Ethnicity is mystified; the explanations proposed are merely pointing out that ethnicity is an innate part of people.\textsuperscript{135}

Secondly, primordialists cannot explain the fluidity of ethnicity. Ethnic boundaries, identity, and cultural traits articulating ethnicity are all regarded as static and unchangeable. A simple one-to-one correlation is assumed between the cultural characteristics and the people. At best, individuals are regarded as passive transmitters of their ethnic affiliations.\textsuperscript{136}

Thirdly, since ethnicity is universally salient, the primordialists ignore the social and/or historical context. Ethnic, primordial sentiments are always expressed, and although some pay lip service to the argument that articulations depend on the context they nevertheless primarily search for core characteristics of ethnic groups in isolation. The primordialists tend to ignore context as a factor that influences ethnic groups.\textsuperscript{137}

The last and fourth point concerns another level. The previous issues all deal with the shortcomings of the primordial model in their treatment of reality. A fundamental problem on the interpretative level is, however, that primordialists assume that ethnic groups or nations are the primary and determining social units universally. That is, the ferocity of nationalism in the western world of the 19th and 20th centuries is assumed to be relevant and valid universally. Primordialists fail to recognise that their conceptualizations are

\textsuperscript{134} van den Berghe 1978, 401.
\textsuperscript{135} Jones 1997, 68f. See Eller and Coughlan 1993, for a profound criticism of primordialism.
\textsuperscript{136} Jones 1997, 69; Scott 1990, 149.
\textsuperscript{137} Jones 1997, 70.
influenced by the societies in which they live. In effect, they substitute reality with their conceptualization — essentialism at its prime.\textsuperscript{138}

**Primordial Greeks**

The issue of ethnic groups, or race, in earlier terminology, has a long history both in archaeology generally and in classics. These aspects are indeed one of the governing tenets in classics and can be traced at least back to the establishment of modern academia in the early 19\textsuperscript{th} century. There are differences between the discussions in archaeology and the primordial model; perhaps the major difference is that archaeology had (and to a great extent still has) an obsession with tracing the origins of specific ethnic groups, which was a minor issue for primordialists. Archaeology focused also to a greater extent on identifying specific cultural traits of various groups. Although this characteristic occurs among primordialists it is less overt. Nevertheless, there are also indisputable similarities, particularly in certain fundamental assumptions. Both archaeologists and primordialists assume ethnic groups to be fixed, stable and unchangeable in their essence. Put bluntly, they also regard ethnic, national or racial features to be the main determinant of a culture/society and people. In other words, although archaeology strictu sensu cannot be characterised as primordial, archaeologists have worked with primordial assumptions.

The last decade has seen numerous publications on the history of classical archaeology.\textsuperscript{139} Early 19\textsuperscript{th}-century Germany seems to have been obsessed with ancient Greece, perhaps best illustrated by Humboldt’s and Goethe’s statements where the Greeks are regarded as the spiritual guides for the Germans.\textsuperscript{140} The German obsession with the ancient Greeks has been established in many different areas, ranging from politics, philosophy, literature, architecture, and last but not least academia. It is with the establishment of *Altertumswissenschaft* in the early 19\textsuperscript{th} century that the study of antiquity, as we know it today, was established.\textsuperscript{141} The German educational system soon became the inspiration for


\textsuperscript{139} E.g. Andrén 1998; Marchand 1996; Dyson 1998; Morris 2000; Chrysos 1996. See also above *The Politics of Archaeology and Classics*.

\textsuperscript{140} Kakrides 1996, 38; McInerny 1999, 10; Morris 2000, 45.

\textsuperscript{141} McInerny 1999, 10-3; Marchand 1996; Butler 1958.
the humanities in other countries, and German scholarship proved to be very influential to academia in other countries.142

A suitable starting-point, therefore, is Müller’s influential publication Die Dorier from 1824.143 He regarded the Darians as a distinct tribe within the Greek people. The tribes, and accordingly the ethnic groups, were considered as fixed stable units with specific characteristics. Influenced by Herder’s ideas, he placed an immense importance on linguistics. A basic notion was that every people has its specific language/dialect that reveals both the characteristic traits of the people but also its distribution. However, Müller was not merely interested in verifying the Darians historically; he also ascribed to them certain innate characteristics such as purposefulness, constancy and firmness. It is in this use of the concept of ‘Volkgeist’ that Müller takes romantic positivism to its extreme. In other words, the Darians were rewarded with essential traits. History was conceptualized as a mosaic of different bounded peoples, which were perceived to have particular traits revealed through language and culture. This was also intimately connected with the notion of the soil in the romantic tradition. The environment of the homeland determines the character of a people. In short, Müller’s model can also be characterised as environmental determinism.144

Part of the explanation to why Müller’s ideas were so influential should be sought in his pupil Curtius. He reiterated Müller’s ideas in his Griechische Geschichte from 1857-67.145 However, Curtius seems to have stressed one aspect more than Müller. He used myths to historically establish the wanderings of the Darians in prehistoric times.146 There were also other differences. It should be mentioned that Müller studied ancient Greece within the philologically based Altertumswissenschaft, a school that idealized the Greeks and, perhaps more importantly, based their scholarship on ancient texts. It is here that we find the foundation of the characteristic feature in classics, namely to value textual evidence higher than other categories. Curtius tried to excavate in Olympia from the 1850s, but did not actually manage to begin the excavation until 1875. Curtius, albeit after the publication of Griechische Geschichte, turned to

142 Marchand 1996; Dyson 1998, for influences on US classics; Chrysos 1996, for German influences on Greek classics. I am not aware of any study elaborating on the Swedish conditions.
143 Müller has received considerable attention lately, e.g. Calder and Schlesier 1998, Blok 1994.
145 McNerney 1999, 13; Hall 1997, 8, mentions that Curtius considered Greek (i.e. the language), because of its beauty, to have originated further north; Marchand 1996.
146 McNerney 1999, 14-6.
archaeology, and with him classics as a discipline began to synthesize philology, history and archaeology.\textsuperscript{147}

Although Müller and Curtius established a tenacious tradition in classical studies there were also early critics, or perhaps more correctly other traditions. Fustel de Coulanges, for instance, in his influential \textit{La Cité Antique} from 1864, de-emphasised ethnicity in ancient Greece.\textsuperscript{148} Coulanges held that religion was the most determining aspect of a community.\textsuperscript{149} Clearly influenced by social evolutionism of the 19th century, he argued that ancient Greek culture slowly bonded together in increasingly larger groups — from ‘genos’, via ‘phratry’, to ‘phyle’ — all levels revealed through the cults of the groups.\textsuperscript{150} Coulanges’ view was highly influential, and by the later half of the 19th century a general evolutionary model was established for the history of the ancient Greeks. According to this model, the ancient Greeks developed through an initial period of small isolated tribes or groups, some of which were nomadic and others autochthonous, which later with increasing contact developed more social complexity and a sense of identity on a wider level, namely the Greek.\textsuperscript{151} In other words, several different strands contributed to a wide model that fundamentally regarded social, or ethnic, groups as fixed and bounded, with innate characteristics revealed in language, religion, or other traits.

Another kind of criticism of Müller came from Grote. While accepting some of Müller’s ideas, such as the general assumption of bounded entities, in his publication \textit{History of Greece} from 1846-56, Grote rejected other ideas. His method has been described as one that focuses on the evidence, and he argued primarily against the inability to historically verify myths and legends. Grote distanced himself from Müller and the many followers he had in England. Grote’s publication was also very influential, and German scholarship of the later half of the 19th century has been characterised as being either for or against Grote. From this point of view, it is perhaps only natural that Curtius emphasised the historical tracing of the Dorian wanderings more than Müller, since in a sense he defended his teacher’s ideas.\textsuperscript{152} Another critic of the Müller

\textsuperscript{147} Morris 2000, 50f.
\textsuperscript{148} McInerney 1999, 16.
\textsuperscript{149} Reality is of course not as neat as presented here. Blok 1994, 34, points to the central role religion had in Müller’s thoughts. Nevertheless, he was guided by “his principle of local, “national” creation of culture.”
\textsuperscript{150} Hall 1997, 10f.
\textsuperscript{151} Hall 1997, 11f.
\textsuperscript{152} McInerney 1999, 18; Hall 1997, 11f.
Curtius legacy was Beloch. He articulated ferocious criticism of the two in his *Griechische Geschichte*, 1912-27. Nevertheless, Beloch accepted one important part of the legacy, namely the idea that language reflects the uniqueness of a national character. Interestingly, however, national character is more deep-seated than language according to Beloch. Foreigners can learn a language, but they cannot shift ethnic identity. An individual thus acquires his/her identity at birth and cannot change it — a position characteristic of primordialism. This can also serve as an illustration of the tenet in classics to attribute immense importance to languages.

Classics was, however, not unique in having primordial assumptions; this can be claimed for archaeology in general. Two archaeologists in particular have come to be regarded as the epitome of culture historical archaeology — an archaeology that perhaps comes closest to primordialism — namely Kossina and Childe. Although Kossina’s legacy has been scrutinised from the 1970s onwards and his strong political overtones have been condemned, his methodology nevertheless had a strong impact on the development of archaeology. His methodology, settlement archaeology, was governed by two principles. Firstly, clearly defined, or distinct, archaeological cultures correspond undoubtedly with areas of specific peoples or tribes. Typology was used to establish bounded cultures that were ordered temporally and spatially. The notion of archaeological culture was important for Kossina, and he was one of the first to use this concept systematically. Variations in archaeological cultures were assumed to reflect variations in ethnicity. History was thus conceptualized as a mosaic of cultures. Secondly, his archaeology was governed by a retrospective historical method. Ethnic conditions documented in historical times were traced backwards. The first historically documented people(s) of an area were traced back to prehistory through the mosaic of cultures established by archaeological analysis. Kossina had also other assumptions that are close to the primordial model. He was governed by a belief that racial mixture led to decline. He made a distinction between ‘Kulturvölker’ (culturally creative peoples) and ‘Naturvölker’ (culturally passive peoples) and argued that the Germans (who were the first-born of the Indo-Europeans) were the most

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historical Greece, the invasion of the Dorians was in general accepted as part of a larger scheme also in Anglo-American scholarship. Cf. Schnapp-Gourbeillon 1979, 4.

155 Suffice to mention Trigger 1989, 164; Veit 1989, 38f., also for references; Arnold 1990.
creative people which, when they became racially mixed with other peoples, lost their innovative spirit.157

Although his methodology proved to be very influential, it should also be mentioned that criticism of Kossina was soon raised. It is, however, notable that it was not his methods and assumptions that were criticised but the specific results of his methods. In other words, the theoretical foundations were accepted.158 The Nazi appropriation of Kossina’s archaeology after his death in 1931 changed this, of course, and it became common to condemn Kossina after the Second World War. However, it has been pointed out that archaeology continued to be governed by the same basic notions.159

The methodology of Kossina soon also influenced the English tradition. Childe used Kossina’s method, although distancing himself from the overt political aspects of Kossina. However, there are also methodological differences between Kossina and Childe. Childe worked in the English tradition that was more prone to diffusionistic ideas. Accordingly, while Childe accepted the concept of archaeological cultures as bounded entities — the mosaic of cultures again — and the charts of European prehistory do epitomize this view, he was also strongly influenced by the diffusionistic ideas of Montelius. That is, European prehistory was conceptualized as having been the result of a diffusion of ideas from the Orient; change was regarded as the result of diffusion or migration, and absence of these factors was axiomatically taken as evidence of continuity. However, perhaps somewhat contradictory, his aim was to describe the way of life in the various cultures, established empirically through diagnostic artefacts.160

Trigger discerns a major dividing-line in the development of archaeology with the emergence of Kossina’s and Childe’s culture historical approach. He argues that the systematic utilisation of the concept ‘archaeological culture’ marks a profound difference to the evolutionary archaeology as developed by Thomsen and Montelius. Olsen has argued against Trigger on this, and I am inclined to follow him. Olsen means that culture historical archaeology did not

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157 Trigger 1989, 165f. This was the case with the ancient Greeks who were Indo-Europeans (descendants of the Germans, in Kossina’s view), and who had lost their driving force when mixed with native blood.
158 Veit 1989, 40-2. Collects the references. See also Jones 1997, 107. Tahlgren 1937, seems to have been an exception, since he questioned the equation of archaeological cultures with ethnic variation. The neutrality of the concept of archaeological culture was emphasised more often after the Second World War, e.g. Childe 1956; Daniel 1975; Taylor Jr. 1948. See also above n. 26.
160 Trigger 1989, 168-72. It should perhaps be added that it is the early works of Childe that I am concerned with here, in particular Childe 1925. Montelius 1899.
break with the evolutionary archaeology but supplemented it. The culture historical approach is founded on evolutionary assumptions – giving migrations and diffusion a determining explanatory power does not contradict basic evolutionary aspects, nor does it preclude a hierarchization of cultures.161

Classicists in the first half of the 20th century followed to a great extent the general framework established during the 19th century. Not only the basic evolutionary model, but also the Dorian question became a fundamental issue for classics. Classical archaeology was probably also influenced by the culture historical archaeology developed by Kossina and Childe. There are numerous examples of classical archaeologists who have continued to work within this framework and a few examples will suffice. Hall mentions Wace, Jardé, Jaeger and Dumézil. Although raising doubts about certain aspects of the model, they all complied with assumptions about the Doric race.162 There is an underlying tenet in the issue of the Dorians that is occasionally detectable. The northern origin of the Dorians is more or less explicitly associated with Germanic features. By giving the Dorians physiological traits associated with central or northern Europe, the ideological connection with ancient Greece could be expressed through the notion of blood ties. Thus the contemporary, racially based, hierarchization of the world, where Europeans were regarded as better and more developed, was projected on antiquity. The Greeks, physiologically connected with the Europeans, could be kept on the idealized pedestal on which they had been placed by romanticism. This tenet is visible in perhaps the most disquieting example Hall mentions; Myres claimed that, “it was apparently common knowledge that the Dorians were blond”.163

The overt use of the ancient legacy by the Nazis had profound consequences on classics after the Second World War. Hall identifies two reactions. By far, the most common reaction was to be more cautious in the terminology. That is, scholars avoided using the terms Dorians or races as explanations of the development of ancient Greek culture. In many cases this meant that the Dorians or races were kept as a phenomenon, but reduced to a dialectical group, explaining only the distribution of dialects and certain customs. Often it was, however, only a simple replacement of terminology from race to linguistic group or archaeological culture.164 Although there was a shift, I see a major

162 Hall 1997, 12, also for references. It is hard not to mention Bernal 1987 in this context. I subscribe to the criticism of Black Athena expressed by Shanks 1996, 87-91.
163 Myres 1930, xxiv. Hall 1997, 12 n. 54, makes a convincing argument against this assumption.
164 Hall 1997, 13, also for references. E.g. Starr 1962, 72.
problem with this strategy; namely, that the assumptions were never scrutinised or questioned, but the concepts changed. It was only due to the political abuse of the legacy that classics changed, not due to a debate and refutation of earlier scholarship. An illustration of the inadequacy of this position, which consists of the bulk of scholarship in classics, is the many examples of scholars who continue to subscribe to the notions from the 19th century, often without being aware of them.

A second and much less common strategy identified by Hall was to explicitly reject the assumptions of the model. Will, for instance, explicitly rejected Müller’s ideas in his book *Doriens et Ioniens* from 1956. He scrutinised the essentialistic characterisations Müller had proposed for the Dorians, and concluded that ethnicity was not a valid concept for explaining the development of ancient Greece. Will argued instead that economic and socio-political factors explain the development better.\(^\text{165}\) However, as Hall remarks, despite Will’s rejection of Müller’s themes, it is ironic that Will nevertheless seems to have held some belief in an objective ethnicity in ancient Greece.\(^\text{166}\)

Another example of this strategy is Roussel’s study from 1976. He argued against the fundamental evolutionary tenet casting the origins of the polis in the phyle, which gradually merged into increasingly larger units. Roussel means instead that the phyle as an organisational unit developed inside the polis.\(^\text{167}\)

Let me return to the first strategy identified by Hall. A wide group of scholars focusing on various specific problems adhere to this strategy. Nevertheless, I would argue that scholarship, despite its cautiousness, reiterates and continues the same basic notions. For instance, in 1964 Boardman used the term race in his description of the Dorians.\(^\text{168}\) Renfrew mentions other examples of the continuity of the 19th-century model. Both Hutchinson in 1962 and Willets in 1965 explain the development on Crete as due to the Dorians.\(^\text{169}\) The Dorian invasion has indeed been one of the fundamental tenets in Greek scholarship.

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\(^{165}\) Will 1956.

\(^{166}\) Hall 1997, 13f. Context is a theme in Hall’s account, 14f., Will contextualized Müller and Hall contextualizes Will. See also Alty 1982, for a re-examination of Will’s study from an implicit instrumentalist perspective, e.g. Alty, 14, concludes that ethnic sentiments were a factor in 5th-century Greece.

\(^{167}\) Hall 1997, 14; Roussel 1976. Interestingly, the evolutionary model has recently been defended by van Effenterre 1985; Nagy 1987.


\(^{169}\) Renfrew 1996, 12; Hutchinson 1962; Willets 1965. In all fairness, it should be mentioned that Renfrew discerns a conceptual shift in the 1970s in Cretan studies. The Dorians are not used to explain Cretan history after the shift.
Archaeologically a number of material categories were used to verify the historicity of the Dorian wanderings. Basically this meant that different categories of evidence were interpreted to have arrived with a new population — a population remembered as the Dorians in the ancient literature. Demographic shifts at the end of the Bronze Age (more precisely at the end of LHIII B) have been interpreted as verifying the Dorians. The same applies to the occurrence of new styles of pottery, both Barbarian Ware (also known as Handmade Burnished Ware) and Protogeometric pottery; the practice of cremation; the introduction of fibulae; and new type of swords and spearheads. Some scholars have argued for the connection of a certain category, while diminishing the importance of other categories, and so on. Fundamentally, however, they accept the basic notion that archaeological finds can be taken as straightforward evidence of the existence of a certain ethnic group. A second fundamental notion is that change is principally viewed as an exogenous factor.\footnote{170 Hall 1997, 114-8, for references and arguments, also 129f.}

In the aftermath of the Second World War a new school emerged. To be sure the proponents of the traditional model continued, but they were now attacked systematically by a new and increasingly larger group of scholars. They scrutinised the different evidence taken to prove the arrival of the Dorians and explained them with endogenous models. That is, the Dorians were no longer the obvious explanation of development; a strong case was made for endogenous explanations. This can be regarded as part of a more general development in archaeology at large to seek for internal explanations of developments. These refutations can perhaps be considered to peak in 1979 when Hooker proclaimed the death of the Dorian invasion hypothesis.\footnote{171 Hooker 1979, 359; Hall 1997, 118-21, for the systematic counter-attack.}

However, the death sentence expressed by Hooker is overrated; classical archaeology is more tied to its tradition than so. For instance, Jacob-Felsch argued in 1988 that the concentric circle motif of Protogeometric pottery was a Dorian feature, and she equated the spatial distribution of it with the spatial distribution of the Dorians — an argument very similar to proposals from the 1930s. In 1988, Foley explicitly connected cist-graves with Dorians in the Argolid.\footnote{172 Hall 1997, 122f.; Jacob-Felsch 1988, 198; Foley 1988, 40. Hall 1997, 123-8, argues against Foley’s hypothesis.} Eder argued in 1988 that Apollo Karneios and Lykeios are Dorian cults reflecting a pastoral past of the Dorians. Although doubting the equation of certain traits as reflecting ethnic identity, Eder nevertheless means that cult
practices reveal ethnic groups. Additionally, she also uses myths to establish the wanderings of the Dorians.\footnote{Eder 1990, 207, 209. See also below pp. 66f.} Yet another example is from 1995: Parker argues that the Dorian invasion should be dated to the 10th century. He adopts a view in which the Dorian invasion is regarded as a wave of migration — the Dorians consist of a number of groups, and one or several move forward, establishing a base from which other groups move forward.\footnote{Parker 1995, 131f.} His argumentation is based on dialectological evidence, but also archaeological evidence — the breaks in the archaeological continuity in Sparta and Korinth, and the introduction of cremation on Crete — is used as arguments for the arrival of the Dorians.\footnote{Parker 1995, 152f. An explicit equation of the introduction of cremation with the coming of the Dorians is made on 148. Cf. also Doumas 1996-97, for a recent alternative solution, equating the term, Dorians, with woodcutters. Essentialistic notions prevail in Doumas’ analysis too, e.g. 180.} Parker discusses the time point of the arrival and which categories of evidence can support this, but never what the Dorians were. In his view, the distribution of a dialect is seen as reflecting the distribution of a people, and a novelty in the archaeological record is the result of a new population. The relation between a people and the cultural traits, or the assumption that cultural variation depends on ethnic variation, is never under discussion. The Dorians existed, and the question is when and how they can be revealed. In short, the arrival of the Dorians is still an issue in classics, still conceptualized according to the basic framework established by Müller.

Scholars focusing on the Dorian question are, however, not the only group that lingers in a tenacious tradition. Other scholars focusing on other issues also follow this tradition. The normative conceptualization of ancient Greek culture is evident also among art historians. One of the more explicit subscriptions to it can be found in Onians in 1979. His explanation of the architectural program in Athens echoes assumptions proposed in the 19th-century model. He argues that Greeks “naturally tended to think in terms of the separate cultural traditions of the different Greek races.” And he continues: “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 Aeolic dialect, build in an Aeolian style, use Aeolian pottery and sing and dance to Aeolian music. Minor racial groups tended increasingly to be dominated by major ones as trade developed, but it was only in fifth-century Athens, a society relatively independent of any racial grouping … that we find … liberation from local racial traditions. Yet Athens had still opted for Ionic forms on racial
Several primordial assumptions are visible in this quote; races are isolated, and stable, and everything is characterised by racial affiliations. The evolutionary scheme of ancient Greece is also evident; minor isolated racial groups form increasingly larger units.

Another example of the prevailing assumptions comes from a conference held at my department (Dept. of Classical Archaeology and Ancient History) in Uppsala in 1990. The conference was devoted to the economic aspects of cult in ancient Greece, and again this is a part of classics that focuses primarily on other issues than ethnicity. Ethnicity is discussed particularly in one article, *Ethnic Diversity and Financial Differentiation in Cypriote Sanctuaries* by Beer. Ethnic differentiation is firstly assumed to be the relevant line of demarcation on Cyprus. Votives are identified as belonging to, or being influenced by, one specific ethnic group. In other words, artefacts and practices are primarily characterised by their ethnic origin. One example is the type of dress on sculptures. Although recognising that “dress is not always proof of ethnic origin” the clothing is identified by its ethnic origin, such as Persian and Greek. Statues with Persian dress are in Beer’s view likely representations of authentic persons (read Persians), while the same may not apply to Greek dress since people of other ethnic identity could have worn it, “adopting the Greek culture because of its higher status.” There is thus a core of Greekness — Greeks wearing Greek dress and speaking Greek are true Greeks, while non-Greeks can adopt Greek culture on account of its higher status without being Greeks. A culture has a core and individuals from the outside can attempt, but not succeed, in their efforts to adopt a new culture. This assumption is also revealed earlier in Beer’s article. Extravagant ornamentation of female sculptures is considered a Levantine feature. Although raising some doubts, she concludes that details on sculptures such as nose-rings and upturned-toe shoes indicate an ethnic display of Phoenicians or Anatolians. In other words, the issue here is what cultural traits can be regarded as revealing ethnic groups. A basic tenet in the 19th-century model has been that language reflects a people, and linguistics has been used more than any other category of material to reveal the presence of an ethnic group. Beer ascribes a definite importance to linguistic evidence. In her view, epigraphic evidence reveals the presence of Eteo-Cypriots, Greeks and Phoenicians, while other groups that have left less epigraphic evidence are

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177 Beer 1992, 74, 76, 80.
178 Beer 1992, 80, 81.
179 Beer 1992, 76.
less well known to us. A cultural trait — i.e., the recorded presence of a language — is thus serving as proof of the existence of an ethnic group. There is an assumed straightforward correlation between language and ethnic presence. The discussion following Beer’s article between her and Linders is also revealing; the issue is which votives can be identified as belonging to which culture or ethnic group. In short, Beer subscribes to the same basic assumptions and focuses her attention on issues that are characteristic of the 19th-century model.

The Dorians are the ethnic group in ancient Greece that have received the most attention from modern scholars. However, there was a range of ethnic groups mentioned in the ancient Greek literary sources, for instance Ionians, Aeolians and Dryopians. The Swedish philologist Strid treated the latter in 1999. He is primarily interested in the literary tradition concerning the Dryops, and argues against the standard conceptualization of the Dryopians as a people that emerged in central Greece and then later primarily settled in Asine (this group later moved to Asine in Messenia) and Hermione in the Argolid. Although Strid questions the historic veracity of the image of the Dryops and argues that they principally are a literary construction, he nevertheless argues inside the positivistic model. That is, Strid argues against one established image of where and when the Dryopians lived and instead proposes a ‘Gegenbild’, arguing that the Dryopians lived in many other places. In other words, he replaces one reality with another, thus validating ancient sources differently. However, this is done within the culture historical model. The Dryops existed, although not where scholars in general argue. In other words, the examination of the literary tradition is not serving to question the 19th-century model but to correct it.

Although the primordial position is evident in classics, it is also still visible in archaeology in a wider sense. Part of the explanation for the continuity in classics is the focus on other aspects; ethnicity, being a secondary issue for many, is treated according to well-established models. However, this explanation may be too neat. There are at least two scholars focusing on

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180 Beer 1992, 73f. As a matter of fact, the very existence of the Eteo-Cypriots has been questioned by Given 1998. See above pp. 4f.
181 Beer 1992, 84.
182 Strid 1999, 79-81. When Strid 1999, 87f., argues that the name is a construct — a construct not revealing reality — he means that the ethnonym was invented in the epic cycle of Herakles, but he nevertheless maintains that the Dryops, together with Pelasgians and Lelegians, designate pre-Hellenic peoples. In other words, peoples as a category is of utmost importance, and they are fixed entities which replace each other.
ethnicity that can be characterised as working within the primordial model, namely Stefanovich and Renfrew.

In his doctoral thesis from 1999, Stefanovich focuses on ethnicity in the Balkans. It should be mentioned that there are aspects of his publication that could be characterised as instrumentalist. He focuses, for instance, on the environment and modes of subsistence as a determinant for ethnicity. He also emphasizes that ethnicity is a synchronic phenomenon, and dismisses any diachronic aspect of ethnicity initially. Ethnicity should be understood as a negotiation in a present, an aspect characteristic of the instrumentalist model. However, after a long deviation where he laments the political bias in the former Soviet Union and thus dismisses research under these conditions – which is contrasted to the Western scholarship said to be unbiased and governed by objective aims – he falls into the primordial position. Despite the refutation of Soviet research, it is strangely enough Bromley (from the Soviet Union) who Stefanovich turns to; neither Barth nor the Manchester school is mentioned. Bias and objectivity are other aspects stressed by Stefanovich. In his view a researcher should be distanced from the cultural and ethnic tradition he/she studies in order to avoid a bias. That is, a researcher cannot study the tradition he/she belongs to. Fair enough. This makes me wonder why Stefanovich then chooses to study the Balkans. In my view he belongs to the very tradition he studies. What Stefanovich’s study concludes is that there is and was a social organisation – semi-nomadic transhumance clans – characteristic of the Balkans, which can be traced back via present-day Montenegro, the early Serbian state, and the Illyrians to before the arrival of the Indo-Europeans. The reason society was organised in this way is the environment. In other words, there is an essential way of life in the Balkans that can be traced backwards. Although Stefanovich is careful not to connect this cultural tradition with a specific ethnic group, he manages to present a covert argument for a true Balkan tradition. The mode of production is thus perceived as an essential characteristic cultural trait. Archaeology is used to establish that a particular social organisation (read ethnic groups) was first in an area. This is one of the more dubious aspects of objective and un-biased archaeology.

183 Stefanovich 1989, xiv, 4-6.
184 Stefanovich 1989, 297f., 318-20. See also above p. 44.
185 See Stefanovich 1989, vi-x. As becomes evident in the acknowledgements, Stefanovich has lived and studied extensively in the former Yugoslavia.
The categorization of archaeologists dealing with ethnicity is neither easy to make nor obvious. There are scholars who in their introductory proclamations fall into one of the models, but who can then in their analysis be placed in the other. In my view, Renfrew is one example of this; several instrumentalist tenets are visible initially in his discussions about ethnicity. He argues that ethnic groups are constructed. In another article he argues against the existence of ethnic groups since they lacked (political) institutions, thus setting up political organisation as a condition for ethnic groups. Most importantly, however, Renfrew argues that ethnicity is a self-ascriptive identity. That is, ethnicity is defined by what the members of an ethnic group regard themselves to be — a characteristic instrumentalist position. Renfrew furthermore delimits ethnicity from other aspects and distinguishes between linguistic groups, biological groups and ethnic groups. However, in the following discussion about the Minoans and the Indo-Europeans he comes close to the primordial position. He equates the linguistic spread of languages with population movements, and in the case of the Indo-Europeans also with the spread of farming. In other words, he regards groups as superseding each other, introducing new languages and social organisations (though he is careful not to denote them as ethnic groups), thus in effect correlating a language with a people/group and culture. The origins are also important for Renfrew. Turning to molecular genetics, he sees a tool that, on a biological level, will solve the question of where the Minoans and Indo-Europeans came from. Although Renfrew carefully distinguishes between cultural (i.e. ethnic) and biological identity, his assumption that the spread of a language is connected with the arrival of a new population ultimately end means that, despite his introductory instrumentalist proclamations, his archaeological analysis falls into the primordial position. Through scientific methods we will be able to establish population movements, which brought with them new languages and social organisations; these are not ethnic or racial movements, in Renfrew’s view, but the correlation between language and people and culture is there. Illustrative of his primordial position is his view that ethnicity is a threat. The

188 Renfrew 1996, 1f., 3-5. There was no Greek identity in archaic times, and no Minoan identity, since there were no institutions to uphold it.
189 Renfrew 1996, 2f. Renfrew turns to Dragadze 1980, 162, who quotes Bromley 1975, 11, in order to characterise ethnic groups. See above p. 44.
190 Renfrew 1993, 32.
193 Renfrew 1993, 50.
primordialists tend to regard ethnicity as a phenomenon that threatens stability. In Renfrew’s view, then, ethnicity is a modern phenomenon that leads to violence, and archaeology should not study this phenomenon since it furnishes groups with an objective past. Despite his distinction between ethnicity and genetics, he manages to reiterate the well-founded archaeological position that regards the past as a mosaic of culture.

In conclusion, then, both archaeology and classics show a remarkable continuity when dealing with these issues. The general model established in the 19th century is still the general framework for the discussions. This does not mean that all scholars accept these positions. Although criticism has been articulated, it has primarily concerned which specific traits can be regarded as evidence of which specific ethnic group. The scholars have nevertheless shared the basic assumptions. The primordialists in anthropology and sociology argue that ethnic affiliations are an innate part of humanity and thus govern every aspect of life. Likewise, classicists working within the 19th-century model, who are no doubt also influenced by the culture historical model, assume that cultural variation is primarily determined by ethnic affinities. The past is conceptualized as a mosaic of cultures. There are, however, also features specific to classics. For instance, language is given a more defining role in classics than in the anthropological discussions. The Dorian problem seems to be another dominating issue in classics. Science is to some degree also influenced by the socio-political context. Conceptualizing the world as a mosaic of cultures (nations) was, and is, a characteristic feature of the nationalistic era from the 19th century to the mid-20th century. Archaeology shows a clear resemblance to these ideas. I have mainly exemplified the primordial model through scholarly production. There are, however, also other aspects of archaeology that can be regarded as continuing and reinforcing the culture historical legacy of archaeology. Brather points to the continuance of archaeological exhibitions named after a people as one such phenomenon. Although an obvious continuity can be shown, it should be pointed out that this is not the only way classics discusses these issues. The awakened interest in these issues lately has been influenced by the development in anthropology, and there are scholars who take a different view. This in many respects new and parallel discussion is the topic of Instrumentalism.

194 See e.g. Diaz-Andreu and Champion 1996; Kohl and Fawcett 1995. See also above p. 2.
Primordial Messenians

Periodizations are always arbitrary to some extent. Although on one level they are a helpful tool when we attempt to conceptualize the past, on another level they can be regarded as obstacles. Our conceptualizations are guided by the heuristic boundaries set up in order to help us comprehend the material. Periods, as analytical devices, have a tendency to acquire a life of their own, and scholars occasionally ignore the self-evident point that analytical boundaries are there just to make the conceptualization easier. The backbone of periodizations of the early history of ancient Greece is the art historic periods, or archaeological typologies. This changes, however, and from the 5th century it is instead political history that functions as the backbone of periodizations. The history of Messenia will in this chapter be treated according to the following periodization: Messenian Origins, Messenian Survival, and Messenian Independence. In essence, the division follows the political history of Messenia. The Battle at Leuktra in 371 can be regarded as a starting-point for the foundation of Messene two years later. The boundary at the 470s has other reasons. Scholarly conceptualizations and discussions of the early history of Messenia often include events from the early 5th century. I have therefore found it convenient to present my argument by drawing the line around 470.

Messenian Origins

A number of features govern the conceptualization of the early history of ancient Messenia. The issue of the Dorian invasion is perhaps the one that has dominated scholarship most. On another level, religious evidence has also played a primary role in the discussion about the early Messenian history. In the discussions concerning both these two themes, a range of evidence is used, from Pausanias’ account to isolated archaeological finds. This changes, however, in the third major theme of this period, namely the Messenian Wars. The arguments concerning this theme primarily revolve around the credibility of Pausanias’ account. The writing of the early Messenian history changes from being a historic, religious and archaeological narrative to becoming a more

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196 Since Pausanias is the major source, all references in Messenian Origins without a clear designation to an author are to Pausanias.
restricted political-historical, not to say even philological, concern. This will also be mirrored in the following chapters. There is an intentional difference between the sections *Proto-Messenians* and *Messenian Wars and Aristomenes*, with regard to the level of complexity and exactitude. The scholarly debate concerning the Messenian Wars has not only had more contributors, but it has also revolved around details to a higher degree than the debate concerning the earlier period of Messenian history. One way to illustrate the shortcomings of the culture historical discussion is to attempt to capture the frenzy of it; in the end it has failed to present a substantially new objective knowledge about the Messenian Wars, at least on the level that scholars in general agree on a version that is fundamentally different from the original, that is ancient, starting-point.

**Proto-Messenians**

The ancient Greeks conceptualized their earlier history through genealogies and myths. More specifically, for Messenia the following rough scheme seems to have formed the basic plot. The population in Messenia was originally Achaean. With the southwards movement of the Dorians, Messenia was one of the areas which came under their control. The Messenians were Dorians prior to the Messenian Wars and continued to be Dorians also after their independence in 369. Let us examine this more closely.

Pausanias gives the outline of the early Messenian history as conceptualized by the Greeks in the *Messeniaka*, book four in his *Periegesis*. The history of Messenia begins, of course, with the naming of the region. According to Pausanias, Messenia got the name after its first queen (4.1.2). She was married to Polykaon and their descendants ruled Messenia for five generations (4.1, 4.2.2). When the house of Polykaon died out, the Messenians called upon Perieres who became their new king (4.2.2). Perieres’ house was left without heirs after his sons, Aphareus and Leukippos, fought the Dioskouroi. Neleus had been invited to settle in the maritime district of Messenia earlier, and his son Nestor could now rule the whole of Messenia (4.2.5, 4.3.1). These are the main characters in Pausanias’ account of the period prior to the arrival of the Dorians in Messenia. Noteworthy is the focus on the royal genealogies. Scholars have in general accepted this conceptual framework. Nevertheless, external evidence has been used to verify the Achaean period and/or population in Messenia. The evidence primarily derives from later periods, and it includes

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197 Meyer 1978, 233-40, collects both ancient and modern references for the early history of Messenia.
vocabulary, place-names and cults. The existence of the games called ‘Pohoida’ in Classical times is taken to prove the survival of a pre-Dorian feature. Likewise, the cults of Apollo Korythos, Artemis Limnatis and the Dioskouroi, regarded as pre-Dorian and/or Achaean traces. The scholarly arguments rest here on the notion of continuity. The idea that evidence confirms earlier conditions relies on the notion that culture is invariable and correlates on a simple one-to-one basis with ethnic affiliations.

The Dorians, according to Pausanias, enter the Messenian history two generations after the Trojan War. With the return of the Herakleidai, Kresphontes became the first Dorian ruler in Messenia (4.3.3-5). Although Nestor’s descendants were driven away from Messenia, the population en masse agreed to be ruled by Kresphontes (4.3.6). After the account of the descendants of Kresphontes (4.3.8-10), Pausanias introduces his major theme, namely the enmity between the Messenians and the Spartans. Their hostilities began with a quarrel at the sanctuary of Artemis Limnatis during the reign of Phintas (4.4.2-3). This was the prelude to the Messenian Wars proper, which began a generation later during the reign of Antiochos and Androkles (4.4.4). Put differently, in Pausanias’ account there is a genealogical, not to say biological, continuity from Kresphontes to the Messenians who became independent in 369.

The Dorian identity of the Messenians is, however, also verified by a range of external evidence. Thucydides (3.112.4, 4.3.3, 4.41.3) mentions that the Messenians by the late 5th century spoke a dialect indistinguishable from the Spartans. Similarly, continuing with the linguistic evidence, Pausanias (4.27.11, 4.34.8) mentions that the Messenians spoke the purest form of Doric by his days. Their Doric identity was also articulated in other ways. The Messenian conceptualization of their past according to the above-mentioned scheme, is also verified by Pausanias’ mention of the paintings of 13 pre-Dorian and Dorian Messenian kings that he observed in Messene (4.31.11-12).

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199 Meyer 1978, 233f. The spelling of Hermes on IG VI, 1390 (= SIG, 736) is written in Achaean dialect, which also proves the survival of Achaean traces, according to e.g. Eder 1998, 189; Chrimas 1949, 285; Zunino 1997, 293; Farnell 1921, 191.

200 Meyer 1978, 234, collects the ancient sources for the coming of the Dorians, and 235 for the return of the Herakleidai. I am well aware that these traditions are impossible to reconcile in the historical positivistic sense, pointed out by e.g. Pettersson 1992, 107.

201 Kresphontes, Aiptos, Glaukos, Isthmios, Dotadas, Sybotas and Phintas are the Dorian kings in chronological order.

202 Themelis 2000, 10.
Furthermore, the Messenians adopted the cult of Apollo Karneios (often regarded as the purest Dorian cult), and the Dorian religious calendar. Lastly, features in the political organisation of the independent Messenia after 369 indicate also the Dorian identity of the Messenians. Scholars with a primordial perspective regard the office of the ‘ephor’, and the naming of the ‘phylai’ after Dorian heroes, as specific to the Dorians.

In addition to the genealogies, primarily those of the royal houses, religious evidence is recurrently invoked. Religion, and by default cult and ritual, is often considered as one of the more conservative strands of the ancient Greek culture, reflecting earlier conditions. One of the more persistent tenets is to establish when and where cults originated. This is often, but not always, connected with an identification of who established the cult and which group (social, but also often ethnic) practised it. The underlying continuity is then implicitly taken to prove social and/or ethnic continuity. Burkert’s influential study of ancient Greek religion, from 1985, is illustrative of this approach. In addition to the general argument that ritual was the defining aspect of Greek religion, he focuses on establishing the origins of deities, heroes and cults. I have already mentioned the cult of Apollo Karneios, and Burkert’s treatment of Apollo is characteristic. He distinguishes various elements of the deity and associates these with specific regions and/or ethnic groups — some elements in the worship originated from Lykia, others from Dorian-northwestern Greece, others were Cretan-Minoan, and finally, some components were Syrio-Hittite.

To distinguish the ethnic origins of the components in the worship is, in other words, important for Burkert. In fact, it seems that it is sufficient to end an analysis once the elements of a deity are identified and associated with an ethnic group.

Zunino adopts an approach similar to Burkert’s in her 1997 study of the religious history of Messenia. One of the central features for Zunino is to establish the origins of cults and deities in Messenia. According to her, there existed a ‘Messenian’ religion by the Mycenaean period. Cults and deities that are attested on the Linear B tablets — e.g., Zeus, Poseidon, Hera and Athena (Potnia) — and also mentioned after 369, are proof of cultic continuity.
Messenian religion was, however, not an isolated phenomenon and Zunino associates the cults with wider cultural contexts. For Zunino it is likewise important to establish the time of introduction of the cults in Messenia. Some cults, such as Artemis Orthia/Limnatis, are considered to be part of a Messenian-Lakonian koine.\textsuperscript{208} Other cults, such as Artemis Laphria, were brought to Messenia with the returning exiles in 369.\textsuperscript{209} Again, other cults belong to Arkadian-Achaean enclaves, for example Pan, Hermes and Apollo Korythos.\textsuperscript{210} Admittedly, the aim of Zunino’s work is not to argue for an exclusive Messenian continuity from the Bronze Age to the establishment of the independent Messenia. Rather it is to establish when and where the cults existed. However, the primordial assumptions are underlined, since the cults are correlated with essentialized cultural (read ethnic) groups. However, the neat correlation between cult and ethnic group is an issue Zunino avoids.

Pausanias is the main ancient source for the Messenian history. Naturally, Zunino’s reliance on the Messeniaka is great, which is evident not least in her collection of testimonia. Unfortunately, however, Pausanias is not a problem for Zunino. That is, although Pausanias is the main source for the history of Messenia, in particular for the period between the fall of Pylos and 369 by her own account, the debate about Pausanias’ reliability is dismissed as marginal. According to Zunino, the debate concerns specific historical details, but religious history lies on another, more general and popular, level and is thus not affected by the uncertainties in Pausanias’ account.\textsuperscript{211} This is a defence for naive straightforward readings of the ancient sources, which is a characteristic feature of the culture historical approach. Following Zunino’s logic one step further means that the past, in an objective sense, can be retrieved regardless of the sources — historical veracity lies beyond, and is unaffected by, representation.

There are also wider consequences of Zunino’s position for the history of Messenia. Since ‘Messenia’ was used in the Linear B tablets, she argues that ‘Messenia’, as a political and religious entity, existed six to seven centuries prior to the Spartan conquest.\textsuperscript{212} The connotation of the term is not only assumed to be unchanged, but in fact taken as the criterion for establishing the existence of an ethnic group. The Messenian national identity was furthermore preserved.

\textsuperscript{208} Zunino 1997, 26, 45-61, 293.
\textsuperscript{209} Zunino 1997, 61-3, 295.
\textsuperscript{210} Zunino 1997, 296f.
\textsuperscript{211} Zunino 1997, 26.
\textsuperscript{212} Zunino 1997, 19, 21.
from the Bronze Age through the period of Spartan occupation. Zunino thus regards ethnic, national, identities to be fixed and stable. The notion of continuity is fundamental. Furthermore, ethnic divisions are given precedence over other divisions. History in general is conceptualized as a mosaic of essentialized ethnic groups. Religious studies, in the culture historical mode, thus primarily focus on discerning and establishing, when and where various components occurred. Typically, then, Zunino is careful to collect the ancient evidence relevant to the religious history of Messenia. The focus on origins is relevant since culture is viewed as static and passive. That is, since culture does not change and passively reflects conditions, the straightforward association of a cultural phenomenon with an ethnic group is taken for granted.

Although Zunino is mainly concerned with the Messenian national identity, the discussion on the Messenians has primarily focused on their Dorian identity. Other scholars, too, have used the general outline for the early Messenian history, based primarily on Pausanias’ account, to explain the development of history. Huxley, focuses on the early history of Sparta and accepts the Dorian invasion as a historical fact. Besides the aim to pinpoint the wanderings of the Dorians, we also learn that the “Dorians were semi-nomadic warriors, men of the mountains, ... and who were ill suited to settled agriculture.” That is, their ethnic identity explains their way of life. Once the content of an ethnic group is filled with an essential content, ethnic divisions can also be used to explain specific events. Huxley discerns, for instance, in Pausanias’ account (4.5.6-7) an internal division among the Messenians based on whether or not they should fight the Spartans at the beginning of the 1st Messenian War. This division is explained with reference to the existence of different ethnic groups, that is Dorians and non-Dorians. Chrimes, writing in 1949, is another scholar who focuses on the Dorians and who is fond of primordial explanations. According to her, the Messenians had become "wholly Dorian in race and in speech" sometime before the Messenian Wars.

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213 Zunino 1997, 23.
214 Zunino 1997, 22. See also Messenian Survival.
215 Also Meyer 1978, 284-7, collects the references.
216 My account is by no means exhaustive. There are many other scholars that have dwelled on these issues, e.g., Kiechle 1959; Kiechle 1963; Kiechle 1966; Bockisch 1985.
217 Huxley 1962, 14-9. Quote from 15. The Dorian invasion is dated to around 1200.
218 Huxley 1962, 33.
219 E.g. Chrimes 1949, 272, the political institutions of Sparta are due to their Dorian identity.
220 Chrimes 1949, 275.
This is proved, according to her, by the existence of Dorian cultural traits in Messenia after the independence in 369. Two culture historical notions are crucial for Chrimes. First, authenticity; the Dorian cultural traits are present in Messenia only because the Messenians were authentic Dorians. Second, a straightforward and unchangeable correlation between ethnic identity and cultural features; the evidence from liberated Messenia can be used as pertinent to the period prior to the Messenian Wars only because Chrimes assumes that expressions of an ethnic identity do not change over the centuries. In effect, ethnic identities as such are perceived as essentialistically unchangeable. The second assumption also facilitates her view that some cultural phenomena — for instance the cult of Artemis Limnatis, the cult of the Dioskouroi, and linguistic traces of a pre-Dorian dialect — prove the survival of pre-Dorian ethnic groups in Messenia. In other words, due to the simple one-to-one correspondence between cultural expressions and ethnic identities, the distribution of cultural features can be equated with the distribution of ethnic groups.

The Dorian invasion is also the main issue for Eder, writing in 1998. She focuses on the archaeological material and examines whether the Dorian invasion can be proven archaeologically. It should be added, parenthetically, that archaeology has played a minor role in the primordial conceptualization of the Messenian history. That is, archaeological evidence has been used in order to confirm arguments based mainly on the literary evidence. Eder accepts the Dorians as an ethnic group, and she regards names, the distribution of dialects, phyle-heroes, and religious calendars and festivals, as evidence for this. The arrival of the Dorians is connected with a widespread break in the archaeological record dated to the end of the Bronze Age (more precisely to the LHIIIC). As Eder acknowledges, however, the distributive patterns of the material artefacts used to verify the break are complex. For instance the spatio-temporal distribution of the so-called Handmade Burnished Ware, which has been associated with the intrusion of the Dorians, makes it impossible to correlate it to a Dorian invasion by the end of the Bronze Age. As far as Messenia goes, Eder argues that the break, proved by changed settlement...

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221 Chrimes 1949, 276f., 282. See also above pp. 62f.
222 Chrimes 1949, 285, 289.
223 E.g. Pearson 1962, 402-9. A common approach is to dismiss the value of archaeology, at least up to the 1960s, e.g. Chrimes 1949, 273; Huxley 1962, 18.
224 Eder 1998, 11-3. See also above pp. 53f.
patterns, occurred, but she hesitates to correlate it to the Dorian invasion.\textsuperscript{226} However, she also finds evidence for an intrusion of an Aeolic-speaking population, possibly from Thessaly, in eastern Messenia during the post-Mycenaean period. The occurrence of new settlements in the archaeological record is thus due to the arrival of a new ethnic group.\textsuperscript{227} Eder argues additionally for a second break in Messenian history, namely the Spartan conquest. In her view, this break is so fundamental that the genuine Messenian tradition was lost forever.\textsuperscript{228} Messenian history is accordingly considered as a 4\textsuperscript{th}-century construction. In other words, although Eder hesitates to conclude that the Dorians invaded Messenia during the Bronze Age, this is not due to her theoretical position but rather to the scarcity of the evidence. She assumes that there exists a direct one-to-one correspondence between material culture and ethnic groups. The hesitation is a consequence of Eder’s opinion that the break caused by the Spartan conquest was complete. Since the Messenian tradition was lost, we cannot prove that the Messenians were Dorians prior to the conquest.\textsuperscript{229}

Themelis, 2000, is another scholar who focuses on archaeology and accepts the framework presented by Pausanias for the early history of Messenia. It should initially be mentioned that his focus is on art history and on the Hellenistic and Roman periods. One of the main notions in Themelis’ publication is the issue of origins. He primarily elaborates on the artistic influences for pieces of art excavated in Messene, identifying the artist who made a particular painting or sculpture, and from where the artist was inspired.\textsuperscript{230} The tracing of origins is, however, not restricted to the inspiration of various artistic influences but also concerns wider aspects, for instance the origins of the Messenians.

As far as the early history of Messenia goes, Themelis not only accepts the ancient Greek conceptualization, that is the Dorian invasion, but also at least occasionally takes Pausanias literally. The mention by Pausanias (4.3.9) that Glaukos ordered the Dorians to worship Ithomatas proves, according to Themelis, that the cult was pre-Dorian.\textsuperscript{231} An excavated tripod, dated to the 8\textsuperscript{th} century, confirms the early date of the cult. It should be noted that the tripod was used as a symbol of Zeus Ithomatas on Messenian coins after their

\textsuperscript{226} Eder 1998, 177f. 
\textsuperscript{227} Eder 1998, 196. 
\textsuperscript{229} Eder 1998, 197. 
\textsuperscript{230} See also below pp. 157-61. 
\textsuperscript{231} Themelis 2000, 5, n. 13.
independence. Themelis assumes that this confirms that Glaukos ordered the worship of Ithomatas.\(^{232}\) Additionally, Glaukos is regarded as a real historical king who reigned in Messenia sometime during the 9th-8th centuries.\(^{233}\) It is noteworthy that the textual sources are taken at face value, and that archaeology is used to confirm a literal reading of them.

Although the Dorians occasionally surface in Themelis’ analysis, the Messenian national identity is nevertheless the main interest for him. Like Zunino above, Themelis posits the existence of a Messenian identity prior to the Spartan conquest. The development towards a city-state had begun in Messenia but was interrupted by the Spartan conquest, according to Themelis. However, the Spartans did not manage to stifle the national consciousness completely. Themelis identifies three features through which it was kept alive: (1) the local worship of heroes in particular; (2) the memory of the achievements of legendary persons in the past, for example Aristomenes; (3) the desire of the Messenian exiles to return to an independent homeland. In addition to the exiles, Themelis stresses the role of the (Messenian) perioikoi for the maintenance of the Messenian identity.\(^{234}\) Unfortunately, he does not elaborate on the helots and/or their relation to the perioikoi. The importance given to the worship of local cults is based on the assumption that all religious activities in ancient Greece were conducted on the level of city-states. Since there is abundant evidence of hero cult in Messenia, we can infer some kind of city-state organisation.\(^{235}\) Themelis does not discuss these initial assumptions further, but he is more detailed on the issue of how the memory of the legendary persons (read Aristomenes) was kept alive. He takes the historical existence of Aristomenes for granted, and believes that already during Aristomenes’ lifetime epic folksongs began to be sung about his adventures.\(^{236}\) The Messenian women kept singing these songs during the Spartan occupation, thus maintaining the Messenian national consciousness. This collective memory together with the practice of local cults is regarded as a kind of symbolic resistance against the Spartan oppression.\(^{237}\) Underlying Themelis’ argument is the notion of continuity. It is because culture is regarded as passive and static,
and assumed to correlate to ethnic divisions, that a Messenian national identity can be traced backwards to the time prior to the Spartan conquest. The Messenian national identity is, furthermore, regarded as the relevant frame of reference for the history of Messenia. The possible content of the national identity remains unaddressed, however.

Themelis is the director of the excavations at Messene, and his publication is also important since he publishes and interprets the archaeological evidence found there. The finds from Messene prior to the 3rd century are actually meagre. Nevertheless, Themelis mentions some finds from as early as the 7th century. He has identified a small temple beneath the Asklepieion with an adherent pit and altar. These are associated with a first building phase, dating from the 7th-6th centuries. The small finds from this phase are few, and only un-iconic plaques are mentioned.238 There are also finds from the 7th century in a building termed ‘Omega-Omega’ (continues to the 4th), and identified as a sanctuary to Demeter. Here, again, Themelis elaborates mostly on the plaques. The plaques are attributed to a continuous local iconographic tradition from the 7th to the 4th century.239 How are these finds interpreted, then? The finds beneath the Asklepieion are interpreted as evidence of worship to Asklepios, in the respect of a political leader, and to a chthonic heroine, who is arguably Messene.240 In the case of the Omega-Omega building, a part of the explanation is more surprising. Themelis finds evidence for a cult to Leukippos as hero ‘archegetes’ here. However, this is not explained as a Messenian activity but rather as a Spartan appropriation of local Messenian cults, specifically the mythical kings of Messenia. It is a well-known fact, according to Themelis, that the Spartans adopted local cults in order to forge mythical bonds with the conquered lands.241 Obviously, this particular hero cult was not part of the Messenian symbolic resistance. However, this does not mean that Themelis

238 Themelis 2000, 17, 24.
239 Themelis 2000, 25f. Many plaques have been found (the amount is not specified). He has identified a number of series, i.e. a motif produced with different casts. The motif-themes are the following: (1) horsemen; (2) warrior; (3) man (with or without a woman) lying down in a symposion scene; (4) women lying down; (5) seated man with standing woman; (6) seated woman with standing man; (7) triad of women, two seated with one standing in the middle; (8) various, women with gifts or with animals beside them. The plaques found at the tholos tomb at Voidokilia, see Peppa-Papaioannou 1987-88, were produced from the casts found in Messene, according to Themelis 2000, 27 n. 53. See Themelis 1992, 37-9, for pictures. Themelis 1993, 49, mentions also that the plaques were mixed with burned and unburned animal bones, ceramic sherds, tiles, metal objects, coins, and stones. In addition, a concentration of charcoal and ash was identified. Themelis 1993, 51, two plaques are similar to plaques from Amyklai, Sparta.
240 Themelis 2000, 15. See also below pp. 106f.
241 Themelis 2000, 27.
abandons the primordial assumptions. His solution that the Spartans practised this is also a solution giving precedence to ethnic affiliations.

Although Themelis stresses the importance of hero cults in his discussion of Messene, this topic has in particular revolved around the activities connected with the many Bronze Age tombs in Messenia. A contributing factor to this might be that archaeological activities in Messenia have focused on the many Bronze Age sites. The following 13 Bronze Age tombs have finds ranging from the Late Geometric period to the 6th century: Volimidia Angelopoulos 4; Volimidia Angelopoulos 5; Volimidia Angelopoulos 6; Volimidia Angelopoulos 10; Volimidia Angelopoulos 11; Papoulia; Koukounara 4; Koukounara 6; Tourlidita; Nichoria-Vathirema; Nichoria-Karpophora (Akones); Vasiliko; and Kopanaki. Hero cults have received a lot of scholarly attention the last decades. Accordingly, the archaeological evidence has also been presented in several publications. I find it therefore sufficient to direct the reader to these publications. In the Table on pp. 72f. the references to the various sites are collected, and the date of the later reuse is indicated. Most of the publications of the sites are of minor interest to me, since they are preliminary publications and focus on descriptions of the finds. I will, overall, restrict the analysis to the occasional attempts to interpret the meaning of these finds.

Valmin’s excavations in Messenia in 1926 can be said to mark the beginning of the topic of hero cults at Bronze Age tombs in Messenia. His main interest was the Bronze Age, and thus the later reuse of the tombs was treated briefly. In the tomb at Vasiliko finds dated to the 8th century consist of proto-Korinthian sherds. Likewise, the finds in the Kopanaki tomb are described as Korinthian sherds and dated to approximately the same period. For Valmin the evidence, of the sherds as well as the occurrence of extensive ash layers and numerous animal bones inside the tombs, confirms that there were continuous cults from the Bronze Age. Furthermore, the large amount of offerings in the Vasiliko tomb indicates that it was the place of a hero cult, according to him. He is more hesitant in the interpretation of the less extensive evidence in the Kopanaki tomb, which he concludes was “a kind of tomb-cult that was devoted

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242 This number is based on Boehringer 2001, 309, table 16.
244 Nevertheless, I will occasionally also comment on preliminary reports. I am well aware of the many practical constraints that influence preliminary publications of archaeological excavations. However, the focus in the preliminary reports also indicates theoretical assumptions.
245 Valmin 1927-28, 197.
to the dead for many hundreds of years.” Although Valmin leaves the question of which groups practised cult unanswered, he focuses on continuity. The notion of continuity is one of the governing assumptions of the culture historical and primordial models. Since culture is regarded as static and passive it is sufficient to explain phenomena merely by tracing them on the spatio-temporal grid.

Like Valmin, Marinatos was primarily concerned with the Bronze Age during his extensive excavations of Bronze Age tombs in the 1950s and 1960s. The results of the excavations have generally been published in preliminary reports, and descriptive accounts of the finds are accordingly dominating. However, there are some interpretations in Marinatos’, otherwise mostly descriptive, accounts. He asserts that the finds are indicative of a characteristic Messenian way of practising cults. In other words, his interpretations often end with an association of artefacts to cult. However, there are exceptions. In one article, Marinatos elaborates on the activities in the Volimidia cemetery. He argues that the descendants of the two persons buried in tomb Angelopoulos practised the post-Mycenaean cults. This family, or families, kept the memory alive and worshipped their ancestors. Marinatos does not comment on the absence of evidence between the 11th and 9th centuries. With the Spartan conquest, the cult was forbidden according to Marinatos, which explains the lack of evidence for the period between the 7th and the early 4th century. The memory of the forefathers was kept alive, however, and the cult was resumed intensively after the liberation of Messenia. In addition to the cult, the burial of family members also took place in the cemetery from the Late Classical/Hellenistic period onwards. Marinatos’ explanation of the finds rests on an assumed biological continuity. It is only by postulating that the families kept an authentic memory alive that the centuries-long break in the archaeological record can be explained. Put differently, culture and identity are regarded as static entities. The persons practising cult do so because of their heritage. Ultimately, the primordial givens of life explain the archaeological finds.

249 Valmin 1938, 405f., explaining the Malthi culture as a result of northern intruders is another illustration of his culture historical perspective.
250 See, Marinatos 1960b, for a summary of the excavations from 1952 to 1960.
252 Marinatos 1955b, 154f. Continuity is also stressed in Marinatos 1960b, 113.
253 Noted however earlier Marinatos 1955b, 148, for Greece in general.
### Table. Reused Bronze Age tombs in Messenia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>LG-A</th>
<th>Cl</th>
<th>LCI-H</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Koukounara 6</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>Marinatos 1960a, 195-8; Marinatos 1963a, 115-8; Marinatos 1963b, 81-4; Marinatos 1964b, 165; Korres 1981-82, 414, 416f.; Deoudi 1999, 108; Boehringer 2001, 265f.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Abbreviations: LG = Late Geometric, A = Archaic, Cl = Classical, LCI = Late Classical, H = Hellenistic.


255 Only one sherd is securely dated to the 5th century, Boehringer 2001, 287.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>LG-A</th>
<th>Cl</th>
<th>LCI-H</th>
<th>References</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rounsi (Myrsinochori) Tholos 2</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Cl</td>
<td>LCl-H</td>
<td>Marinatos 1956b, 93-6; Marinatos 1956a, 202-6; Marinatos 1957c, 70-5; Marinatos 1957a, 118-20; Marinatos 1957b, 97-100; Marinatos 1960b, 112-9; Korres 1981-82, 383, 423, 442f.; Alcock 1991, 460; Antonaccio 1995, 82f.; Boehringer 2001, 259.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volimidia Kephalyvyros 2</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Cl</td>
<td>LCI-H</td>
<td>Marinatos 1964c, 81f.; Marinatos 1964a, 83-6 (= Marinatos 1965a, 201-3); Marinatos 1965b, 102; Korres 1981-82, 415, 420, 423, 424, 429, 438; Alcock 1991, 466; Boehringer 2001, 256.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The practice of hero cult was, during the Late Geometric/Archaic periods, not an isolated Messenian phenomenon. Both the Argolid and Attika had similar developments. Coldstream elaborates, in 1976, on the hero cults on a Panhellenic level. His main argument is that the Homeric epics inspired the Greeks to practise hero cults in Mycenaean tombs, which emerged in the second half of the 8th century.256 Hero cults cannot be explained by an assumed continuous local tradition running through the Early Iron Age, as Blegen argued.257 There were of course exceptions, however. Coldstream acknowledges that three instances of hero cult prior to circa 750 cannot be explained by the influence of the Homeric poems. These are, instead, explained as the result of racial continuity.258 That is, the post-Mycenaean veneration in the tombs could continue in some places, as long as there was “enough racial continuity”.259 Racial continuity is for Coldstream on a level of the Dorian invasion. That is, in the Dorian areas of Greece, for instance Messenia, there could not be any continuous authentic tradition, since the populations in these areas were newcomers. Ultimately, then, although Coldstream doubts continuity, he nevertheless accepts primordial explanations. The break was due to the intrusion of a new race.

In conclusion, then, the primordial conceptualization of the early history of Messenia is centred around the aim to pinpoint cultural phenomena on a spatio-temporal grid. Since culture is regarded as invariable, the meaning of it is a minor problem. The focus is on the distribution of a feature or features. A dominating tenet is, furthermore, to establish the origins of cultural phenomena. Cultural features are also associated with ethnic groups. That is, although there might be disputes as to which ethnic group a particular feature should be associated, this notion nevertheless is one of the governing assumptions. Coupled with the static view on culture, this makes it possible to regard evidence from the 5th century as reflecting ethnic conditions from the 13th century.

Another facet of this is the relevance placed on the cultural breaks. The breaks of relevance are the intrusions of new ethnic groups. Although there are

256 Coldstream 1976, 8, 14. This explanation was proposed by Farnell 1921, 340, and followed also by Cook 1953, 116f. See also below p. 210.
257 Coldstream 1976, 9; Blegen 1937, 390. In effect, this is an argument against Marinatos too. Coldstream 1976, 13f., explicitly mentions that there was no continuity in Messenia, thus contra Marinatos 1955b, 154f.
259 Coldstream 1976, 17.
examples of scholars who evaluate breaks in the archaeological record as very
important, and who thus on a superficial level might be seen as critics of the
culture historical model, they usually raise their doubts from within it. The
breaks are important in order to delimit the mosaics of culture from each other.
However, they are only important because ethnic boundaries are regarded as
the most determining factor for the development of history.

**Messenian Wars and Aristomenes**

From a historical perspective, the major topic in the discussions of the early
history of Messenia has been the issue of the Messenian Wars. However, in
contrast to the archaeological and religious discussions above, this discussion
revolves around the ancient historians and in particular the credibility of
Pausanias. Although the aim is similar, namely to find out what actually
happened, the means differ. Since a major problem for archaeology is to
pinpoint the date and distribution of the finds, the archaeological narrative
often ends with this issue. The historical discussion has already a narrative on
which to debate. Therefore, a general thread in the historical debate about the
Messenian Wars is to pinpoint the chronology of the events. It is of utmost
importance to prove, or disprove, the veracity of the specific details in the
ancient sources. For the culture historical approach, Pausanias’ account is
interesting as a testimony to what happened. That is, it is less interesting why
Pausanias, for instance, focused his narrative on the battles against the Spartans,
than if and when these battles occurred.

Messenia enters the historical record with the Messenian Wars. Unusually,
Pausanias, our most extensive source, devoted a considerable part of the
*Messeniaka* to the history of the region. It was especially the struggles, the
Messenian Wars, which led to the subjugation of Messenia by the Spartans, that
Pausanias devoted attention to. The 1st Messenian War (4.5-13) lasted for 20
years, ending in 724 (4.5.10, 4.13.6-7). It began with a Spartan attack and the
capture of Amphieia (4.5.9), and after several battles (4.8, 4.11) the Messenians
were defeated. Noteworthy is that the Messenians are described as one political
entity under the leadership of a king (4.7.9f, 4.8, 4.10.3), fighting in orderly
hoplite formations (4.8.12, 4.11.4). Mount Ithome plays already here a central
part. The Messenians withdrew to Mount Ithome (4.9.1) after the first battle.
The second battle, which (by the way) the Messenians won, was fought near the

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260 See also *The myopic gaze of Pausanias*. 
foot of the mountain. When Ithome finally fell, the Spartans razed it to the ground (4.14.2). The Spartans proceeded by capturing the remaining towns. The true cause of the defeat and fate of the Messenians is preconditioned by omens in Pausanias’ account (4.12-4.13). In other words, there is a fatalistic dimension in Pausanias’ narrative.

The 2nd Messenian War (4.14.6-21) has another touch. This was a Messenian revolt against the Spartans that began in 685 (4.15.1). It has a clear and defined protagonist, namely Aristomenes who led the Messenians. 261 He began the revolt in Andania (4.14.7). After three battles (Battle of Dereae, 4.15.4; Battle of Boar’s Tomb, 4.15.7-16.5; and Battle of The Great Trench, 4.17.2-9), where both sides had allies (4.15.7-8), the Messenians withdrew from Andania to Mount Hira (4.17.10). They were under siege there for eleven years (4.17.10-11, 4.20.1). During this period (4.18-21) Aristomenes escaped from the siege on several occasions and, regarding the Spartan-controlled territory as hostile, he and his followers plundered whatever Spartan property they could (4.18.2). Once he even raided Amyklai (4.18.3). Furthermore, Aristomenes was captured at least twice (4.18.4, 4.19.4). He managed once to escape thanks to an eagle and a fox (4.18.5-6) and was aided by a local Messenian girl (4.19.5-6) the second time. Last but not least, Aristomenes killed countless enemies during his adventures; Pausanias (4.19.3) mentions the figure 300. Hira inevitably fell, and once again Pausanias describes the true reason fatalistically. Illustrative is the episode (4.21.10) during the final battle where Aristomenes is asked why he maintained the fight, since it was already predestined that Messenia would fall. Once again an omen is the true reason (4.20.1-3), although an adulterous affair triggers the events (4.20.5-10) that led to the fall of Hira. In the end, the Spartans allowed the Messenians to pass and they went into exile. The 2nd Messenian War ended in 668 (4.23.4). The consequence of the Messenian Wars was that the Spartans subjugated the Messenians. If we follow Pausanias, the Messenians were subjugated after the 1st Messenian War. The second was an unsuccessful rebellion that resulted in an even stronger oppression of the Messenians. 262

The above is a rough outline of Pausanias’ account of the Messenian Wars. However, his narration has a number of inconsistencies, which has fuelled a scholarly debate originating at least as early as with Grote, in the mid-19th century, and which is still going on today. Several issues have been raised. First, Pausanias mentions explicitly a 2nd Messenian War (4.23.4). Apart from the

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261 Shero 1938, 501, collects ancient sources about Aristomenes.
262 Oliva 1971, 108.
fragmentary poetry of Tyrtaios (West, GLP, fr. 5 (=FGrH 580 F 6, Paus. 4.15.2, Strabo 6.3.3)), there is no other ancient source prior to the 4th century mentioning two Messenian Wars. Herodotos (3.47.1), Aristotle (Pol. 1306b 37-38), and Antiochos of Syracuse (FGrH 555 F 13 (=Strabo 6.3.2)) all knew of only one Messenian War.263 The 4th century is crucial here, since it is commonly accepted that once Messenia was freed in 369 the Messenians ‘invented’ some kind of national past, although the exact degree of invention is very much an issue of debate (see below). Thus, textual evidence originating after the liberation of Messenia is on the whole regarded with more suspicion than evidence earlier than 369. The veracity of the 2nd Messenian War was questioned by Schwartz in 1899, but has since then been accepted as a historical fact.264 The acceptance of two Messenian Wars, which is the general agreement, rests on the acceptance that Tyrtaios lived during the 7th century.265 The pre-4th century accounts with knowledge of only one Messenian War are thus dismissed as products of Spartan propaganda.

If the doubting about the veracity of the 2nd Messenian War has been dismissed relatively easily, this cannot be said about the question of when the 2nd Messenian War actually occurred. Perhaps the easiest way to undo this web is to begin with the outright mistakes Pausanias makes in his account. After both the 1st and 2nd Messenian Wars, Messenians go into exile (4.14.1, 4.23). According to Pausanias, Anaxilas, tyrant of Rhegion, invited the wave of exiles after the 2nd Messenian War to Sicily. Anaxilas had waged a war against Zankle and offered the Messenians to settle in the captured settlement. With the settlement of the Messenians in Zankle, it was renamed Messene. Pausanias (4.23.10) dates the renaming to 664. He definitely makes a mistake here, since other more conclusive evidence places Anaxilas’ reign in the early 5th century.266 The date is a consequence of Pausanias’ opinion that Aristomenes was the champion of the 2nd Messenian War, which we shall see below is a debated issue. Pausanias’ narrative has also another inconsistency. He has clearly

263 Cf. Luraghi 2002a, 46 n. 3.
264 Schwartz 1899, argued that the poems of Tyrtaios were forgeries by a 5th-century Athenian sophist. Thus this undermines the veracity of the 2nd Messenian War; see Sher 1938, 511 n. 19, 512. However, Schwartz 1937, changed his mind and accepted two Messenian Wars. See also Oliva 1971, 103, 140.
265 Pritchett 1985, 2f., defends the reliability of Pausanias. See also Meyer 1978, 253, who concludes, with the rather reductionistic view, that the only certain thing about the Messenian Wars is Tyrtaios’ fragments; everything else is later, either ancient or modern, constructs.
266 In addition to Thucydides (6.4.6), it is numismatic evidence that is used. Head 1911, 152-57, coins from Zankle/Messene inscribed with ‘Messenion/Messanion’ are dated to 490-461 and later. See Robinson 1946; Huxley 1962, 88f.
confused the dates for the end of the 2nd Messenian War. The renaming of Zankle to 664 is consistent with the dating of the fall of Hira to 668 (4.23.4). However, elsewhere (4.27.9) Pausanias dates the fall of Hira to 657.

The period of the early 5th century is relevant also in other parts of Pausanias’ narrative. This is connected with the sources Pausanias uses for his account. He mentions that he has used the history written by Myron of Priene and the epic poem by Rhianos of Bene (4.6.1-5). Both Rhianos and Myron remain elusive figures, but a 3rd-century date is, in general, proposed for both. Neither of them wrote a complete history of the Messenian Wars. Pausanias furthermore needed to make a choice between them, since their accounts differed. The scholarly community overall accepts the parts of Pausanias’ narrative that are based on Tyrtaios and Myron of Priene.\(^{267}\) At the heart of the debate about the early history of Messenia is Pausanias’ reliance on Rhianos. However, Pausanias disagrees explicitly with Rhianos on one important point, namely when Aristomenes was active. Pausanias regards Aristomenes as the protagonist of the 2nd Messenian War (4.6.5), in contrast to Rhianos (4.15.2-3) who placed his epic hero to the time of the Spartan king Leotychides, which, according to Pausanias, is the sixth generation after the 1st Messenian War.\(^{268}\) Pausanias follows instead Tyrtaios on this matter, and accordingly Aristomenes belonged to the second generation after the first war (see above).

These basic issues have been used back and forth in the debate about the Messenian Wars. This debate can, however, be regarded as part of the broader issue concerning the possibility to write a history of early Greece. There are already good summaries of the debate about the Messenian Wars, and it is therefore pointless to recapitulate all the arguments and positions.\(^{269}\) I will restrict myself to a couple of scholars and arguments in order to illustrate it.

The scholars can be categorized according to their opinion whether Aristomenes was active in the early 5th century or not. Among the scholars arguing for the ‘Rhianos hypothesis’ — i.e., that Aristomenes was active in the early 5th century — are Schwartz, Wilamowitz, Jacoby, Kiechle, and Huxley.

\(^{267}\) Pearson 1962, 410 n. 31, the remark that Pausanias altered the account of Myron is an exception.

\(^{268}\) There is great confusion on this matter. The Spartan king-list Pausanias followed included only one Leotychides. He reigned in 491-69 and is commonly known as Leotychides II. Other king-lists had another, earlier, Leotychides (commonly accepted) which Rhianos might have meant. Nevertheless the important thing here is that Pausanias rejected what he believed was an early 5th-century date for Aristomenes. See Huxley 1957, 200; Shero 1938, 516. However, Wade-Gery 1966, 290, although Rhianos mentioned Leotychides this does not establish that Rhianos dated Aristomenes to the early 5th century.

\(^{269}\) Meyer 1978, 240-53; Pearson 1962, 397 n. 2; Oliva 1971, 139-45.
These contributions stretch from the early 20th century to the 1960s. The other group, chronologically stretching from early 20th century to 1995, includes Beloch, Kroymann, Shero, den Boer, Pearson, Wade-Gery and Dillon, who are united by their rejection of the Rhianos hypothesis. Some accept Pausanias and consider Aristomenes to be the protagonist of the 2nd Messenian War, while others propose other dates earlier than 500. In the end, the differences rest on the evaluation of the ancient sources. A couple of features propel the discussion. The opening for the whole debate is provided by the inconsistencies in Pausanias’ account. However, what keeps the debate alive, and indeed seems to fuel it, is the desire to present a coherent account of what actually happened. An implicit aim for many scholars is to present an account of ancient history that correlates statements by different ancient authors, which at first glance might seem to contradict each other. In other words, it is important to reconcile the various accounts in antiquity.

The proponents of the Rhianos hypothesis have to find arguments for the existence of a Messenian/helot uprising in the early 5th century — in direct opposition to Pausanias. Such an uprising in Messenia is mentioned by Plato (Leg. 698D-E) as the cause of the late arrival of the Spartans at the Battle of Marathon. The problem, however, is that Herodotos (regarded as a more trustworthy source for the early 5th century since it was closer to his own time) does not mention this uprising. Herodotos (6.106.3-107.1) explains the late arrival with religious reasons. One inscription is the second external evidence often used to verify a Messenian revolt in the early 5th century. This Spartan dedication to Zeus at Olympia, commemorating a Spartan victory over the Messenians, has been dated to the early 5th century on the basis of the

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270 Oliva 1971, 140-2; Wade-Gery 1966, n. 1.; Shero 1938, 512f.; collects the references. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1900; Schwartz 1937; Jacoby 1902; Kiechle 1959; Huxley 1957; Huxley 1962, 89-93. Scholarly debate can occasionally be heated; Pearson 1962, 401 n. 12, mentions: “Wilamowitz, who asserts (SB. Akad. Berlin, 1918, 733, n. 1) that Aristomenes’ war took place about 500 and anyone who denies it lacks intelligence or else the good-will to learn.”

271 Oliva 1971, 142-4; Beloch 1912-27; Kroymann 1937; Kroymann 1943; Shero 1938; Wade-Gery 1966; Den Boer 1956, esp. 173; Pearson 1962, esp. 401; Dillon 1995, esp. 67f. The second best source is Strabo (8.4.10) who mentions four Messenian Wars. The third refers to the revolt in the early 5th century. This group, e.g. Huxley 1962, 89, reads Pausanias (4.23.5-10), as an argument for the Rhianos hypothesis. This is, of course questioned by the opponents of the Rhianos hypothesis, e.g. Pearson 1962, 401; Dillon 1995, 66. For what it is worth, Diodoros (15.66.3-4) mentions three Messenian Wars; the third refers to the revolt in the 460s.

272 Huxley 1957, 202f., attempts to reconcile these passages. According to him, there was a Messenian revolt in 496, but the Spartan delay was due to their celebration of the Hyakinthia. They had employed Cretan mercenaries to deal with the Messenians.
lettering. In addition to the early 5th-century date of Anaxilas, these are the main arguments used to verify the Rhianos hypothesis. In order to find out what actually happened, a number of proposals attempting to explain the inconsistencies in Pausanias’ account have been presented. Fundamental here are the distinctions between what Rhianos wrote and what Pausanias added. The proponents of the Rhianos hypothesis argue that Rhianos placed Aristomenes in the early 5th century in his epic poems. Pausanias, basing his narrative on Rhianos, changed certain parts of it. He confused, for instance, the pedigree of Aristomenes’ descendants (4.24.1-3) and erroneously placed Anaxilas about two centuries too early. Another way to explain these oddities was proposed by Jacoby in 1943. Through the method of Quellenkritik he posited an anonymous intermediary. This intermediary collected earlier sources, and it was this collection that Pausanias had access to, not the works of Rhianos. The inconsistencies and contradictions can thus, conveniently, be blamed on the anonymous intermediary.

However, the scholarly debate does not end with an acceptance or rejection of the issues in Pausanias’ account; there are also other references that occasionally are used. For instance, while Huxley 1962 accepts and follows the Rhianos hypothesis and thus a Messenian revolt in the early 5th century, in which Aristomenes was the protagonist, he also argues for disturbances in Messenia around 600, in addition to the 1st and 2nd Messenian Wars. Following Plutarch’s (Mor. 194B) comment that Messenia was repopulated after 230 years, he argues that Pylos and Mothone were not subjugated until around 600. Pausanias (4.23.1) or his source has thus conflated the story of the exiles from Pylos and Mothone with the early 5th century. This is an illustrative example of how the debate is fuelled by an aim to present a coherent picture. Huxley’s proposal reconciles the traditions preserved among different authors.

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274 IG V1, 1562 (= IVO, 252; = SEG 11, 1203A). Jeffery 1949, 26-30; Jeffery 1990, # 49, 196, 201; Wallace 1954, 32; Huxley 1957, 201; Huxley 1962, 88. Since Pausanias (5.24.3) dates this inscription to the 2nd Messenian War we have one more inconsistency. However, Dillon 1995, 61 n. 10, questions this date, see also below p. 81.

275 E.g. Huxley 1957, 201, 203.

276 For H IIIa, 109-95, 112f., 150f. Jacoby’s treatment of Rhianos Messeniaka has been very influential. Huxley 1962, esp. 56 n. 356, 92; Oliva 1971, esp. 104f., 145; are perhaps the most enthusiastic followers. Wade-Gery 1966, 291f., for instance explains Pausanias’ confusion about Anaxilas as the result of Jacoby’s anonymous source ‘A’. Pearson 1962, 409, 419f., esp. 424f., presents the strongest criticism of Jacoby. Jacoby, focusing on the philological aspects, did not accept the early 5th-century revolt as a fact. He did maintain that Rhianos placed his fictitious epic hero Aristomenes in the early 5th century, however.

277 Huxley 1962, 59f., 91-3. Huxley obviously changed his mind, see Huxley 1957, 203f.

278 Huxley likes to reconcile, see above n. 273.
On the other side, we have the scholars who rejected the Rhianos hypothesis. Predictably, they reject the value of Plato as a historian, and thus the veracity of a Messenian revolt in the early 5th century. The date of the above-mentioned inscription is also questioned, and placed to the 2nd Messenian War. Pausanias’ inconsistent account remains, however. Proposed models that introduce external evidence are found among these scholars, too. Like Huxley above, Wade-Gery, in 1966, also makes use of Plutarch (Mor. 194B). However, for Wade-Gery the reference to 230 years of exile proves that Aristomenes was active around 600. This war was local and the memory of it, including Aristomenes, was preserved by “authentic … descendants”. Later in 369 when Epaminondas passed by he picked it up and spread the legend of Aristomenes and his adventures. It is noteworthy that the tradition is kept alive by blood-relatives in Wade-Gery’s scheme. Another theme in the debate, namely the notion of tradition, is also manifest in Wade-Gery’s discussion. There are two sides to it. First, a preservation of tradition, and second, an invention of tradition by Epaminondas. Tradition is also important in Shero’s argumentation from 1938. He rejects the Rhianos hypothesis and argues that Pausanias’ account preserves an authentic tradition about Aristomenes, who was the protagonist of the 2nd Messenian War. Nevertheless, he also accepts that there was some kind of Messenian revolt in the early 5th century, which resulted in a wave of Messenian exiles and ultimately the renaming of Zankle to Messene. Pearson, too, rejects the Rhianos hypothesis in 1962 but he underlines the ‘invention of tradition’ after the liberation of Messene in the 4th century. His aim is to disentangle how and who contributed to the invention of the Messenian history, thus axiomatically taking a position that the history of Messenia, as we know it, was invented around the time of Messene’s liberation. Put differently, the existence of a nation is regarded as a prerequisite for having a history. In Pearson’s view, once the Messenians

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279 Pearson 1962, 401; Shero 1938, 523.
280 Dillon 1995, 67, n. 44, 68. See also below n. 388.
281 Wade-Gery 1966, 296f.
284 Wade-Gery 1966, 298f., summarises his arguments.
285 Shero 1938, 504.
286 Shero 1938, 531, 526, for an outline of the events in the 490s.
287 Pearson 1962, 401, 418, 419f., 423f. See also above n. 276.
288 Pearson 1962, esp. 402f.
289 Pearson 1962, 397. The reason is articulated in Pearson 1962, 404: “But the founding of Messene offered a much stronger incentive to invent Messenian history and to give it a pro-Spartan or anti-Spartan twist.”
independent they had to invent a history. A consequence of this is that Pearson explicitly denies a Messenian political unity prior to the Spartan conquest.\textsuperscript{290}

More recently, Parker 1991 follows Pearson and regards Messenian history as a Hellenistic construct.\textsuperscript{291} He is particularly eager to question Pausanias as the authority of Messenian history. Parker accordingly dismissed the revolt in the early 5\textsuperscript{th} century as a Pausanian invention.\textsuperscript{292} He turns instead to Plutarch (\textit{Mor.} 194B) and proposes a lower chronology for the Messenian Wars: 1\textsuperscript{st} Messenian War circa 690-670, and the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Messenian War circa 635/625-610/600.\textsuperscript{293} Parker’s annihilation does not end with Pausanias. He also totally dismisses external evidence used by other scholars. Noteworthy is his rejection of the attempt to correlate the early history of Messenia with the list of Olympic victors.\textsuperscript{294} For all it is worth, however, Parker’s aim is to correct the chronology. A fundamental aim is thus to pinpoint events on the spatio-temporal grid — to establish the true origins of phenomena. Put differently, Parker’s criticism is articulated from a culture historical, indeed primordial, position. Parker, too, uses tradition in his argumentation. The reason he chooses to trust Plutarch’s text, is that the figure 230 years most likely originated from the Messenians themselves. In other words, the argument rests on the notion of an authentic tradition. Exiles are more prone to count the years in exile and thus they preserve a more accurate memory.\textsuperscript{295} To phrase it in the spirit of Parker: ‘who says?’ Why did the memory of the exiles freeze, remain unchanged and static, while other memories changed? In effect, Parker buys in to one of the more fundamental tenets of primordialism, namely that culture (ethnic identity) is static. The origins of a phenomenon, which is at stake, can only be traced if we posit an authentic and static memory. The flexibility, evolvement, of culture is a problem if we ask the kind of questions Parker does.\textsuperscript{296} The unchanged (read correct) culture is pitched against the changed (read false).

Nevertheless, there are also features that bridge the differences in opinion that scholars have about the exact events. First of all, there is a certain recurrence in the debate. The futility in aiming to establish exactly what

\textsuperscript{290} Pearson 1962, 402f. See also below p. 278.
\textsuperscript{291} Parker 1991, 25.
\textsuperscript{292} Parker 1991, 35, 43.
\textsuperscript{293} Parker 1991, 42.
\textsuperscript{294} Parker 1991, 27, also for references. Messenian Olympic victors; 7 between 768 and 736, none after 736. One exception: Phanas won in the ‘dolichos’ (therefore 716 or later), according to Pausanias (4.17.9) during the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Messenian War. See also below A comment on the geography.
\textsuperscript{295} Parker 1991, 34.
\textsuperscript{296} If the Messenian history is a Hellenistic construct, then a crucial issue avoided by Parker is why they constructed their history the way they did.
happened is articulated by several authors. Interestingly, this futility is blamed on the scarceness of the sources.\textsuperscript{297} The problem is pushed outside the academic inquiry, and the issue, for instance, that we should ask other questions is not raised. Yet, the debate continues well into the 1990s. Admittedly, many of the contributions focus on specific details. Illustrative is Dillon whose aim is to re-examine the date of one inscription.\textsuperscript{298} However, the result of the re-examination leads also inevitably to a contribution pertinent to the wider discussion about early Messenian history. On a more general level, however, culture historical, and primordial, assumptions govern this discussion. Fundamental for the debate is the aim to pinpoint what actually happened on the spatio-temporal grid. Noteworthy is the predominance of wars and political leaders in these accounts.

One of the prevailing images of Messenia and helots, possible to anchor in the ancient sources, is the rather crude categorisation that Messenian helots were perpetually ready to revolt, while Lakonian helots were loyal to the Spartans. That is, ethnic identity is regarded as primary and determinative in a primordial fashion. Plato (\textit{Leg.} 698D-E) states that the Spartans could not make it in time to the Battle of Marathon since they were busy fighting a war against the Messenians. Scholars, in general, accordingly refer to a Messenian uprising or war, but Huxley makes a revealing conflation. According to him, this was a “helot revolt” and “the Spartans were hard pressed in Messenia”.\textsuperscript{299} In other words, although social rank is attributed with some explanatory value, nevertheless ethnic identity is ultimately decisive. The driving force in history is ethnic affiliation. This is one of the hallmarks of primordialism, namely the assumption that ethnic sentiments are the most determining factor for human actions.

We should, however, not be deceived by the conflicting proposals. Although Pearson rejects a political unity in Messenia prior to the Spartan conquest, his discussion about the ‘invention’ of a Messenian history is governed by the assumption that history is created on a national level. He might place the time of origin later, but otherwise the difference is small. Another example is Oliva, who while following Jacoby and accepting that Aristomenes should be regarded as a fictitious hero, nevertheless argues that the tradition about

\textsuperscript{297} E.g. Oliva 1971, 145. Shero 1938, 509, mentions that already Grote noted that there is no sufficient evidence to decide between the two traditions about when Aristomenes lived.

\textsuperscript{298} Dillon 1995. \textit{IG} V, 1562 (= \textit{IVO}, 252; = \textit{SEG} 11, 1203A). See also above pp. 79f.

\textsuperscript{299} Huxley 1962, 88. Pearson 1962, 401; Shero 1938, 526; Wade-Gery 1966, 290; all refer to the rebels only as Messenians.
Aristomenes shows a Messenian tradition of resistance. This enforces the blunt categorization that the Messenian helots were perpetually ready to revolt. This is a perspective indistinguishable from Childe’s mosaic of cultures, which regards ethnic division-lines to be governing.

**A comment on the geography**

The connotation of the term ‘Messenia’ changed during antiquity, and this needs to be addressed. The prevailing view seems to be that Messenia in the 8th and 7th centuries consisted of the area of Stenyklaros, that is, the upper Pamisos valley. This is indicated by the following ancient passages. First, seven cities in south-eastern Messenia, by the Messenian Gulf, are mentioned in the so-called ‘embassy to Achilles’ (Hom. Il. 9.150-153, 9.292-295). These were under Spartan control prior to the Messenian Wars. Second, a fragment of Euripides mentions that Messenia was far away from the sea. Interestingly, Strabo (8.5.6) whose quotation has preserved this fragment, disagrees with Euripides. Third, a winner in the Olympic Games in 732 is designated as Koronean and not Messenian.

Nevertheless, by the 4th century Messenia designated, more or less, the area that we still today denote by this name. There are notable exceptions, such as Asine and Mothone, which were allowed some degree of special status within Messenia after 369. Accordingly, somewhere along the line the term ‘Messenia’ expanded. I find it impossible to pinpoint the exact nature of this process. The confusion regarding this is also evident in the scholarly debate concerning early Messenian history. Illustrative, for instance, is that exiles from the whole of Messenia (i.e., including the specific group from Pylos and Mothone mentioned by Pausanias (4.23.1)) are designated as Messenian exiles by the 4th century and by modern scholars. Some scholars, like Huxley, regard Pylos as part of Messenia as early as 600. He considers Plutarch (Mor. 194B) as evidence of the final defeat of the Messenians. The earliest use of Messenia to designate the whole area seems to be Aristophanes (Lys. 1141). Pausanias (and Strabo) also

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300 Oliva 1971, 145.
303 Parker 1991, 33. It should be noted that doubts have been raised whether this actually refers to Korone in Messenia.
304 Huxley 1962, 59. Also Cartledge 1979, 128. This would mean either that the Spartans had to deal with Messenian resistance over a period of one century, or that the Pylos area was a smaller political entity. The latter is Huxley’s proposition.
305 Chrimes 1949, 293. See also below p. 270, esp. n. 1005.
uses Messenia to designate the entire area, but he projects the conditions from his own time backwards.

The geographic uncertainties play, however, a minor role in the debate. The debate about the Messenian Wars is illustrative. In general, the scholars pay attention to the chronological aspects. Although the geography is as uncertain as the time-frame, these aspects are only briefly, if at all, commented upon.\textsuperscript{306}

There are occasional proposals of how the Spartan conquest spread westwards in Messenia, but these diverging positions are of less importance. It seems that the urge for spatial exactitude is more relevant on another level, namely to pinpoint the exact distribution of archaeological finds. The obsession to pinpoint when and where events happened does not include the term ‘Messenia’ itself. Although I initially suspected that the spatial uncertainties would be as important as the chronological, I cannot claim that this is the case.

**Summarising remarks**

It is time to summarise the characteristic features of the primordial conceptualization of the early history of Messenia. To begin with, we can note, that determining what actually happened is the objective for the proponents of this approach. They therefore need to propose a history that is coherent. This is even more evident in the interpretations made by the historians, who in addition often attempt to reconcile various conflicting sources. The intention to present a coherent history is less evident among the archaeologists. They do, however, accept the general framework for the early history of Messenia as presented in the ancient sources, and the archaeological finds are placed within it. The acceptance of the framework makes it possible for the archaeologists to end their interpretations of the finds by placing them within the framework. The focus is to fix the archaeological finds, and distributive patterns, on the spatio-temporal grid.

This is further enforced by a view on culture that is static and invariable. That is, the content and meaning of a culture is regarded to be stable, and aside from slight variations, it can essentially remain the same for centuries. It is because culture is regarded as static that the archaeological interpretations can focus on the distribution of artefacts. The meaning of them can be explained by the literary accounts. The culture historical approach to culture can also be

\textsuperscript{306} E.g. Chrimes 1949, 300, says explicitly that Makaria (i.e. lower Pamisos valley) was conquered after the 1\textsuperscript{st} Messenian War, and Stenyklaros after the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Messenian War.
characterised as passive. Cultural features reflect conditions. The possibility of manipulation is never an option.

There is in particular one dimension that is reflected, and to which the various finds are associated, namely ethnic divisions. That is, the finds are primarily associated with specific ethnic groups. Since culture is static and passive, isolated features can reflect ethnic conditions of a particular time. In addition, once a cultural feature is associated with an ethnic group — coupled with the static view on culture — it can be used to verify the ethnic conditions centuries earlier. In other words, the mere existence of a festival like the Pohoida not only confirms an Achaean sub-stratum in Messenia by the 5th century, but also that Messenia was Achaean prior to the Dorian intrusion.

The notions of continuity and cultural breaks are important for culture historical interpretations. Since ethnic categories are the determining aspect in these accounts, ethnic continuity is primarily discussed. Substantial changes are explained by changes in ethnic conditions. Furthermore, the preferred explanation for breaks is the presence of a new ethnic group that brings their culture with them. Since continuity and breaks are of primary importance, the difference of opinion often revolves around the magnitude of the breaks. In other words, a major issue is whether particular evidence reflects conditions prior to a fundamental break or not. The difference between Eder and Zunino is revealing. The break caused by the Spartan conquest of Messenia is important for both. While Eder argues that the break was so complete that the authentic Messenian tradition was lost, Zunino, although acknowledging that it was fundamental, nevertheless argues for a Messenian continuity that bridges this divide. The second break fundamental to the primordial conceptualization is the founding of Messene. It is noteworthy that it is the political breaks that are considered as relevant and decisive. Regardless whether a break is considered as the cause of a total eradication of the previous culture or not, it plays a prominent role in the primordial model. More than anything else, ethnic affiliations are the prime mover of history.

Although cultural features by default are associated with ethnic groups, the actual content of the identities is seldom commented upon. The various features identified as reflections of an ethnic group are not presented as part of a more elaborate account of what that ethnic identity was. That is, the ethnic categorizations that are taken for granted remain at best fragmentary. Besides the fact that they practised one or another cult we do not learn anything more about them.
Finally, it should be noted that the bulk of contributions belong to the time around the 1960s, although there are contributions originating from as early as the mid-19th century until 2000. Although the debate is embedded in primordial assumptions, there were also critics early on. Such an exception is, for instance, Starr who in 1965 rejected explanations based on essential characteristics such as Doric blood.307 This seems, however, to have passed unnoticed. The following quote can serve as an illustration, and it also serves as a transition to the next chapter, on the prevalence of the primordial model that governs our conceptualization of Messenian (and Spartan) history.

After the war the same status [i.e., of helotism] was extended to the Messenians whose lands were annexed, but these remained a distinct group, retaining a strong sense of national identity and always prone, unlike the Laconian helots, to rebellion. All the recorded ‘helot revolts’ were actually Messenian revolts, national, not social, in origin.308

307 Starr 1965, 271. See also below Holistic Helots.
Messenian Survival

Although Messene was conquered at the time of the Messenian Wars, I included the debate about Aristomenes and a possible helot uprising in the 490s in the last chapter. This chapter differs from the previous one on a number of points. Most significant, perhaps, is that the history of Messenia is now an integrated and inseparable part of the history of Sparta. The absence of any publications on the history of Classical Messenia speaks its own language. The focus of the ancient sources for this period is the political history. The ancient sources do not pay any special attention to Messenia since it was not a political entity but part of the Spartan state. The exceptions to this rule are the internal political troubles the Spartan state occasionally faced. There is in a sense a primordial perspective already in the ancient sources, since the most relevant analytical entity is the political. Occasionally the primordial tenets are even more governing, since some of the ancient authors also make a sharp division between the Messenian and Lakonian helots. The political focus has yet another profound effect. The subjugated groups, the helots and the perioikoi, are treated briefly at best. These groups surface occasionally when their activities have political consequences. Furthermore, the social conditions of the subjugated groups are also of less interest in the ancient sources. In contrast to the previous chapter, which depended on Pausanias, this one differs since there are more relevant ancient authors for the discussion. The conceptualization of Classical Messenia is based on Thucydides, Xenophon and Diodoros, to mention the most important. There is a greater variety of opinions present already in the ancient sources during the Classical period.

The archaeological narratives about Classical Messenia are, if possible, even more meagre than the historical. With the exception of the few recent finds from Messene, and one or another instance of reuse of Bronze Age tombs, the Classical period is virtually absent from the archaeological discussions. There are, in my view, two mutually enforcing reasons for this. The first reason is that the archaeology of Messenia has focused on two chronological periods: firstly, on the abundant record from the Bronze Age in western Messenia, extensively excavated by American and Greek archaeologists from the 1950s onwards; and secondly, chronological focus has been on the Hellenistic and Roman periods encountered in Messene. The second reason for the scarce archaeological record of Classical Messenia is the absence of features that classical archaeologists usually concentrate on, that is sanctuaries, temples, and other magnificent
buildings. Put differently, and bluntly, there is no archaeology of Classical Messenia. The few scattered scraps that nevertheless exist will be treated in the relevant sections. This chapter will therefore be a chapter that almost exclusively can be characterised as historical, based on literary evidence.

This chapter is divided into two major parts: a political history, and a social history. The fragmentary remarks on the social dimensions in Messenia in the ancient sources are made in connection with political events. I find it therefore appropriate to begin with the political history before I turn to the social. The concentration on the political events among the ancient historians has also influenced modern scholarship, and this dimension has received more attention than other aspects. Scholars have in particular devoted attention to the tense relations between the helots, or Messenians, and the Spartans. Fitzhardinge’s words, which ended the previous chapter, epitomize the primordial conceptualization of the Classical period of Messenia. The quote captures several characteristic features of primordialism. In Fitzhardinge’s view, the Messenians preserved their distinct ethnic identity during the Spartan occupation. This identity furthermore overrides other categorizations (hence primordial), and there is a sharp and distinct division made between the Messenian and Lakonian helots. The helots are not regarded as a coherent social category, but are divided along the assumed ethnic divisions. The Lakonian helots, who shared the same ethnic identity as their masters, were loyal to them, while the Messenian helots were disloyal and always prone to revolt against their masters. Thus the explanation of history is cast along the ethnic divisions. Fitzhardinge is by no means unique in holding this position; several other scholars make the same divisions.309 Heuristic models, however, seldom capture all aspects of a phenomenon and, as will be evident, the primordial conceptualization includes several facets.

**Political history**

*The helot revolt in the 460s*

The helot revolt in the 460s (Thuc. 1.101-103; Diod. Sic. 11.63-64) is often considered as a watershed in the history of Messenia and Sparta.310 This

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309 E.g. Jones 1967, 10, 134. See below and *Holistic Helots*.
310 There are also other sources. However, Pausanias (4.24.5-7), for instance, is less detailed than Thucydides and Diiodores. He differs primarily in regarding the earthquake as revenge by Poseidon for a religious offence by the Spartans.
rebellion is associated with the severe earthquake that struck Sparta in 465/4. The rebels were quickly entrenched at Mt. Ithome, and the Spartans began a siege aided by allies. Both Thucydides and Diodoros neglect to account for the events during the decade (Thuc. 1.103.1) the revolt lasted, and focus instead on the beginning and the end of it. The rebellion ended with a truce, and the Messenians (note, not the helots) left under safe conduct. The Messenians were settled in Naupaktos by the Athenians (Thuc. 1.103; Diod. Sic. 11.84.7-8). The identity of the rebels has received much attention. Thucydides (1.101.2) firstly mentions helots and, secondly, perioikoi from the settlements of Thouria and Aithaia. The denomination of ‘helots’ is not straightforward. According to Thucydides (1.101.2), most of the helots were descendants of the Messenians and therefore they were all called Messenians. Diodoros (11.63.4), on the other hand, draws a distinction between helots and Messenians. Like Diodoros (11.84.8), Thucydides (1.103.3) uses the term ‘Messenians’ for the former rebels settled in Naupaktos.

A suitable starting-point for the primordial conceptualization of this event is Oliva, writing in 1971. His overriding aim is to find out what actually happened. Thucydides’ account, regarded as the authoritative, has some inconsistencies, and these have fuelled the modern scholarly debate. An important chronological contradiction is that Thucydides (1.108) mentions a Battle at Tanagra, Boiotia, in 456, between the Spartans and the Athenians. This is considered to stand in opposition to Thucydides’ account of the helot revolt. The revolt would be going on if it began after the earthquake and continued for ten years, since it is assumed that the Spartans could not have engaged in a campaign abroad while the helot rebellion was taking place. It should be mentioned, parenthetically, that the question of how many rebels there were has received less attention. Oliva’s conclusion that only a minor part of the helots participated, since otherwise the Spartan organisation of food supplies

311 Exactly how severe has, of course, been a matter of dispute. Diodoros (11.63.1) mentions 20,000 casualties, but this may be exaggerated, see Oliva 1971, 152; Chrimes 1949, 352. See Toynbee 1969, 346-52, for a calculation of the demographic consequences of the earthquake. Plutarch (Cim. 16.4) stresses also the magnitude, mentioning that only five houses in Sparta were standing after this earthquake.

312 Famous is the aid the Athenians sent to the Spartans (Thuc. 1.102). The Spartans, however, dismissed them, and this is often regarded as a cause of the enmity that later led to the Peloponnesian War, see Ste Croix 1972, 179f.

313 Also Diodoros (15.66.4). Plutarch (Cim. 16.6) makes the same distinction. Both Diodoros (11.63.5-64.1) and Plutarch (Cim. 16.6) describe initial events in Lakonia, and that the rebels were held back due to the quick action of the Spartan king Archidamos. For Thucydides (1.101.2) see also below n. 937 and Becoming Messenian.
would have collapsed is an exception. A dominating dimension in culture
historical conceptualizations of this event is the exact chronology. Oliva in his
eagerness to find out what actually happened devotes the major part of his
treatment to the chronology. The discussion that focuses on the chronology
tries, in a mode characteristic of the culture historical perspective, to reconcile
conflicting testimonies. Oliva thus proposes that the helot revolt began in the
early 460s, in connection with the death of the Spartan king Pausanias, who
would have instigated the helots to act as a consequence of his power struggles
with the ephors. Since Oliva situates the ultimate reason for the revolt in these
power struggles he reduces, in a sense, the helots to a group of passive
bystanders. In other words, there was already a helot revolt when the
earthquake struck Sparta. However, the revolt became more intensive after the
earthquake, and therefore Thucydides remembered only the last phase. The
rebellion would, following Oliva, have ended by the time of the battle of
Tanagra. The advantage of this model is that it “can explain the “inconsistency”
of Thucydides”.

The major distinction for Oliva is between Spartans and helots. He is careful
not to draw a distinction between the Messenian and Lakonian helots, and does
in fact raise some objections to this. The characterisation of some helots as
Messenians by later authors, such as Pausanias, is explained by Oliva as an
influence of Ephoros. Since Ephoros was writing after the liberation of Messenia
he described the helots as Messenians, thus legitimising the revolt as a struggle
for independence. In other words, although Oliva does not regard ethnic
categories as governing, he nevertheless accepts the governing tenet of
essentialism. That is, the content of the denomination of helots is not a problem,
and neither is this crude dichotomy.

Hammond also focuses on the chronology of the rebellion in his article from
1955. He basically takes Diodoros at face value and proposes a revised
chronology for the 3rd Messenian War. He accepts that the rebellion lasted a
decade, although in his view it did not begin in 465/4 but in 469/8 and lasted

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314 Oliva 1971, 162f.
315 Oliva 1971, 156-61. Gives, as usual, an exhaustive bibliography. Reece 1962, is one example,
devoted to the complicated issue of when Ithome fell.
316 Oliva 1971, 146-52. An interesting parallel is Wallace 1954 (and Huxley 1962, 87f.) who argues
that the helot revolt in 490 was instigated by the Spartan king Kleomenes.
317 Oliva 1971, 151.
318 Oliva 1971, 153f., refutes Hammond’s scheme, see below.
until 460/59. There are thus obvious similarities between Hammond’s and Oliva’s positions. Both aim to reconcile conflicting accounts and both argue that the rebellion ended in 460/59, thus solving the chronological conflict in Thucydides’ account (1.103.1, 1.108). However, Hammond, in contrast to Oliva, is more eager to explain the rebellion with primordial assumptions. In his opinion the ‘Messenians’ began the rebellion in 469/8. The ‘Messenian helots’ together with the perioikoi joined them only after the big earthquake that struck Sparta in the summer of 464. Hammond distinguishes between a first and a second more intensive phase of the rebellion. Furthermore, he is eager to distinguish between three groups of rebels: first, the Messenians (i.e., Messenians that lived in Messenia, and were still independent and authentic, and émigres that returned to participate in the rebellion); second, the Messenian helots (i.e., Messenians that had been helotised); and third, the perioikoi.

Hammond conceptualizes the rebellion as an ethnic conflict. Interestingly, ethnic categories are regarded as preserved and static. There were still independent Messenians living in Messenia who initiated the revolt. Furthermore, the ethnic identity of the helots explains their participation. This is one of the basic tenets of the primordial model, namely that ethnic affiliations determine history and take precedence over other categories. There is yet another strand present here. Independence seems to be important for Hammond. The independent Messenians initiate the rebellion.

Independence is also a notion that is important for ancient historians. The helots are often reduced to a passive group that reacts to actions of groups and individuals that are independent or self-governing. That is, groups that are not subjugated are regarded as more active. Thus, once the Messenians (here, but also in the next section dealing with the events at Pylos) are in exile or free, they are allowed to take more initiatives than the helots. Put differently, once a group is its own mosaic (in Childe’s scheme) it is also able to act, but as long as it is a suppressed part of another group’s mosaic it is deprived of this possibility. Furthermore, Hammond regards culture as static and passive. Diodoros’ distinction between helots and Messenians is taken at face value. Diodoros is not regarded as an active author, but as a passive transmitter of

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319 Hammond 1955, 381. This in turn, see Hammond 1955, 371, is a reaction against scholars who argue that the rebellion lasted four years. See Gomme 1945, 401-8, for the specific details. Also McNeal 1970, who argues that 10 years is in accordance with Thucydides’ methods.

320 Hammond 1955, 375, even dates the earthquake to June/July 464.

321 Hammond 1955, 375f., 379. Like Hammond, Cartledge 1979, 216-22, also upgrades Diodoros. He has, however, a different solution than Hammond, since he argues that Lakonian helots were active in the initial phase of the rebellion after the earthquake, see below p. 102.
reality. As Sealey pointed out in 1957, Hammond solves the problem by inventing a new ethnic group. According to this view, each term used by Diodoros corresponds to a particular group.322

Perhaps the most articulate advocate of the dichotomy between Lakonian and Messenian helots is Chambers, from 1977/78. In his view, a simple distinction between helots and Spartans is unsatisfactory since it cannot explain the contradictory references to the Spartan-helot relations. Chambers identifies two guiding tenets in the ancient sources, one negative emphasising the hostility of the helots towards their masters, and a corresponding Spartan concern with the helot danger. This image also includes the accounts of the Spartan state-sanctioned terrorization of the helots (e.g., Thuc. 4.80; Pl. Leg. 776-777C; Arist. Pol. 1269a; Plut. Lyc. 28).323 In contrast he discerns a second positive tenet mentioning more friendly relations between the Spartans and the helots (e.g., Paus. 4.16.6; Hdt. 6.80-81, 7.229, 8.25; Xen. Hell. 6.5.23-29; Diod. Sic. 15.65.5).324 The solution to these conflicting lines of thought is, according to Chambers, to draw a distinction between Messenian and Lakonian helots. The negative principle is associated with the Messenian helots and the positive with the Lakonian.325 The failure to realise the importance of this distinction has in Chamber’s view resulted in a simplistic image of Spartan society. This image stresses the polarisation between the Spartans and the helots, and exaggerates the negative principle, viewing all helots as enemies of the Spartans.326 The reason the negative image applies only to the Messenian helots is, of course, their ethnic identity: “the Messenian helots differed in that they never lost their ethnic identity and the memory of their freedom.”327 Put briefly, in Chambers’ view, then, all helot troubles during the 5th century were a consequence of the Messenian ethnic identity.328

More specifically for the rebellion in the 460s, Chambers argues that scholars have failed to appreciate the distinction between the Messenian and Lakonian helots. They have relied on the late and exaggerated reports by Diodoros (11.63-
64), Plutarch (Cim. 16), and Pausanias (1.29, 4.24), who all ascribed Messenian acts of hostilities to all the helots. In contrast to the accounts of early authors, Herodotos (9.35, 9.64), Aristophanes (Lys. 1141-44), Xenophon (Hell. 6.5.33), and Thucydides (1.101-103) are all interpreted by Chambers as characterising this revolt as Messenian. In other words, the late ancient authors distorted the image of the rebellion since they failed to realise the distinction between the Lakonian and Messenian helots and therefore included the Lakonian helots among the rebels. Chambers’ proposed distinction is firmly grounded in the primordial model. Not only does he presuppose that the Messenians had a national/ethnic consciousness prior to the Spartan conquest, but also he argues that they preserved their identity — identities are determinative, fixed and static. Both Hammond and Chambers argue that the Messenians preserved their ethnic identity, and regard this dimension as decisive for their actions. However, there are also noteworthy differences. Hammond follows and reinforces the distinction present in Diodoros’ account, arguing for the existence of the ‘Messenians’. Chambers, in contrast, argues that Diodoros distorted the real distinction between Lakonian and Messenian helots.

In conclusion, then, these accounts are governed by a static view on culture. What unites them is that the helots, and culture, are regarded as passive. Oliva reduces the helots to a passive group, although he is careful not to explain the revolt as an ethnic conflict. Hammond and Chambers are more eager to explain the revolt as an ethnic conflict, and draw a distinction between Messenian and Lakonian helots. Nevertheless, they all reduce humans to labels, whether explicitly ethnic or not, and assume that they acted as coherent units. The fundamental difference between the various scholarly opinions is what analytical boundary they regard as primary. The content of these analytical entities remains conceptualized in accordance with essentialistic assumptions.

Pylos, 420s

Messenia becomes a topic of interest again in the political history of the Classical period in the mid-420s. The south-western part of Messenia, more precisely Pylos and the immediate environs, was the scene of fighting between the Spartans and the Athenians as part of the Peloponnesian War (Thuc. 4.3-23, 4.26-41). The Athenians decided to take the promontory at Pylos, in an attempt to keep the Spartans in check during the war. The Messenians and
helots were an intrinsic part of these events, used by both the Athenians and the Spartans.

On the initiative of the general Demosthenes, the Athenians garrisoned Pylos in 425. They built a fortification in all haste on the height. The Spartans, of course, reacted to this, albeit slowly, and sent forces. Their attacks were not successful, however. What is worse 420 Spartan soldiers and additional helots were entrapped on the island of Sphakteria. The battle on Sphakteria ended with the defeat of the Spartans, in itself a remarkable thing, and the surviving Spartans were sent to Athens as prisoners of war (Thuc. 4.34-38).

The Messenians from Naupaktos played a crucial role in the Athenian plans. These Messenians had been loyal allies to the Athenians since their exile began after the helot uprising in the 460s. They are an active group in Thucydides’ narrative, and for instance the final and decisive blow to the Spartan contingent on Sphakteria was due to their initiative (Thuc. 4.36). Thucydides stresses that the Messenians regarded this as an opportunity to take at least partial control of their homeland. A consequence of the garrison was that many helots defected to it (Thuc. 5.56.2-3). Perhaps even worse, according to Thucydides the Spartans feared that the garrison would lead to a new helot rebellion (Thuc. 4.41.2-3).

The role of the Messenians became more significant after a time since the Athenians left and entrusted them with the task of holding the fort. With the peace agreement between the Athenians and the Spartans in 421, Pylos was abandoned (Thuc. 5.35.6-7). The Messenians were, however, back at Pylos already in 419 (Thuc. 5.56.2-3). This time the garrison might have lasted for a decade (Diod. Sic. 13.64.5-7).

Needless to say there are inconsistencies in Thucydides’ account, and these have once again fuelled a scholarly debate that focuses on very specific, primarily topographical and military, details. It is striking to note the degree of exactitude in this debate; it revolves around single metres and days. Thucydides’ account is furthermore isolated from its context, and the fundamental aim is to find out exactly what happened. Several scholars — e.g., Gomme, Pritchett, Wilson, Westlake, Bauslaugh and Rubincam — have elaborated on the topographic and military problems around Pylos in Thucydides’ account. Another important thread is the discussion about the

331 It is here that the ‘homophonia’ between the Messenians and Lakonians is mentioned, see also above p. 62.
332 Noteworthy is that Thucydides does not mention this.
narratological aspects of Thucydides’ account. This part of the debate — e.g., by Kagan, Hunter, Maele and Flower — tends to focus on the image Thucydides conveys of the Athenian general Demosthenes and his adversary Kleon.\textsuperscript{334} In addition to the unusual level of exactitude of the debate, the longevity is striking — it goes back to Grote in the mid-19th century and continues until present-day.\textsuperscript{335} The degree of exactitude in the ancient sources seems to correspond to the degree of exactitude in the modern treatments of history — the more detailed the ancient accounts, the more detailed the modern debate.

The focus on specific details has its dangers, however, which can be illustrated by Strassler’s elaboration of the chronology of the opening of the Pylos campaign in 425 from 1990. An avoidance of an explicit discussion about culture, or ethnicity, does not necessarily mean that these notions are absent from the scholarly conceptualization. Strassler accepts Thucydides’ comment that the fort in Pylos caused many helots to defect. He also stresses the Spartan fear of helot revolt as an effect of the Pylos fort (Thuc. 4.41, 4.55, 4.80). Strassler is thus enforcing the negative image of the Spartan-helot relations, whereby the helots are regarded as perpetually ready to rebel.\textsuperscript{336} In addition, Strassler draws a distinction between Messenian and Lakonian helots, and in his view it is in particular the Messenians whom the Spartans feared.\textsuperscript{337} In other words, it is the ethnic affiliations that determine the actions. Although the chronological details in Thucydides’ account are elaborated on at length, the ethnic denominations are taken at face value. Strassler’s neglect to elaborate on ethnicity results in an enforcement of ethnic labels, in a characteristic primordial essentialism.

Summary

In sum, Messenia is a topic of interest in the political history of the Classical period in connection with these two episodes. We can note, firstly, that Thucydides is the main source for both episodes, and secondly, that in both there is a conflict between the Athenians and the Spartans. Thucydides is primarily interested in the conflict between the two arch-enemies, and the helots or the Messenians are of interest only when they are part of this power struggle. In both instances the culture historical, and primordial, treatment of these episodes focuses on the aim to find out what actually happened. To


\textsuperscript{335} Bauslaugh 1979, 1, collects the early references.

\textsuperscript{336} Strassler 1990, 112f.

\textsuperscript{337} Strassler 1990, 112f. Chambers 1977/78, 282, makes the same distinction, although more bluntly.
reconstruct what actually happened means, however, that inconsistencies in the ancient sources are unacceptable, and a dominant principle is therefore the need to reconcile various conflicting accounts. The scholarly discussion focuses thus on specific details, and the contributors propose in various ways solutions to these problems.

The devotion to specific details and the avoidance of the larger issues leads, however, to an enforcement of rigid and static ethnic labels that are seldom elaborated on. Regardless whether the dichotomy is drawn between Spartans and helots or more explicitly between Messenian and Lakonian helots, these groups are reduced to their labels. Since the narratives of Thucydides are the most extensive, they are also crucial for the conceptualization of other aspects of the helots. They form the backbone of the discussion that tries to elaborate on the social conditions of the helots.

Social helots

The clear distinction between Messenians and Lakonians, whether helots or Spartans, which is often made in connection with the political troubles, is less evident in the elaborations of the social aspects of helotism. Although less clear-cut, there are nevertheless considerable variations in the ancient sources regarding the helots. We have fragments describing the helots as being most cruelly treated at one extreme, and texts describing friendly, everyday, close relations between the helots and their masters at the other end. Scholars explain the variations in the ancient sources that describe the helots, in different ways. Some scholars, for instance Chambers, explain the evidence by a differentiation according to ethnic divisions. The sources referring to hostile relations are regarded as pertinent to the Messenian helots’ relations to the Spartans, and the ones mentioning friendly relations to the Lakonian helots. The more common position is to regard the ancient sources that describe social conditions as relevant to all helots, making no distinction between Messenian and Lakonian helots on this level. It should, however, be mentioned that there is a difference when it comes to the recorded tensions between the Spartans and the helots. Even scholars who do not make a generic distinction between the Messenian and Lakonian helots, are more comfortable with explaining the tensions as a difference between Messenian and Lakonian helots.338

338 See e.g. below p. 102.
Origins

A suitable point to begin the discussion about the helots is perhaps the origins of this institution, since origins is a fundamental notion for the culture historical and primordial conceptualizations of the past. Helotism, as a social institution, is intimately associated with the Spartan state organisation in antiquity. As with Messenia, the early history of Sparta is very uncertain, and we have a very limited number of sources. Furthermore, the later ancient sources that elaborate on the early history have a tendency to give mythological or legendary explanations that are difficult to accept today. Helotism together with a number of socio-political institutions — such as the Spartan diarchy, the ephors, agoge, syssitia, the kleros-system and, of course, the perioikoi — is commonly regarded as a part of the unique Spartan totality. Leaving the uncertainties aside, in the ancient Greek tradition these structures were conceptualized as having been introduced by Lykourgos.

Since the Spartan society had petrified into its uniqueness for the period I am concerned with here, I will refrain from the vexed issue of when and how the Spartan state organisation emerged. Whether or not helotism existed prior to the 2nd Messenian War or if the Spartan state was re-organised completely as a result of this challenge, is of less interest since during the Classical period the agricultural production in the fertile plain of the Pamisos valley was organised in this way. Suffice to mention that, according to generic primordial explanations, the helots were the original pre-Dorian inhabitants of Lakonia. The Dorians subjugated them when they conquered Lakonia. In other words, helotism as a social institution existed in Lakonia already when Messenia was conquered, and the Spartans transferred this kind of organisation also to Messenia.

Social organisation

A topic of debate has been whether helotism was such a unique institution as to evade the essence of the term ‘slavery’. In an economic sense slavery captures much of helotism, since helots were involuntarily exploited. However, their bond was not on an individual level as for chattel-slaves, and therefore slavery

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339 Oliva 1971, 15-136, elaborates on all these features. Besides the scholarly debates, it is the notion of origins that governs his account: 63-70, for Lykourgos; 23-8, for the diarchy; 32-8, for the kleros-system.

340 E.g. Toynbee 1969, 195-8; Walbank 1957, 728. Due to the clear Lakonian origin of helotism, the tenet in these discussions focusing on the etymological aspects of ‘helot’ will not be discussed here. See Oliva 1971, 38-44, for references.
obscures some aspects of helotism. The helots were the slaves of the Spartan state, and thus it has been proposed that the term ‘state-serfs’ captures the legal, social and political conditions better. The focus on the terms, and the aim to propose exact definitions of a term, is of course one of the characteristic features of the culture historical mode of studying the past. I, however, find this terminological debate to be a dead end, and fail to see how a rigid definition would solve any problem.\footnote{See Oliva 1971, 38-44, for references. Classic is Lotze 1959 characterisation of the conditions of the helots as in-between free and slaves. Also Hunt 1998, 14 n. 51, collects the references. See also below Holistic Helots.}

One fundamental methodological issue underlies the debate. As with the conceptualization of the early history of Messenia, the major problem is how far the credibility of the ancient sources extended on the spatio-temporal grid. The ancient sources from the Archaic-Classical period dealing with the social aspects of the Spartan society are few, and therefore sources originating from the Hellenistic and Roman periods are also used. At heart, again, is thus the problem whether changes were so fundamental as to invalidate late evidence from a discussion about the early or Classical period or not. The problems — and this begins to resemble a litany — were identified by Grote in the mid-19th century. This is well illustrated by the issue of the ‘kleros’ (allotments). According to the tradition mentioned by Plutarch (Lyc. 8), the organisation of agricultural land into equal lots, without any possibility to sell them, and their distribution among the Spartans was part of Lykourgos’ reforms. One problem, however, is that Polybios (6.45, 6.48) from the 2nd century is the earliest ancient source to mention the kleros-system. Earlier authors do not refer to such a rigid organisation of the agricultural land in Lakonia and Messenia. This silence, together with the substantial reforms of the Spartan society in the late 3rd century which are associated with the Spartan kings Agis IV and Kleomenes III, is used as an argument that the kleros-system was introduced during Hellenistic times. That is, the re-organisation of Spartan society is regarded as a complete break, which delimits the relevance of the comments of Polybios and Plutarch to the period after the late 3rd-century re-organisation. According to this view, then, they would project conditions backwards.\footnote{Oliva 1971, 33, for references. Grote argued that the tradition of the Spartan tenure system was invented in the Hellenistic period in order to anchor the reforms of Agis IV and Kleomenes III. There are of course variations within this scholarly tradition, for instance Jones 1967, 40-3 argues that the tradition of Lykourgos’ reforms was invented in the late fourth century. The silence of Aristotle about the kleros-system, inferred from quotes by Heraklides, see Jones 1967, 42, is fundamental for this group. Aristotle’s Institution of the Lacedaemonians is lost.} On the other hand we have a group of scholars, amongst them Oliva, that argues that the validity...
of the ancient sources can be stretched beyond this break. Although cautious, Oliva argues that the kleros-system and the other peculiarities of the Spartan society were “survivals of the old Dorian tribal society. In land tenure this is seen in the fact that Spartan citizens were tenants and not owners of their kleroi.”

Ethnic affiliations explain the development of the Spartan society. Furthermore, it is the notion of continuity that is crucial for Oliva. This is one of the rare instances where Oliva’s primordial assumptions are explicit.

The kleros-system is fundamental since it is intimately connected with the prime function of the helots. Their defining role was to produce agricultural products. They worked the kleros of the Spartans, and a ratio of their production was handed over to the tenant of the specific kleros. Although the origin of the kleros-system has been questioned, helotism as a social institution is commonly accepted for the Classical period. There is a discrepancy here, since a fundamental aspect of helotism, namely the organisation of the agricultural production, is questioned, but the institution of helotism as such is not invalidated. In order to belong to the highest ranked group in the Spartan society (the homoioi), the individual Spartan had to be a member of a ‘syssitia’ (mess hall). Belonging to a syssitia also implied certain obligations, such as contributing food (Arist. Pol. 1271a 36). The Spartans were dependent on the helots, since it was from the production of the helots that they could contribute to the syssitia.

Beyond the generic function of the helots to till the allotments of the Spartans, few aspects of helotism are certain — everything remains open to controversy. The list of aspects that have been disputed is extensive. At one end of the spectrum is the focus on quantifiable issues. Considerable attention has been given to such problems as how many helots there were, and the population ratio between the helots and the Spartans; how many helots were confined to each allotment; how many kleroi there were; and how much of the production was handed over to the Spartans. Exactitude is, again, crucial for the conceptualization of the past according to the culture historical model. However, I fail to understand, for instance, why it is important whether seven or ten helot families were attached to each allotment. To find out what actually happened seems in this case to be governed by the aim to find out the

343 Oliva 1971, 38.
344 The exact amount and organisation is disputed. Four ancient passages are pertinent here: Tyrtaios (West, GLP, fr. 6 (=Paus. 4.14.5)); Myron (FGnH 106 F 2); Plutarch (Mor. 239E; Lyg. 8.4). See also below Holistic Helots.
345 Oliva 1971, 48-54, for references and arguments.
346 See Oliva 1971, 52-4.
exact numbers. However, the writing of history is, in a sense, always connected (regardless of theoretical position) with choosing different issues upon which the scholarly text is focused. The proponents of the culture historical model choose (in some sense and more or less consciously) to focus on exact figures, since these are important from their perspective. However, the other side of this necessity is that other aspects remain absent. It is illustrative that the issue of how the helots lived (i.e., dispersed in the allotments or in hamlets/villages) is absent in Oliva’s thorough survey of earlier scholarship.347 This issue has been discussed, but it has had less apparent impact. According to the primordial conceptualization, the helots would not be allowed to live in villages, since this would facilitate helot interaction and thus augment the rebellious activities. The helots would thus live dispersed on the allotments, in clusters of few houses.348 This is also the view of Cartledge. According to him, the helots both in Messenia and Lakonia were forced “to abandon the villages of their ancestors and kept dispersed on the land of their masters as a precaution against the rebellious combination.”349 In other words, Cartledge’s explanation fundamentally rests on the essentialistic notion that too much helot interaction (amongst themselves, that is) would augment the rebellious nature of the helots. The generic enmity between the helots and the Spartans is thus again the characteristic trait that governs the explanation of the Spartan society.

Before I continue I find it necessary to make some brief comments on Cartledge. Drawing distinctions according to theoretical models has its problems. Occasionally there are such as Sparta and Lakonia from 1979, which evade the analytical abstractions. Facets of both primordialism and instrumentalism can for instance be found in this publication. Cartledge is clearly influenced by processual archaeology. The comment above about the social organisation is a consequence of the shift of perspective toward more social and environmental factors by processual archaeology. Another feature of processualism is the holistic approach. In contrast to earlier, and traditional, accounts of Sparta, Cartledge places culture in an environmental setting that he regards as determinative for the culture/society he studies.350 Nevertheless, in my view Cartledge falls on the primordial side of the fence, at least in his treatment of the helots and Messenia of the Classical period. The processual influences are primarily evident in the constructing of a setting for the more

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347 Neither Toynbee 1969, 195-203, who also summarises scholarship discusses this aspect.
348 Lotze 1959, 38.
349 Cartledge 1979, 164. See also below pp. 224f., for a different view.
350 Cartledge 1979, 13-29. For Cartledge, see also below pp. 123, 141f. and 243f.
traditional historical analysis of Lakonia. In a sense, the processual dimensions are used to supplement a culture historical traditional analysis.\textsuperscript{351} The processual influences, however, decrease with an increasing dependency on the literary evidence. In the end it is only the interest in the social aspects that remains a distinguishable processual trait. Cartledge’s discussion of the Dorian conquest of Lakonia is an illustrative example. He accepts and defends this framework but adds processual aspects. The controversial archaeological break in the Early Iron Age is regarded as a result of the coming of the Dorians. The difference lies in the fact that the Dorians are characterised by their mode of production — they are transhumance pastoralists — and not by their inherent characteristics. In addition, Cartledge is keen to use scientific methods (e.g., palynology) to substantiate his argument. He thus supplements his culture historical position with processual methods. Again, on the instrumentalist side, he is not arguing for an abrupt invasion but a slow process of infiltration of the Dorians.\textsuperscript{352}

With the increasing density and dependency on the literary records, however, Cartledge’s narrative becomes increasingly primordial. Fundamental for his view is that modern scholars have underestimated the hostility of the Lakonian helots towards the Spartans.\textsuperscript{353} If the Lakonian helots were hostile to the Spartans, the Messenian helots were twice as hostile. Cartledge argues that the Messenian helots were a social group with a sense of solidarity, and the oppressive aspects of the Spartan system were primarily directed against them.\textsuperscript{354} The helot revolt in the 460s is accordingly also viewed as a Messenian affair, although he allows for Lakonian helots to participate.\textsuperscript{355} Put differently, Cartledge does not only accept the ethnic labels in the ancient texts, but he also uses them to explain history. The essentialistic trait of the primordial model is fundamental for the explanation of history in Cartledge’s account, too. Although Cartledge, doubtless influenced by processual archaeology, characterises the Messenian helots as a social group, their actions are nevertheless governed by their identity — the helots are hostile to the Spartans because they are helots. Furthermore, the ethnic identity of the Messenian

\textsuperscript{351} Cartledge 1979, 8f., rejects explicitly some fundamental aspects of processualism as irrelevant for classical archaeologists.
\textsuperscript{352} Cartledge 1979, 94f.
\textsuperscript{353} Cartledge 1979, 219.
\textsuperscript{354} Cartledge 1979, 177. See also below p. 123.
\textsuperscript{355} Cartledge 1979, 216-22. As with Oliva, chronology is a dominating issue in Cartledge’s account of the helot rebellion.
helots is taken for granted, and the essential instrumentalist thread to elaborate on how the identity emerged is absent from Cartledge’s account.

There were also other aspects of helotism than agricultural production. The helots as a social group, were self-reproducing. Although the exact social organisation remains evasive, we do have indications that they were allowed to own property (Thuc. 4.9.1, 4.26.6f) and accumulate resources. At the Battle of Plataiai helots collected the war-trophies and, hiding it from their masters, kept the yield when they sold it (Hdt. 9.80). Furthermore, the promise of rewards incited them to aid the military contingent trapped on Sphakteria (Thuc. 4.26.5f). Such a promise would fall flat if the helots were not allowed to keep the reward. If we accept evidence from the Hellenistic period, we can also infer that they were allowed to buy their freedom (Plut. Cleom. 23.1). There are also inscriptions from the beginning of the 4th century indicating that helots could be manumitted. The helots were also not confined to the allotments, although their freedom of movement might have been restricted; there were many helots in the Spartan agora on an ordinary day in the early 4th century (Xen. Hell. 3.3.5).

In addition to their main role of producing food, the helots had also other functions. The best-documented use of the helots, beyond the tilling, is when the Spartans used them in their army. A common role for the helots in the Spartan army was as attendants to the Spartan hoplites. This role is also attested in Sparta itself (e.g., Xen. Hell. 5.4.28; Xen. Lac. 7.5; Hdt. 6.63). It seems that helots could thus be used as household slaves in a way that comes closer to slaves in other parts of Greece. That is, individual Spartans could use them for their private needs and not only in the fields. The Spartan state also used the helots in other ways. On several occasions the ephors entrusted the helots with ‘police’ duties. The ephors seem to have used the helots to guard and arrest persons. The Spartan king Kleomenes was guarded by helots around 490 (Hdt. 6.75).

By way of concluding, then, the conceptualizations of the helots, and to a great extent the Messenians, are based on these scattered references. Regrettably, however, I have not found any primordial elaboration of the

356 Plutarch mentions that 6 000 helots purchased their freedom in 223/2. This is, however, the only reference to helots buying their independence. The changes in the Spartan society due to the loss of Messenia may, however, have changed things to such an extent that this reference is invalidated for the Classical period, see Robins 1958, 93f.
357 IG V1, 1228, 1230-1232. See Oliva 1971, 173.
358 See below Loyalties.
359 The parallel to the Scythian archers in Athens is all too obvious.
everyday life of the helots. The dominating perspective and problem is the role of the Spartans. The above attempt to construct a ‘primordial’ image of the helots ends with a repetitive enumeration of the various fragments. Due to the strong political focus on ancient history, scholars with culture historical perspectives are not eager to elaborate on the effects and implications of these fragments. The scholars’ reliance on texts from such a wide chronological frame also hints at a relatively static view on culture. One more characteristic is worth mentioning: namely, in order to argue for the generic enmity between the helots and the Spartans, proponents of this model need to explain the instances of less hostile, or even friendly, relations between them. Thus as a rule the adherents of the primordial model view accounts of tensions between the helots and the Spartans as relevant to the general relations between the two groups, and friendly relations are explained as individual exceptions. That is, the accounts that would contradict their image of the Spartan society are invalidated since they are viewed as be relevant only to that specific and individual event.360

Religion and archaeology

The absence of archaeology so far in this chapter is a reflection of the sparse use of it in the culture historical conceptualization of the Classical period in Messenia. The scarce material record that nevertheless exists is associated with religion. It is striking that the religious life of the helots is so absent from the primordial conceptualizations, especially if we keep in mind that religious studies have traditionally held a strong position in classics.

Let me begin with the fragmentary literary sources about the religious life of the helots. It is obvious that the Spartan perspective dominates. The most common remark about the helots is in connection with the ‘krypteia’ (Pl. Leg. 633B-C; Plut. Lyc. 28; Plut. Cleom. 28). Krypteia was an institutionalised assassination of helots. The exact mode of operations remains obscure, apart from that it was Spartans who secretly assassinated helots.361 A common view is to regard the krypteia as an initiation rite among the Spartans. The helots are here reduced to passive victims of an awesome religious practice. The krypteia is another part of the image of the Spartan society that elaborates on the tense relations between helots and Spartans.

The absence of the helots is also evident in Parker’s article from 1989 focusing on Spartan religion. Once again the perspective is on the dominating

360 Oliva 1971, 48.
361 Burkert 1985, 262.
group in Spartan society, namely the homoioi. The helots are only cursory mentioned in three instances. Parker, like Burkert above, also portrays the helots as passive victims. We are informed that the helots are obliged to mourn when Spartan kings died (Tyrtaios, West, GLP, fr. 7; Hdt. 6.58; Xen. Lac. 15.9).

Interestingly, Parker adheres to the distinction between Messenian and Lakonian helots made by Herodotos (6.58), since he notes that “perioikoi and helots from all Lakonia” participated in the funerals. The Messenian helots are thus reduced doubly; not only are they absent from the account, but once the helots are incorporated in the Spartan religion, it is only the Lakonian helots.

The helots surface again in connection with the festival of Hyakinthia. The Spartan perspective is again evident. In this festival the Spartans entertained their helots, and for a brief time the usual roles in the Spartan society were reversed, a religious ceremony with many parallels in ancient Greece. The reference by Plutarch (Lyc. 28.8f.) that the helots were forced to perform ridiculous songs and dances might have been in a religious context. In addition to the krypteia and the ridiculous songs mentioned by Plutarch, it is Myron’s (FGrH 106 F 2), mention of cruel treatments, and Thucydides’ (4.80.5) statement that the Spartan society was organised with a view to security against the helots, which are cited to verify the harsh conditions of the helots. It is from these accounts that the grave tensions between the helots and the Spartans are inferred.

Although the helots interacted mostly with each other, had their own hearths (a focus of private religious activities), and presumably had some religious life, there is no ancient literary evidence of the religious dimension of helotism. No helot shrines or festivals are noted. This certainly is a major reason for the scholarly silence about helot religion.

There is, however, one religious dimension in which the helots surface more often, namely the act of supplication. Like everybody else in ancient Greece, the helots had the right to be suppliants and seek safe haven in sanctuaries.

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363 Parker 1989, 145. See Pettersson 1992, 9-41, for an elaboration of the Hyacinthia. Pettersson 1992, 10, for this aspect. The ancient source is Polykrates (FGrH 588 F 1 (= Ath. Deipnosophistae 4, 139cf)).
364 Parker 1989, 145. This silence about the helots can be contrasted with the situation of the perioikoi. They had their own shrines and festivals, and the Spartan religious particularities are mirrored by the perioikoi.
365 Noted by Parker 1989, 145. He makes the following unnecessary remark. “The helot had his own hearth, and lived amid other helots of the same nationality who also had their own hearths.” My emphasis.
Thucydides (1.128.1) mentions that many Spartans believed that the earthquake of 465/4 was a punishment for their sacrilegious act of dragging helot suppliants out of the temple of Poseidon at Tainaron and killing them. On a fundamental level, this shows at least that the helots, in the eyes of the Spartans, did have suppliant rights.

Perhaps typically, then, the silence on the helots is only broken when the Spartans are concerned with them. The absence of the everyday religious life of the helots in the culture historical conceptualizations, based on the ancient sources, also contributes to the upholding of the generic image of hostile relations between the helots and the Spartans. The helots are only mentioned in the exceptional cases, when the Spartans are concerned with them. The religious dimension is thus also used to enforce the essentialism of the culture historical and primordial models.

The Spartan perspective is further enforced since culture historical elaborations on Messenian religion do not include the period when Messenia was part of the Spartan state. That is, Messenian religion is a topic only when Messenia is an independent political entity. The lack of interest in the ancient sources is also reflected in the primordial conceptualizations. However, due to the strong tenet of continuity, the attested cults from the earlier and later periods, when Messenia was independent, are perceived as survivals. The Messenians would thus have continued to practise these cults, or on a basic level at least kept the memory of them alive. In what way remains obscure, however.

The predominance of the Spartan perspective is less evident in the archaeological elaborations of Messenia. The Classical period in Messenia has not received much archaeological attention in its own right. The archaeological excavations have instead focused on the Bronze Age (in Messenia) and to a lesser degree on the Hellenistic period (in Messene). Furthermore, primarily cultic activities in Messenia have been investigated. The focus on Messene and the reuse of the Bronze Age tombs, noted above in *Proto-Messenians*, is also a determining factor in the conceptualization of the Classical period in Messenia. Themelis, the excavator of Messene, is governed by the notion of continuity in his analysis of this period. There are two categories of evidence — terracotta plaques, and architectural phases — on which he focuses. According to Themelis, a workshop in Messenia manufactured the terracotta plaques

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368 Themelis 2000, 25f. See above p. 69, esp. n. 239.
continuously in the Classical period.369 It is these plaques, beneath the building called Omega-Omega, that Themelis interprets as Spartan appropriation of local cult(s).370 Terracotta plaques and other categories of finds were also discovered beneath the Asklepieion, and they are associated with a building phase ranging from the early 4th to the late 4th/early 3rd century.371 Whether this building phase was initiated prior to or after the foundation of Messene remains unknown. Some of the finds associated with this phase are nevertheless dated to the 5th century.372 However, the major part of this phase dates after the founding of Messene. Themelis’ interpretation ends at the establishment of the chronology and an identification of the worshipped deities and heroes—Asklepios and a chthonic heroine beneath the Asklepieion, and Demeter and a variety of heroes and heroines under the building Omega-Omega.373 Put differently, the interpretation of the Classical period in Messene is limited to the establishment of chronologies and the identification of cults. Furthermore, it is the notion of continuity that governs Themelis’ analysis.374

The second focus of the archaeological activities from the Classical period is the traces of reuse at Bronze Age tombs. There is a considerable drop in the number of Bronze Age tombs that contain evidence from this period in comparison with earlier and later periods. Archaeological finds dating to the Classical period has been found at the following six sites:375 Volimidia Angelopoulos 10; Koukounara 4; Nichoria-Vathirema; Nichoria-Tholos F; Kopanaki; and Peristeria. Although there is a considerable chronological spread of the archaeological activities — Kopanaki was excavated in the 1920s, while most of the other sites were excavated in the 1960s, and some investigations were resumed in the 1980s — there is one notion that governs the interpretation of the Classical period. Both Valmin and Marinatos, who have made interpretations according to the primordial model, argue that the activities of the Classical period are local traditions that were kept alive during the Spartan occupation.376 Of the other sites it is only the reuse at Nichoria-Tholos F that has been interpreted.377 Nichoria-Tholos F was excavated by the Minnesota

370 Themelis 2000, 27. See above p. 69.
372 Themelis 2000, 19, 22.
373 Themelis 2000, 15, 17.
374 See also above pp. 67-70, and below pp. 157-61.
375 This number is based on Boehringer 2001, 309, table 16. See Table, pp. 72f., for references.
376 See above pp. 70f.
377 This is certainly due to the scarce 5th-century finds at Vathirema and Peristeria, see Table pp. 72f.
Messenian Expedition in the early 1970s. This archaeological expedition is often regarded as the first major archaeological expedition in Greece to have been influenced by the processual model. The influence is also evident on a general level, where for instance environmental factors are considered as important for the cultural development. However, when it comes to the interpretation of the activities in the Tholos F there are clear similarities with the interpretations of Valmin and Marinatos. The finds from the second half of the 5th century are thus regarded as “clear evidence for the practice of hero worship in this part of Messenia in Classical times. Perhaps this was a way of perpetuating local traditions in the face of Spartan occupation.” There is, however, a difference in relation to the primordial model in the sense that the notion of continuity is avoided. Put differently, the overall different theoretical aim of the Minnesota Messenian Expedition does not have a distinct and clear effect on the interpretation of this specific site.

Despite the greater variety of excavators and the wider chronological spread in the excavations of the Bronze Age tombs in Messenia, the interpretations from a culture historical perspective are united in a similar focus on continuity. The passive view of culture, enforced by the scarcity of finds and the political situation, results in conceptualizations that regard the Classical period in Messenia as a transition between periods of Messenian independence. In a sense, this confirms that archaeology is the handmaiden of history in classics. Archaeology is used to complement the political history.

**Exiles**

An important aspect of the history of Messenia is the notion of exile. A feature that recurs in the ancient accounts is that, at the end of every conflict between the Messenians and the Spartans, some Messenians are exiled. Messenian waves of exiles are mentioned after both the 1st and the 2nd Messenian War. Likewise, after the helot rebellion in the 460s a group goes into exile, ending up in Naupaktos. Only a few basics are known about this group. We can note, initially, that they are persistently denominated as Messenians. In addition, it is the active role of the Athenians that stands out. For instance, the Athenians settle the Messenians in Naupaktos. Furthermore our main source, Thucydides, focuses on the military activities of this group. The Messenians appear as loyal
allies to the Athenians during the second part of the 5th century and participate in several campaigns under the command of Athenian generals (Thuc. 2.25.4, 2.90.3f., 3.75.1, 3.81.2, 3.95.2, 3.107.1, 3.107.4, 3.109.1, 3.112.4, 7.31.2, 7.57.8). This is perhaps also a suitable place to call attention to the decisive role of the Messenians from Naupaktos in the Pylos-campaign of the 420s.

Besides the one-sided perspective of Thucydides, another category of evidence is associated with the Messenians in Naupaktos, namely inscriptions. Before I elaborate on the inscriptions that are explicitly associated with the Messenians in Naupaktos, I want to draw attention to two inscriptions associated with the helot rebellion in the 460s. The ‘Methanioi’ dedicated two spear butts, one found at the Apollo Korythos sanctuary in Messenia and the other in Olympia. Versakis argued that the inhabitants from Methana in the Argolid dedicated both. This proposal has met with some scepticism since the spear butt in Olympia commemorates a victory over the Lakedaimonians and the other a victory over the Athenians. Furthermore, this makes it hard to explain why people from Methana would dedicate at an insignificant sanctuary in Messenia. Jeffery, in 1961, dated both spear butts to the first quarter of the 5th century and argued that the spear butt in Messenia was dedicated by the perioikic settlement of Mothone. This view has changed in recent years; since Bauslaugh in 1990 made a convincing case that the Messenians dedicated the spear butts. The earlier conclusions were based on the letter-forms; he argues instead for a lower date and associates these dedications with the helot revolt in the 460s. The seemingly contradictory notion that one spear butt commemorated a victory over the Athenians and the other a victory over the Lakedaimonians, is solved by Bauslaugh’s proposal to associate them with the early phase of the rebellion, before the Athenians were sent back home by the Spartans. In effect, Bauslaugh questions the method, used by Jeffery, of dating inscriptions on the basis of the forms of the letters. He down-dates the inscriptions and finds a suitable political context. The questioning, however, is done from inside the culture historical model. That is, Bauslaugh does not question the practice of this kind of history, but instead aims to correct the

382 Also Diodoros (12.42.5, 13.48.6).
384 E.g. Jeffery 1990, 177, 182. See Bauslaugh 1990, 661 n. 2 for references. Published already in 1882.
385 Versakis 1916, 115.
387 Bauslaugh 1990, esp. 667f.
388 Bauslaugh’s method is very similar to Dillon 1995, see above p. 81, who also raises doubts about Jeffery’s method. They reach, however, different conclusions: Dillon updates his inscription, and Bauslaugh downdates his.
picture. Tellingly, his solution is to find a suitable political context. Thus, once again the political context is governing, indeed determining, the interpretation of the inscriptions.

The spear butts have been associated with the helot rebellion that eventually resulted in a wave of Messenian exiles to Naupaktos. There are, however, other inscriptions, from Delphi and Olympia, that have been associated with this group of exiles. An inscription at Delphi has, by Daux in 1937, been argued to be a dedication of the Messenians, dated to c. 455 and commemorating their actions against the ‘Akarnanians’ and ‘Oiniadai’ (Paus. 4.25-26.1; Thuc. 1.111.3). Another category of inscriptions is the dedications made by the Messenians (‘Messenioi’) jointly with the Naupaktians at Delphi and Olympia. The famous statue of Nike by the sculptor Paionios accompanied the Olympian inscription. This dedication is generally associated with the Pylos-campaign, and dated to the 420s. The Delphic inscription is also dated to the later part of the 5th century, and the Archidamian War (431-21) has been proposed as a suitable context. Lastly, a fragmentary inscription found at Naupaktos regulates the conditions of co-existence between the Messenian exiles and the local Naupaktians, stating that they should live under the protection of Athena Polias.

In other words, during the second half of the 5th century the Messenians, primarily from Naupaktos, made dedications at the pan-Hellenic sanctuaries. The scholarly concern with them has focused on linking them to known events in the political history of Greece. One basic conclusion found on both sides of my heuristic boundary between primordialists and instrumentalists can in general be inferred from these inscriptions; namely, that the exiled Messenians were identifying themselves as Messenians. However, beyond this basic conclusion there are also differences between the primordialist and instrumentalist interpretations of this evidence. The primordial interpretations focus on the notion of preservation in their analyses of the Messenians in exile. Since the latter held on to the designation and persistently identified themselves as Messenians, thus anxious to be distinguished from the

389 Daux 1937, 67-72; Jeffery 1990, 205f., is sceptic to Daux’s proposed date. Figueira 1999, 214, 237 n. 12, however raises the possibility that it commemorates the helot rebellion in the 460s. See below Becoming Messenian for Figueira’s position.
393 See below Becoming Messenian for the instrumentalist discussions.

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other inhabitants of Naupaktos, the primordialists argue, that they preserved their identity. This is, however, not necessarily restricted to the short period in exile but to the Messenians in general. Illustrative is Roebuck, who argues that the evidence for the exiled Messenians confirms that the Messenians in general “despite the occupation of the country, preserved a sense of their nationality” during the Classical period.\textsuperscript{394}

There remains to make a cursory remark that, when the Peloponnesian War ended in 404 with a Spartan victory, the Messenians in Naupaktos and a second more anonymous group in Kephallenia were expelled from these settlements. They found their way to Sicily and Kyrene (Diod. Sic. 14.34.2-6, 14.78.5-6). These dispersed groups of exiled Messenians returned when Messene was founded in 369 (Paus. 4.26.5).

Loyalties

Although the Spartan society is often conceptualized as relatively static, consisting of fixed social categories (the Spartans, the perioikoi and the helots), there is also another side. There are indications of internal ranking within these categories, as well as mobility between them. The differentiation and mobility was due to a variety of factors. It is perhaps easiest to begin with the homoioi, which after all is the best-known group. The homoioi were equals ideally — but not in reality. Differentiations within this group were based on a number of principles. First, among the homoioi were the two Spartan kings. There was thus a distinction among the equals based on a hereditary principle. This dividing-line was expressed politically, and there are several incidents mentioned where a Spartan king is involved in a power struggle against the other homoioi, represented politically by the ephors (Hdt. 6.75; Thuc. 1.128-134). Other notions through which there was a social stratification in the agoge but also among the homoioi at large, were physical skills and bravery. Competition was important in the Spartan society and winners were highly esteemed. There was also a differentiation according to age. Old persons were respected in the Spartan society, and this was above all articulated through the political institution, ‘gerousia’. The static image of Sparta can thus be contrasted with these hierarchizations among the equals. In addition to the above-mentioned notions, which presumably were present from the introduction of the Lykourgan system, the development resulted in stratification along other notions, too. The equal distribution of kleroi, which was the ultimate

\textsuperscript{394} Roebuck 1941, 27.
foundation for the equality, in reality did not function perfectly. From the late 5th century, in particular after the end of the Peloponnesian War in 404, and onwards there seems to have been a concentration of kleroi, and wealth, among the Spartans. In other words, there was stratification among the homoioi according to the notion of wealth.395

Since the social aspects were of less interest to the ancient authors, differentiations among the homoioi and social mobility between the various groups are only occasionally mentioned. Nevertheless, these processes can be inferred from denominations of various sub-groups. The term ‘hypomeiones’, inferiors, (Xen. Hell. 3.3.6) refers to Spartans who were not regarded as homoioi in the fullest sense. Although from a distant perspective the hypomeionoi could be regarded as homoioi, their inability to fulfil their obligations meant that they were not regarded as peers by the other homoioi. However, neither were they incorporated among the lower-ranked groups of perioikoi or helots — there was a limitation to mobility. This group had thus moved downwards in the social hierarchy.396 Hypomeiones are attested once in the ancient sources, in connection with the so-called conspiracy of Kinadon (Xen. Hell. 3.3.4-11). Kinadon was an inferior who planned a rebellion in 398. The conspiracy was betrayed, however. I will not elaborate further on this event, since it is ignored in the discussion about the Messenians from a primordial perspective, except with regard to two aspects.397 Once again, a potential internal strife is initiated by the Spartans. The helots, together with other groups in Sparta, are mentioned as siding with Kinadon, but they are not the leaders of the conspiracy. However, it was one of the persons whom Kinadon entrusted that betrayed him, which shows at least that the inferior groups were divided.

Hypomeiones is not the only term used to designate smaller groups that did not fit the crude categorization in the Spartan society. ‘Mothakes’ (Xen. Hell. 5.3.9; Phylarchos FGrH 81 F 43 (= Athenaeus 6.271ef); Plut. Cleom. 8.1) was also used to designate a group somewhere inbetween the Spartans and the helots. Their exact origin, which has received some attention, whether bastards of Spartan fathers and helot mothers or freed helots brought up as foster-brothers to the Spartans, remains unsolvable.398 The four terms ‘aphetai’, ‘adespotoi’,

395 I follow, roughly, Finley 1975, 164-7, see below Holistic Helots. See also Oliva 1971, 178f. David 1979, 240 n. 1 and n. 2, collects the ancient references.
396 Oliva 1971, 177f.
397 Cf. Oliva 1971, 192f.; Hooker 1989, 126f.; Chrimes 1949, 354, the Messenians are absent from these accounts. Chambers 1977/78, ignores the conspiracy. Fuks 1962, 257, characterises it as the most dangerous revolutionary movement the Spartans had to face.
‘erykteres’ and ‘desposionautai’ (Myron of Priene FGrH 106 F 1 (= Athenaeus 6.271f)) refer to free(d) helots. These terms remain enigmatic; the exception is desposionautai which is usually associated with some kind of naval duty.\footnote{Oliva 1971, 170-2.} Noteworthy is that all these terms, with the exception of mothakes, are only attested once in the ancient sources, and their fragmentary context invalidates anything but the inference that there was social mobility in the Spartan society.

Despite their limited value, these terms at least indicate that there were helots loyal to the Spartan state. This undermines the crude image of the helots as enemies within, perpetually ready to rebel against the Spartans. Other indications of helot compliance with their situation, and of Spartan entrustment of them, emerge in the ancient accounts of the Spartan military. Although military service was associated with political rights during the Classical period in ancient Greece, slaves and other non-citizen groups were utilised in armies. Sparta was, in this respect too, an extreme case. In no other Greek state from this period do we have an image of such grave tensions between the slaves and the citizens as in Sparta, but simultaneously no other Greek state used its slaves and subject population to such an extent in its military. The basic function of the helots in the Spartan army was as ‘hypaspistai’, batmen. They were personal servants to the Spartan hoplites, carrying their master’s weapons and attending them in various ways during the campaigns (Hdt 7.229; Thuc. 4.8.9). The exact tasks varied, of course, with the situation; Herodotos (7.229) for instance mentions that a helot led his blinded master back to the battlefield at Thermopylae. The helots were also assigned to different tasks collectively: they were ordered to set fire to a sacred grove (Hdt. 6.80); collect the spoils after the Battle of Plataiai (Hdt. 9.80); and carry the wounded off the battlefield, acting as stretcher-bearers (Xen. Hel. 4.5.14). The helots were probably armed, but whether they fought, and if so how they were organised, is a more controversial question. Xenophon (Lac. 12.4) mentions that helots were kept away from the arms in military camps. Herodotos (9.28), on the other hand, mentions that the 35 000 helots in the Battle of Plataiai were light-armed.\footnote{The number of helots has been questioned, e.g. Lazenby 1985, 100-102. See however below pp. 250f. Following the number of Herodotos there would be 7 helots to 1 Spartan. It should also be noted that helots were killed in the Battle of Plataiai. Herodotos (9.85) mentions that they were buried in a specific tomb. Helots were also killed at Thermopylae (Hdt. 8.25).} Nevertheless, there is a tenet in the ancient sources that delimits helot activities in the Spartan army to mirror their position as slaves in society.
However, there is also another, partly contrasting, thread. In the preceding paragraph (above) the 5th century, in a wide sense, was regarded as static and no consideration was taken to a possible development. However, there was a definite change from the mid-420s, and helots were armed during the Peloponnesian War. Seven hundred helots were armed as hoplites in 424 and were sent on a campaign to northern Greece under the command of the Spartan king Brasidas (Thuc. 4.80.5). These ‘brasideioi’, as they are known, were manumitted after the campaign (Thuc. 5.34.1). Thucydides (5.34.1) mentions also a second group of emancipated helots, the ‘neodamodeis’, whose freedom also is associated with military service. Both these groups were used in military activities even after their manumission. They are for instance mentioned as fighting in the Battle of Mantinea in 418 (Thuc. 5.71.3, 5.72.3). Neodamodeis were sent on several military expeditions. The Spartan aid to the Syracusans in 413 during the Peloponnesian War consisted of neodamodeis and helots (Thuc. 7.58.3). Xenophon (Hell. 3.1.4, 3.4.2-3, 5.2.24) mentions three Spartan military expeditions, dated to the 390s and 380s, in which neodamodeis were deployed. Neodamodeis were also used in garrison duties, they formed part of the Spartan garrison in Byzantion in 408 (Xen. Hell. 1.3.15). The neodamodeis appear for the last time in connection with the Theban invasion of Lakonia in 370. They participated in the defence of Lakonia, and a garrison was composed by neodamodeis (Xen. Hell. 6.5.24). The neodamodeis are only attested from the 420s to 370.\footnote{Oliva 1971, 166, 166-70, for references. Typical are Willetts 1954 and Robins 1958 who both try to disentangle the exact nature of the neodamodeis.} In other words during this period some helots, and ex-helots, were not only armed but occasionally also armed as hoplites. This contrasts with the above image of the deployment of the helots in the Spartan army. Helots were not only batmen — they were trusted with weapons and fought for the Spartan society. At least some helots were loyal to their masters. Furthermore, it seems that military service was a way in which the helots could be emancipated.

A scholar that has elaborated on the Spartan army from a clear culture historical perspective is Lazenby. He focuses on the organisation of the army and on how specific battles were fought, and can thus be characterised as a military historian. Lazenby’s account, from 1985, is propelled by the characteristic obsession to fixate events on the spatio-temporal grid. In addition, other features in his publication indicate a primordial perspective. He accepts the Dorian invasion,\footnote{Lazenby 1985, 63.} and devotes a considerable part of his narrative to
establishing the origins of the Spartan army organisation, but also of the Spartan society.\textsuperscript{403} It is no surprise, then, that the silence on the helots among the ancient authors is taken at face value by Lazenby. He stresses repeatedly that the helots were ineffective as soldiers.\textsuperscript{404} Put differently, Lazenby enforces an essentialistic notion of the helots as a collective doomed to servitude. The notion of a generic enmity between the helots and the Spartans is important in Lazenby’s explanation of the origins of the brasideioi and the neodamodeis. He accepts that these two groups were armed and fought in battles, for instance in Mantinea in 418, despite their helot origin.\textsuperscript{405} The reason helots were armed and sent on military expeditions far away from home was that the Spartans feared helot unrest, which is supported by Thucydides (4.80.2).\textsuperscript{406} According to this logic, to send potential rebels on military expeditions abroad was a way to prevent outbreaks of revolt. It is the enmity between the groups that is the direct reason for this development. There is also a secondary implicit reason. During the second half of the 5th century the actual number of Spartans declined considerably (this is the famous ‘oliganthropia’, mentioned by Aristotle (Pol. 1270a 12) and Plato (Leg. 780B)) which has been regarded as a problem. The helots were needed to fill out the ranks in the Spartan army. The ultimate reason for the break-down of the Spartan system, which was a precondition for the Spartans to arm helots, is in Lazenby’s view the permanent menace of the helots as well as the never-ending wars the Spartans fought during the 5th century.\textsuperscript{407} The development in the Spartan army is thus, both directly and indirectly, explained by the enmity of the helots towards the Spartans. It should be mentioned that other scholars share Lazenby’s position, too. Oliva, Kagan, and Cartledge, to mention a few, argue along the same lines.\textsuperscript{408} It is striking that the ethnic divisions are absent in this discussion. Although the helot rebellion in the 460s is conceptualized as an ethnic conflict, ethnicity ceases to be a relevant issue in the discussions about helots in the Spartan army. The helots, both as a menace and as loyal groups in the army, are conceptualized as one coherent group by these scholars.\textsuperscript{409}

\textsuperscript{403} Lazenby 1985, 63-80.
\textsuperscript{404} Lazenby 1985, 30, 100-2, 119. See however below Helots — the other Greeks.
\textsuperscript{405} Lazenby 1985, 128.
\textsuperscript{406} Lazenby 1985, 47.
\textsuperscript{407} Lazenby 1985, 59.
\textsuperscript{408} Oliva 1971, 164, 169f.; Kagan 1974, 288; Cartledge 1987, 39f.
\textsuperscript{409} Welvei 1974, 160, is an exception when he claims that only Lakonian helots could be despotionautai.
In my view there is particularly one narrative, namely Thucydides’ (4.3-23, 4.26-41) account of the Pylos episode, in which the complexity of the relations between the helots and the Spartans emerges.\textsuperscript{410} There are several, partly contrasting strands, with regard to the helots. At one end of the spectrum are the helots that were part of the Spartan contingent trapped on Sphakteria together with their masters (Thuc. 4.8.9). In addition to the loyal helots in the Spartan army, some other helots responded to the promise of rewards and smuggled in provisions to the trapped Spartans on Sphakteria, which can be seen as an expression of another form of loyalty (Thuc. 4.26.5-6). However, there is also another side to this narrative. The existence of the fort, held by the Athenians and the Messenians from Naupaktos, facilitated expressions of discontent. Many helots deserted to it (Thuc. 5.56.2-3). Perhaps worst was the Spartan fear of new helot uprisings as a result of the fortification (Thuc. 4.41.2-3), which led to two reactions (Thuc. 4.80). First, although the exact chronological relation to the Pylos events remains unclear, the Spartans rounded up and slaughtered 2000 helots. A second consequence of the Spartan fear, still according to Thucydides, was the armament of 700 helots that were sent on an expedition to Thrace under Brasidas.

It is interesting to note how these events are explained. Scholars that conceptualize the Spartan society as governed according to a generic hostility between the Spartans and helots, have greater difficulties than those that make a distinction between Lakonian and Messenian helots. Thucydides’ narrative is contradictory from the first perspective.\textsuperscript{411} An explanation according to this logic is to enforce the enmity between the Spartans and helots. The expedition of Brasidas is regarded as a way to disarm potential rebels.\textsuperscript{412} I find this explanation ironic, since it means that the Spartans would arm the very same persons they feared. Noteworthy is that there are no attested revolts or desertions among helots or ex-helots (read neodamodeis and brasideioi) when they were on military expeditions. Although there are indications that the neodamodeis had a bad reputation as soldiers (Xen. \textit{Hell.} 6.1.14), on the whole they seem to have performed their tasks. If they were driven by hatred to their masters it is strange that they did not seize one of these opportunities; on some expeditions the only present Spartan was one of the kings. This usually remains unaddressed, although an answer has been articulated lately, namely that the

\textsuperscript{410} See also above Pylos, 420s.

\textsuperscript{411} Talbert 1989, 24 n. 16, notes the contradiction explicitly.

\textsuperscript{412} See above n. 408.
helots had families back home that functioned as hostages, and therefore they complied.\textsuperscript{413}

The other group of scholars that make a distinction between the Messenian and Lakonian helots explain Thucydides’ narrative differently. In their eyes the brasideioi, and the helots on Sphakteria, were Lakonian helots; while the helots that deserted, the 2000 that were slaughtered, and the helots the Spartans feared were all Messenians.\textsuperscript{414} However, Thucydides never makes an explicit distinction between Messenian and Lakonian helots. In fact, the opposite can be claimed. In his account of the helot rebellion in the 460s, he claims (Thuc. 1.101.2) that most of the helots were descendants of the Messenians. We should also keep in mind that there are several other accounts of social tensions in Sparta initiated by the kings or inferior Spartans that tend to be omitted in the explanations of Thucydides’ narrative.

**Summarising remarks**

There are a couple of fundamental assumptions that unite the various scholarly positions in this chapter. To begin with, there is a passive view on culture. That is, the various literary sources are read as transmitters of reality in some sense. Inconsistencies are not due to authoritative strategies or narratological aspects, but simple errors. Since the aim of scholarship is to find out what actually happened, inconsistencies and contradictions in the sources need to be reconciled. They are a major problem since they obscure what actually happened. Unfortunately, however, scholarship in the culture historical model tends to end once it fixates events on the spatio-temporal grid.

The notion of national independence is also fundamental. That is, national, political, and ethnic units are regarded as the prime analytical units. This notion is important in several respects. One of the major reasons Messenia is so absent from the ancient sources is in my view that it was an integrated part of the Spartan state. Focusing on the political history, as the ancient sources do, results in a negligence of the subjugated groups. This biased perspective in the sources influences the culture historical conceptualization of the Classical period in Messenia, and it is in particular political events that are analysed. Snodgrass’ positivistic fallacy comes to mind here, since what scholars regard as important

\textsuperscript{413} Noted explicitly by Jordan 1990, 49 n. 62; Hunt 1998, 18.

\textsuperscript{414} Chambers 1977/78; Roobaert 1977 are the most explicit proponents of this view. Parker 1989 and Strassler 1990, are two other proponents though less explicit.
is what is observable. The primacy of the national units is also evident in the archaeological conceptualization (focusing on religion). The Classical period in Messenia is conceptualized as a period of transition. The notion of continuity is fundamental, and the archaeological finds are either interpreted as indications that Messenians preserved a local culture during the Spartan period — thus in effect the archaeological culture proves ethnic continuity — or that the Spartans, being the national/political entity in control of Messenia, appropriated the local culture. Either way, precedence is given to the political boundaries. Although in many accounts the focus is on specific details, Childe’s mosaic of cultures lurks in the background.

Another important notion is essentialism. Ethnic, national and social groups are perceived as having some particular characteristics. That is, a denomination not only characterises but also determines the actions of the individuals in a group. However, this does not mean that scholarly differences do not exist. There are in particular two relevant positions. A common conceptualization is that the Spartan society was fundamentally governed by the enmity between the helots and the Spartans. The helots, in an essentialistic manner, are reduced to being enemies within, perpetually ready to rebel. Put bluntly, the actions of all helots are determined by their hostility to the society in which they lived. In this case, ethnicity is not the prime category since other social categorizations are regarded as more determining. However, the conceptualization of the social groups is primordial so to speak, since these are regarded as static, fixed and unchangeable.

It is easier for the second group of scholars, who make a distinction between the Messenian and Lakonian helots, to explain the ancient accounts. There are accounts, albeit fragmentary, indicating friendly relations between helots and Spartans. These are associated with the relations between Spartans and Lakonian helots. The notion of ethnicity is more determining for this group of scholars. The preservation of a Messenian ethnic identity is considered to override the helot identity. One effect, paradoxical perhaps, is that the generic enmity between helots and Spartans is played down. The Spartans had problems with the Messenians, not the helots, according to these scholars. Yet, ethnic identities are conceptualized as static, fixed and unchangeable. Put differently, the increased density of terms in the ancient sources results in a greater variety of denominations. The main difference between the two groups of scholars concerns which identity is given precedence and where the

415 Snodgrass 1987, 37f.
analytical boundaries are drawn. The various groups are, however, conceptualized similarly.

One aspect remains to be noted. Asking one kind of question and focusing on some aspects necessarily implies that other features are excluded. This is illustrated in the conceptualizations of Messenia during the Classical period by the absence of the perioikoi. This social group in the Spartan society, which was somewhere in between the Spartans and the helots, is not integrated in these discussions. The occasional remarks about the perioikoi are not part of the explanatory schemes, which are governed by the polarity between the Spartans and the helots, or the Spartans and the Messenians.

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416 See also below Becoming Messenian.
Messenian Independence

This chapter deals with the culture historical, or primordial, conceptualizations of Messenia from 371 to 146. The chronological limitations are based on the political history. The Battle of Leuktra in 371 is a watershed in the history of Messenia, since Sparta’s defeat lead to the founding of Messene a year later. Messene and gradually Messenia became thus an independent political entity. Political independence is a fundamental notion for the culture historical conceptualization of the past. Neither is 146 arbitrary, since mainland Greece politically became a Roman province during this year.

Due to the precedence of political history, I will also begin this chapter with this aspect. This will be followed by a section elaborating on the social history of Messenia. To be more precise, due to the fragmentary attention to social aspects in the ancient literary evidence, which is mirrored among scholars with culture historical perspectives, this will in effect be an account of internal political strife in Messenia. Archaeology and religion are again intimately associated with each other; it is through these notions that social aspects are conceptualized, and therefore they will be treated together. Lastly, there is one major exception to the chronological framework. An inscription regulating the mysteries at Andania dated to 92/1 BC is often used in the discussions about Messenian religion, and therefore will be dealt with in this chapter.

Political history

The 5th century was to some extent defined by a long power struggle between Sparta and Athens. With the Spartan victory, which ended the Peloponnesian War in 404, the political landscape of the Greek world changed. The bipolar power struggle was replaced by a power struggle in which several political entities played important roles. Besides Sparta and Athens (which soon again became a major political actor), also Thebes, or the Boiotian League, was for a decade, from 371 to 362, a dominating political actor. The Persian Empire played also a more active role by providing financial means for the seemingly endless military campaigns. A basic driving-force during the 4th century seems to have been that the various states aimed to keep each other in check. This resulted in countless alliances, more or less short-lived, between various states that aimed to hinder another state from becoming too dominant. This
eventually led to the gradual ascendancy of Macedonia during the second half of the 4th century.

The founding of Messene

The single event that facilitated the independence of Messene was the Battle of Leuktra in 371 (Xen. Hell. 6.4.3-15). The Theban victory, under the leadership of Epaminondas, reduced in effect Sparta to a second-rate power on mainland Greece. The antagonism between Sparta and Thebes was, however, evident also before the Battle of Leuktra, as indicated by the quarrel at a peace conference preceding the battle (Xen. Hell. 6.3.19; Plut. Ages. 28.1-3; Paus. 9.13.2; Nep. Epam. 6.4). Despite their defeat, the Spartans challenged Thebes’ power by invading Arkadia the following year (Xen Hell. 6.5.10-22). This was the pretext that Epaminondas needed to send an army against the Spartans. After some hesitation, the Thebans were persuaded to invade Lakonia. The Lakonian countryside was ravaged, but the invading army failed to capture Sparta (Xen. Hell. 6.5.23-32; Xen. Ages. 2.24; Diod. Sic. 15.62.5, 15.64.1-65.6; Plut. Ages. 31.1-2, 32.1-8).

It is interesting to note the actions of the subjugated groups in Lakonia.417 The perioikoi, foremost from northern Lakonia, sided with Epaminondas and it was they that persuaded him to invade (Xen. Hell. 6.5.25). The helots, including emancipated helots, on the other hand are recorded to be loyal to the Spartans. Neodamodeis were part of the garrison at Oion (Xen. Hell. 6.5.24), and up to 6000 helots are said to have responded to the Spartan promise of manumission if they defended Sparta (Xen. Hell. 6.5.28-9). But, again, there are indications of more differentiated reactions. Perioikoi are also reported to be part of the Spartan defence (Xen. Hell. 6.5.32). The massive articulation of helot loyalty had also another side to it; the massive response caused fear among the Spartans of a helot revolt (Xen. Hell. 6.5.28-9), and there are also indications that many helots deserted to the invading army (Plut. Ages. 32.7).

After the failure to capture Sparta, Epaminondas continued his campaign to Messenia, and initiated the founding of Messene in 369 (Diod. Sic. 15.66.1; Paus. 4.26.5-7, 4.27.5-6, 9.15.6; Plut. Ages. 34.1; Plut. Pel. 24.5).418 Epaminondas was soon called back to Thebes, but left a garrison to ensure the foundation of Messene (Diod. Sic. 15.67.1). The role of the Argives and Arkadians, allied with

417 Diodoros (e.g. 15.52.5, 15.64, 15.65) omits the helots and the perioikoi in his account.
418 Interestingly, the authoritative ancient source for this period, Xenophon, does not mention the founding of Messene. Delebecque 1957, 459 n. 31, has placed the omission between Xen. Hell. 6.5.32 and 6.5.33.
Thebes at the time, is also mentioned (Paus. 4.26.7). The Messenians are, of course, part of these narratives. A couple of aspects are noted. One is the return of the Messenian exiles from Italy, Sicily, Libya and other places (Paus. 4.26.5; Diod. Sic. 15.66.6). These together with the helots in Messenia constituted the bulk of the population in the new city (Isoc. Archidamus 28). In addition, the possibility has been noted that persons, or small groups, of Epaminondas’ army — for instance some of the perioikoi that had sided with him — also settled in Messene (Lycurg. Leoc. 62). Another aspect that plays a prominent role is the religion of the Messenians. One feature of this is the meticulous accounts of which deities and heroes were summoned during the founding of Messene (Paus. 4.27.6). However, there is also another facet, at least in Pausanias’ account, which is the most elaborate: the location of the new city is finally determined by the find of a brazen urn, buried by Aristomenes and containing the secrets of the mysteries of Andania (Paus. 4.20.4, 4.26.6–8).

One proponent of the primordial conceptualization of the past is Buckler, who in 1980 studied the Theban hegemony of the 4th century. Buckler focuses on the political and military history, and several characteristic tenets of the culture historical model are present. Illustrative is the attention paid to chronology and the establishment of an exact chain of events. The various movements of troops during and in between battles are perhaps the most dominating features in Buckler’s conceptualization of the past. The fixation of events on the spatio-temporal grid is thus a driving force for Buckler. However, in Buckler’s account there is also one other notion which is often associated with the culture historical model but which so far has not played a prominent role in my own account. The focus on political history is often a focus on political leaders. Buckler stresses the role of Epaminondas. In effect, history takes the course it does due to the genius of one political leader. He comes up with the idea to found Messene, and it is his actions that result in the hegemonic position of Thebes. Buckler’s conceptualization of the past closely follows the ancient sources, at least in the sense that they share the same focus, namely that of the actions of the political leaders. Again, this is a passive view on culture, and the ancient accounts are taken at face value. The primordial

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419 The Arkadians commemorated their participation in the founding of Messene in Delphi by erecting a monument (Paus. 10.10.5).
420 For the mysteries of Andania, see below pp. 161-3.
421 Buckler 1980, 233-42, for an establishment of an exact chronology. 46-69, for the Battle of Leuktra. 70-90, for the invasion of Lakonia and the founding of Messene. Buckler’s historiography is very similar to Lazenby 1985, see above pp. 114f.
422 Buckler 1980, 27f., 77, 87. See also below pp. 127f.
foundation of Buckler’s account is primarily evident in the implicit supposition that ethnic (and other social) identities are static, fixed and unchangeable. Buckler stresses, for instance, that “the helots would cheerfully welcome any foreign army”\(^{423}\) thus enforcing a notion of generic enmity between helots and Spartans, despite the fact that only the perioikoi are explicitly mentioned as siding with Epaminondas. Although helots deserted, the helots that defended Sparta are conveniently ignored. The Messenian identity is also perceived as static; due to their lack of political independence, the Messenians could not develop their identity, and instead their identity evolved around their past.\(^{424}\) In other words, political independence is crucial for the gradual development of national identities, in Buckler’s perspective.

A major dividing-line among the scholars in the previous chapter was between those who conceptualized the Spartan society as a society characterised by the hostility between the helots and the Spartans, and those who make a distinction between Messenian and Lakonian helots, the former being the root of all evil in the Spartan society while the latter were basically loyal with the Spartan society. Buckler does not make a distinction between Messenian and Lakonian helots. However, a scholar who adheres to a division between Messenian and Lakonian helots is Cartledge. He repeatedly stresses this difference in his publication from 1987, and argues that the founding of Messene was a “liberation of the Messenian Helots from Spartan ownership and control after some three centuries.”\(^{425}\) It should be mentioned that the difference is not explicitly noted in the ancient sources. The essentialistic characterisations of the ethnic groups are, however, taken one step too far by Cartledge in 1989. He argues that the enmity of the Messenian helots was so dominating and driving that they revolted immediately upon hearing the news of Epaminondas’ invasion of Lakonia.\(^{426}\) It should be noted that there are no indications of this revolt in the ancient sources — Cartledge infers this. In effect, this is a logic conclusion in accordance with the theoretical assumptions of Cartledge.\(^{427}\)

\(^{423}\) Buckler 1980, 76.
\(^{424}\) Buckler 1980, 86f.
\(^{425}\) Cartledge 1987, 35. He is very keen to determine whether it is Lakonian or Messenian helots he refers to in his accounts of these events, also e.g. Cartledge 1987, 234.
\(^{426}\) Cartledge and Spawforth 1989, 5. The Lakonian helots are, of course, characterised as loyal to the Spartan state on the same page. Although Cartledge does not substantiate his claim, Xen. Hell. 7.2.2. comes close to giving him support.
\(^{427}\) See also above p. 102.
Map. Messenia
Messenian expansion and geography

Although Messene and its immediate surroundings became independent in 369, large parts of Messenia were still under Spartan control. Initially it seems that Messene was primarily a concern of the helots, and the perioikic settlements in Messenia were not incorporated in the new political structure. Independent Messene/Messenia expanded gradually, at the expense of Sparta, during the 4th century and came to incorporate most of Messenia in 338. The founding of Messene was a consequence of the Theban invasion of Lakonia. Messene was from the beginning also an ally with Thebes, the Argives and the Arkadians. This had a number of consequences.

Messene’s territorial expansion was due to the activities of her allies. The short-lived Arkadian League in the 360s attacked several Spartan controlled settlements in Messenia. The attack on Asine in 369 only resulted in looting and destruction (Xen. Hell. 7.1.25). However, the Arkadian attack on Kyparissia and Pylos in 365 meant that the territory of Messene expanded considerably (Diod. Sic. 15.77.4). Messenia west of the Pamisos River, with the exception of the lower Akritas peninsula, where Mothone and Asine remained loyal to Sparta, was now liberated and/or controlled by Messene. In addition, new settlements were founded. Korone seems also to have been founded in the 360s, and a Boiotian general was regarded as the ‘oikist’ (Paus. 4.34.5).428

The initial dependence of Messene on Thebes and the other allies is articulated in other ways, too. Messenian troops participated in several battles and military campaigns on the Theban or Arkadian side during the 360s (Xen. Hell. 7.1.29, 7.4.27), and Messenian troops fought in the Battle of Mantinea in 362 (Xen. Hell. 7.5.4-5; Diod. Sic. 15.85.2). Thebes championed the Messenian cause also diplomatically at the peace conferences in the 360s. Epaminondas had questioned the Spartan domination of Messenia already at the negotiations preceding the Battle of Leuktra in 371, and the attempts made to conclude a general peace on mainland Greece during the following decade failed due to one issue. The Thebans demanded that Messene should be included in the peace, and the Spartans refused to sign any peace treaty that in effect would mean the recognition of Messene’s independence (Xen. Hell. 7.1.27, 7.1.33-40, 7.1.36, 7.4.9; Diod. Sic. 15.70.2, 15.81.3; Plut. Pel. 30). Messene’s independence was also the crucial issue in the negotiations following the Battle of Mantinea in

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428 Roebuck 1941, 39, raises also the possibility that Haliartos (Ptol. Geog. 3.14.42) and Kolonides (Paus. 4.34.8) were founded during the 360s.
A general peace was concluded at this time, despite the Spartan refusal to sign it (Diod. Sic. 15.89.1-2; Plut. Ages. 35.2-4; Polyb. 4.33.8-9). Sparta’s refusal to recognise Messene’s independence determined in a sense the actions taken by Messene in the political scene of Greece.

When Epaminondas died in the Battle of Mantinea, Messene lost her strongest protector. Messene, due to the Spartan threat, needed other allies that could ensure its safety. During the following decades, Messene concluded treaties with Athens and Macedonia. Athens and Macedonia were involved, however, in a long power struggle and this resulted in intense diplomatic efforts that aimed at securing Messene, Megalopolis and Argos to one or the other side. Messene in the end sided with Macedonia, which became the dominating power in Greece after 346 (Paus. 4.28.1-2). After the Battle of Chaironeia in 338, and as a result of Philip II’s general policy to reduce the territories of regional powers in Greece, Messene’s territory was expanded (at the expense of Sparta) to include the whole of Messenia. Although Asine retained some self-governing, its ties with Sparta were broken. The expansion in particular affected the areas east of the Pamisos, and the territories of Kalamai and Dentheliatis were incorporated with Messene.

The diplomatic and military activities during the 4th century have, of course, received attention from modern scholars. From a pan-Hellenic perspective, the history of Messenia is of minor importance. The actions of the major powers such as Sparta, Athens, Thebes and Macedonia had more profound effects, and the interest is accordingly focused on these states. Messene is interesting primarily in its relations with one or several of the major states. The relevant ancient sources have a pan-Hellenic perspective and given the strong positivistic thread of ancient history it also dominates in modern scholarly accounts of the 4th century. A characteristic publication in this tradition is Ryder’s study from 1965. Ryder’s aim is to examine the political history of the 5th and 4th centuries and account for the “chronological order of the treaties”. In other words, Ryder aims to establish exactly what had happened and when it happened. Inconsistencies and discrepancies in the ancient record thus need

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429 The diplomatic activities are inferred from the speeches of Demosthenes. He was one of the strongest critics of Macedonia, and a member of a couple of embassies sent to the Peloponnesse (Dem. The Second Philippic 13, 15, 18-25; For The People of Megalopolis 9). Isokrates (Areopagiticus 10) argues against Demosthenes.
430 Roebuck 1941, 47-57. See also Roebuck 1979b, for the territorial adjustments made by Philip II in 338. In particular Roebuck 1979b, 142-7, for the reduction of Sparta.
432 Ryder 1965, 165-72.
to be reconciled. Terminological exactitude plays a decisive role in Ryder’s conceptualization of the past, and he is careful to define the ancient terms relevant to his study.433 The analytical entity that plays the most prominent role in Ryder’s narrative is the political states in ancient Greece. History in Ryder’s narrative is the history of clearly defined political entities. The few individuals that nevertheless surface are the political leaders.434 Although on one level it seems self-evident that a political history should focus on political entities and leaders, this focus nevertheless on another level reinforces history as a mosaic of cultures. The mere selection of perspective is also indicative of the theoretical model. The past is reduced to a mosaic of various political entities. This view on culture results also in remarks about ethnic groups. The Messenians, for instance, were “always a separate people”, according to Ryder.435 Thus, the governing notion about peoples (read ethnic groups) is that they are distinct, fixed and static.

A fundamental publication for this chapter is Roebuck’s dissertation from 1941, since it is the only study devoted to the history of Messenia during the Late Classical and Hellenistic periods. It is perhaps illustrative of the dominance of the positivistic, ‘what you see is important’, tenet in ancient history that we have only one study devoted to the history of a small state such as Messenia. Roebuck’s aim is to narrate the political history of Messenia from 369 to 146, that is the period during which Messenia was an independent political entity. In some respects the only difference between Ryder and Roebuck is that Roebuck has a different perspective. Roebuck’s exhaustive account of Messene’s activities on the political scene of Greece from 368 to 338 is fundamentally propelled by the need to establish exactly what happened.436 The diplomatic activities on an inter-state level are the backbone of Roebuck’s account. Exactitude is another important notion, and his elaboration on whether or not the territorial adjustments in 338 were made, officially, through the Hellenic League is illustrative.437

There are several other characteristic notions of the traditional culture historical model present in Roebuck’s account. The focus on the political leaders in the ancient sources is also reflected in Roebuck’s narrative, and

433 Ryder 1965, xi-xvii.
434 See Ryder 1965, 79-86.
435 Ryder 1965, 6 n. 2.
436 Roebuck 1941, 41-57. The difference can be illustrated by Roebuck’s elaboration of the Messenian attempts to be a member of the Delphic ‘amphiktiony’ in the 340s, which is omitted by Ryder.
437 Roebuck 1941, 55f. In either case the decision was ultimately made by Philip II.
Epaminondas' genius explains the founding of Messene.\textsuperscript{438} The notion of continuity is another prominent thread in Roebuck's account. Religion, in particular, is regarded as a static entity, and "the traditionally Messenian cults which had been kept alive by the helot population and the Messenians in exile were revitalized" when Messene was founded.\textsuperscript{439} This is not only restricted to the religious sphere, but to Messenian culture more generally since the Messenians managed to preserve a sense of national (read ethnic) identity during the Spartan occupation.\textsuperscript{440} Roebuck thus differentiates between different spheres. Religion and ethnic identities are static features that preserve culture, while the political sphere is perceived to change more rapidly. The development of history is thus explained through national categorizations since the essential characteristics of a people are materialised and result in political actions.

The obsession to pin events on the spatio-temporal grid often becomes, at least in the case of Messenian ancient history, a matter of reconciling primarily temporal contradictions in the ancient sources. The spatial uncertainties are less prominent on the whole. Nevertheless, topography becomes occasionally an important problem, focusing on the identification of settlements and/or geographic entities mentioned in the ancient sources. Topography is thus ultimately a problem of establishing an exact map of a region, or put differently, of determining the spatio(-temporal) grid. Granted the lack of interest in the region of Messenia shown in classics, I can appreciate the need for Roebuck to establish the topography of Messenia. Roebuck begins his study with an exhaustive account of the geography of Messenia. He establishes the borders of the region, identifies smaller areas in Messenia, and last but not least, he identifies settlements in Messenia.\textsuperscript{441} To identify the exact location of the ancient settlements might be a deceitful task, and this focus has its problems. The topographic elaboration ends once the location of settlements and borders of regions are identified. It is striking, however, that the topographic narrative is detached from the history of Messenia. The exact location of settlements is not incorporated into the historical account and thus does not influence it. The aim to fix an exact topography is also symptomatic of a culture historical perspective. In other words, despite its, at best, marginal role for the conceptualization of history, topography becomes an issue only because there

\textsuperscript{438} Roebuck 1941, 31, 33. See also above p. 122.
\textsuperscript{439} Roebuck 1941, 34.
\textsuperscript{440} Roebuck 1941, 27.
\textsuperscript{441} Roebuck 1941, 1-26.
are uncertainties as to which specific feature in a landscape a toponym refers. The pinpointing of exact locations of toponyms might ideally function as a basis for solving various problems in the historical narratives, but they are not used in this way.\footnote{Another topographic study is Valmin 1930. There is one major difference between Valmin 1930 and Roebuck 1941. Valmin pays greater attention to archaeological remains. Nevertheless, both focus on the verification of toponyms and share the same basic problems.}

The short note Treves wrote in 1944 about Roebuck’s publication can illustrate the range of opinions within the culture historical model. Treves raises some objections to Roebuck’s study, and one in particular is fundamental. He questions the possibility to write a history of Messene during this period on account of the fragmentary ancient sources. Roebuck fails, in Treves’ view, to write a history that is anything beyond a compiling of facts.\footnote{Treves 1944, 103.} History in Treves’ vocabulary is the history of a people. Roebuck’s account does not have a narrative focus of the development of the Messenian people, from servitude to freedom.\footnote{Treves 1944, 103f.} In other words, Treves articulates one of the stronger tenets in the culture historical model, namely the primacy of national identities for the conceptualization of the past. It should thus not come as a surprise that he regards ethnic groups to be static and unchangeable.\footnote{Treves 1944, 104.}

**Political relations**

That the ancient sources focus on the political events and major political actors, has been noted above. This has a profound effect on the conceptualization of the history of ancient Messenia, since Messenia is primarily mentioned *en passant* when the hegemonic powers are concerned with it. The political development at large in ancient Greece affected Messenia, too. Thus, Messenia is mentioned during the late 4th and the first half of the 3rd century when the Hellenistic kings, or their armies, are active in Messenia. With the increasing importance of the Leagues during the 3rd and 2nd centuries, and the increasing attention of the ancient sources to the Achaean and Aetolian Leagues, Messenia is noted when these political entities are concerned with it.

In addition to Messene’s relations with the dominant political powers, it is the relations with its neighbours, Sparta and Megalopolis, that are noted in the ancient sources. Messene’s relations with these two states differed considerably. Megalopolis was, like Messene, founded by Epaminondas in 370/69, and the relations between these two states were friendly from the very beginning. Both
were members of the same political bloc. A uniting factor was their tense relations with Sparta. The establishment of both these cities was done at the expense of Sparta. The Spartans did not accept their territorial losses, and there was a consistent Spartan contestation of Messene’s and Megalopolis’ independence throughout this period. The political bloc of Messene, Arkadia/Megalopolis and Argos seems, however, to have been unable to stand up to Sparta. Messene, often together with Arkadia/Megalopolis and Argos, sought additional allies with one of the major political powers in Greece. Messene’s relations with the immediate neighbours were more stable than with the major political powers. A distinct pattern is that Messene sided with other states that had hostile relations with Sparta. When the hegemonic powers declined or changed towards a more Sparta-friendly policy, Messene distanced or terminated the alliance and searched for other allies.

Political relations with Sparta

Perhaps the other most important state for the development of Messene was Sparta. With the founding of Messene, and the gradual territorial expansion, Sparta lost a vital part of its territory. The Spartan contestation was articulated in a number of different ways; the refusal to sign peace treaties during the 4th century has already been noted (see above Messenian expansion and geography). Additionally, this threat was also articulated in a more concrete form. Sparta attempted through military attacks to recapture the territories it had lost in 370/69. As soon as the Theban army withdrew, Sparta successfully attacked the perioikic settlements in northern Lakonia in 368 (Xen. Hell. 7.1.28). Sparta attacked Megalopolis in 351 (Diod. Sic. 16.39.1-7), after a failed diplomatic proposal for a general territorial restoration in Greece in 353 (Dem. For The People Of Megalopolis 16-17). The treaty between Messene and Athens mentioned by Pausanias (4.28.2) is regarded to have prevented the Spartans from attacking Messene, too. There are also indications that the Spartans were prepared to attack Messene in the 340s (sometime after the peace in 346), but

446 Arkadia was united for about a decade in the 360s. During this time Messene had friendly relations with the Arkadians. When the Arkadian League split, the Messenians had good relations with Megalopolis and the other settlements in Arkadia that sided with Megalopolis. The effect of this on the Spartan society has received considerable attention from scholars. I will refrain from a discussion of Sparta during the Hellenistic period, save for single events that have a direct impact on Messenia. See Cartledge and Spawforth 1989, 1-90; Oliva 1971, 201-318; Fuks 1962; David 1979; Shimron 1972; Badian 1994; Martinez-Lacy 1997; Mendels 1979; Robins 1958; to mention only a few.

447 Roebuck 1941, 48.
they were prevented by Macedonian assistance to Messene (Dem. The Second Philippic 13, 15).

The Spartan desire to restore the hegemonic position of the 6th and 5th centuries was also evident during the 3rd century. It should be mentioned that the political landscape in ancient Greece changed considerably during the Hellenistic period. The Hellenistic generals and royal houses became the major powers. The seemingly endless wars and shifting alliances between the kings and other states did, of course, also affect the relations between Sparta and Messenia. That is, more general developments triggered events. Yet there is a clear pattern; Sparta did, on several occasions, attempt to resume a stronger position. Typically the Spartan society was re-organised, and in association with these re-organisations Sparta became more militarily active. Although the Spartan military initiatives were not solely directed against Messenia, they nevertheless affected Messenia. Accordingly, Messene was attacked in the early 270s (Paus. 4.28.3, 8.6.3) in connection with the re-organisation of Spartan society by king Areus. Kleomenes, who also implemented a major program of re-organisation, also attacked Messene. These attacks in 218 and 217 were part of the Social War in which Messenia and Sparta stood in opposite camps (Polyb. 5.5.1, 5.91.3). Lastly, the self-proclaimed king Nabis (who, needless to say, also introduced a program of reforms) attacked Messene in 201 (Polyb. 16.13.3; Paus. 8.50.5; Plut. Phil. 12.4-5; Livy 34.32.16).

The Spartan contestation of Messenia did not, however, end with the military attacks. The most protracted struggle between Sparta and Messene concerned the border area called Dentheliatis. This boundary dispute began in 338 when Dentheliatis was incorporated with Messenia. Areus’ attack, mentioned above, resulted in Spartan control over Dentheliatis, which in turn was restored to Messenia by Antigonos Gonatas or Doson a couple of decades later (Tac. Ann. 4.43.4). This dispute continued also after 146 when mainland Greece was incorporated in the Roman Empire. An inscription from Olympia, from around 140, records that Miletos was commissioned to judge over this

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449 However, Sparta is also conceptualized to be at the mercy of the Hellenistic kings, see below n. 458.

450 Pausanias does not explicitly mention an attack, but he mentions that the Messenians and the Arkadians used the Spartan threat as an excuse for not participating in the Greek defence against the Gallic attack. The Spartan attack is inferred from this Roebuck 1941, 62.

451 This basic scheme is not contradicted by the personal relation between the Messenian Nikagoras and the Spartan king Archidamos (Polyb. 5.37.1-5; Plut. Cleom. 35).

452 Roebuck 1941, 12, 118-21, for the identification of this area.

453 This has been associated with the Battle of Sellasia in 222. Dentheliatis was restored to Messenia by Antigonos Doson after his victory over the Spartans.
dispute.\textsuperscript{454} The judgement was in favour of Messene (Tac. Ann. 4.34.4). However, this was not the end, and the Romans had to deal with the same issue again a century later: Dentheliatis was restored to the Spartans by Julius Caesar and Mark Antony in the 40s BC (Paus. 4.31.1, 4.30.2; Tac. Ann. 4.34.1).

The relation between Messenia and Sparta is, in the culture historical model, conceptualized as being determined by a generic hostility. Sparta, being the stronger of the two, is a threat to the independence of Messenia. The Spartan society is characteristically conceptualized as conservative, clinging to old dreams and ideas, aiming to restore its former glory. This image is emphasised by Roebuck in his account of Messenia’s history.\textsuperscript{455} This conceptualization can be explained in many instances by the positivist tendency to analyse the ancient sources in a naive and straightforward way. However, paradoxically, this thread is occasionally more profound, and Roebuck uses the generic hostility in his reconstruction of what actually happened. He rejects, for instance, Pausanias’ (4.29.6) account that Messene and Sparta had better relations for a while around 272 as incorrect, because there is no other evidence of better relations between Sparta and Messene. However, this further enforces the crude image of the generic hostility between Sparta and Messene, since good relations, in contrast to bad, have to be proven.\textsuperscript{456}

A characteristic feature of Sparta’s political history during the Hellenistic age was the tendency to isolate itself from the Greek political scene. Sparta refused to sign treaties and was seldom a member of one of the many alliances that play an important role on the Greek political scene. Sparta’s isolationist tendency is, however, broken occasionally. With the ascendancy of strong individual Spartan kings, who often introduce reforms of the Spartan society, Sparta plays a more active role on the Greek political scene.\textsuperscript{457} Whether the reforms aimed to ‘normalise’ the conditions in Sparta (i.e., to make the Spartan society more like other Greek societies) as in Areus’ program, or resurrected Lykourgos’ name and reintroduced a more stringent system like Agis and Kleomenes, is of minor importance since they had similar effects on Messenia.\textsuperscript{458} In connection with these reforms Sparta’s hegemonic aspirations

\textsuperscript{454} IVO, 52.
\textsuperscript{455} E.g. Roebuck 1941, 62, 63, 67, 69, 87.
\textsuperscript{456} Roebuck 1941, 63. The evidence Roebuck evokes is ex silentio. See also below n. 464.
\textsuperscript{457} See also below Political biographies.
\textsuperscript{458} Areus: Oliva 1971, 205-8; Cartledge and Spawforth 1989, 28-37. Areus took up an image of a Hellenistic ruler, he introduced coins and a court in Sparta. Interestingly, both Oliva 1971, 207, and Cartledge and Spawforth 1989, 32, explain Sparta’s more dominating role by reference to the power-vacuum among the major powers. Part of Areus’ ability to be militarily active was the support of Ptolemaios. It suited Ptolemaios, who overall had an anti-Macedonian policy, to stir
were concretised and implemented, which also meant that Messenia was attacked. Messene’s response to Sparta’s threat was to seek alliances on a higher level, from Hellenistic kings or different Leagues, in order to check Sparta.

The above conceptualization of the political history of Messenia and Sparta is embedded in the culture historical model. Aspects discerned in the previous chapters, such as the importance of establishing a firm spatio-temporal grid and solving inconsistencies in the ancient sources, are important also for the conceptualization of these events. There is, however, another feature of primordialism that is conclusive here, namely the rigidity of the political entities. The political entities are conceptualized as relatively clear-cut and monolithic. The boundaries between the various units are furthermore regarded as fixed and static — they are mutually exclusive. That political alliances changed, and thus new boundaries were drawn, does not change the basic perception of boundaries as determinative. The main issue is where to draw the boundary, but the perception of the boundary (once established) does not become an issue. This is further reinforced since the content of the political labels remains unaddressed. Finally, since the past is conceptualized through the political labels, these become normative. The assumption, in the end, is that the political entities govern the actions. Ethnicity as a factor is, in contrast to earlier periods, of minor importance. That is, ethnicity in the primordial sense is not used to explain history. The political history of this period shares the primordial perspective in the sense that the analytical entities are perceived as rigid and static. However, the events in the political history are not explained by reference to essential characteristics. It is rather the initiatives and actions of individual great men that propel history.

**Political relations with Hellenistic kings, generals and royal houses**

The political landscape in Greece changed considerably after Alexander the Great’s conquest of Asia and the subsequent power struggles between the Diadochi after his death. These struggles between the generals in Alexander’s

*up troubles on mainland Greece by supporting Areus, Cartledge and Spawforth 1989, 37. Agis and Kleomenes: Oliva 1971, 213-68; Cartledge and Spawforth 1989, 44-6, for the reforms. I will not elaborate on whether this was a reform or revolution, neither on the social tensions within Sparta that often are connected with this program. Nabis: Cartledge and Spawforth 1989, 68-72; Oliva 1971, 279-82. Also, Martinez-Lacy 1997; Mendels 1979; Robins 1958, discusses various aspects of Nabis’ reforms.*

*Roebuck 1941, 61f., 69, 87. See also Shipley 2000, 140-8, who also adheres to the basic scheme in his introductory book to Hellenistic history.*
army continued until 280. These endless wars also affected Messenia. Messenia was a member of the League of Korinth (also known as the Hellenic League) which Philip II formed in 338, and the territorial adjustment in favour of Messenia may have been made, at least legally, through this League. In contrast to most other states on the Peloponnese, Sparta was an exception and remained persistently outside various political organisations. Messene, as a member of the Hellenic League, participated in the Lamian War on the Athenian side against Antipater in 323 (Diod. Sic. 18.11.2; Paus. 1.25.4).

There seems, however, to be one feature in Messene that is most important in these power struggles, namely, the impressive fortifications built in connection with its founding. After the death of Antipater in 319, the struggles between his successors, Polyperchon and Kassander, affected Messene in a very concrete way. Polyperchon garrisoned Messene in 318, and Messene was the only town that Kassander did not manage to capture in his campaign in 316 (Diod. Sic. 19.54.4), and the second campaign in 315 (Diod. Sic. 19.64.1). In the end, however, Kassander managed to gain control of Messene after an agreement in 315 (Diod. Sic. 19.64.3-4). However, an army sent out by Antigonus Monophthalmos in 313 removed the garrison (Diod. Sic. 19.74.2). The Peloponnese was a scene of intense military activities during the last decade of the 4th century, and Kassander’s army recaptured many of the Peloponnesian cities in 307. It is uncertain whether Demetrios Poliorketes in his Peloponnesian campaign in 303 managed to capture Messene (Plut. Demetr. 25.1). Likewise, it remains uncertain whether Demetrios Poliorketes’ attack on Messene in 295 was successful (Plut. Demetr. 33.3-4).

Besides the military activities, it is the alliances that are noted in the ancient sources. Messene was eager to secure alliances, and thus protection, with a major power in Greece. The Antigonid control over Macedonia and mainland Greece during the first half of the 3rd century included also Messenia. Their position was, however, contested. The Diadochic struggles over Alexander’s empire were still being fought in the 280s. An alliance between Lysimachos, Seleukos and Ptolemaios was formed in the 280s, which was directed against Demetrios Poliorketes of the Antigonid dynasty. The allies were successful, and Greece was ruled by Lysimachos for a time (Plut. Pyrrh. 12.6-7; Paus. 1.10.2)

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460 Polybios (9.29.2-4) for the war in general.
461 An inscription regulating the conditions of a garrison on Ithome, Themelis 1991, 96f, inscription # 3756, has been linked by the excavator to Polyperchon’s garrison. Diodoros (18.68.3, 18.69.4) for Polyperchon’s campaign on the Peloponnes. Only Megalopolis managed to resist Polyperchon.
462 Demetrios Poliorketes might have gained control but then lost it after the Battle of Ipsos 301, when many of the cities he controlled fell away (Plut. Demetr. 31.2)
until Antigonos Gonatas could re-establish the Antigonid dynasty in 279. The conflicts between the Hellenistic kings was the opportunity that Areus needed. He re-established the Peloponnesian League, which later resulted in the attacks on Messene mentioned above. Themelis dates an inscription from Messene that records an alliance between Lysimachos and Messene to this period. It illustrates Messene’s persistence to side with the rulers of Greece. That Messene was keen to ally with whichever of the Hellenistic kings was strong enough to keep Sparta from attacking is illustrated again in the 270s. Messene’s siding with the Antigonids did not prevent the Messenians from approaching other powers when they had, more or less, temporal control over Greece. When Pyrrhos attacked Sparta, during his war against Antigonos Gonatas, Messene sent an embassy to him (Justin. 25.4.4). The 270s is also the time of one of the rare instances when Messene intervened in other states. Messenian troops attacked Elis during a civil strife and established a Messenian-friendly party (Paus. 4.28.4-6).

A couple of tenets govern the culture historical conceptualization of Messenia’s relations with the Hellenistic kings. Underlining the discussion is the obsession to establish an exact chronology of events, once chronological uncertainties are identified in the ancient sources. The aim to solve these and establish a coherent spatio-temporal grid becomes the main focus. However, since the ancient sources are exceptionally fragmentary, the discussion cannot revolve around inconsistencies in one specific source. It is, rather, a matter of evaluating different fragmentary accounts and reconstructing a course of events. Furthermore, the scattered notes are primarily focused on the Hellenistic great men. This, coupled with a positivistic cautiousness, has serious effects for the history of Messenia. One effect is that the Messenians are reduced to a passive collective that reacts to external stimuli. That is, although Roebuck aims to write the history of Messenia, this does not mean that the Messenians are the active agents in his account. The history of Messenia, in Roebuck’s version, means events that affect the Messenians. History is propelled by the struggles between the Hellenistic kings on the ‘highest’ level in

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463 Themelis 1990, 83-5, inscription #3017 a and b. Themelis 1990, 85, emphasises that Messene’s foreign policy was determined by the antagonism to Sparta.
464 Pausanias (1.13.6, 4.29.6) comment that the Messenians aided the Spartans, is dismissed as wrong, e.g. Roebuck 1941, 63. See also above p. 132.
465 Roebuck 1941, 59f.
466 There is no continuous ancient narrative for the period 301 to the 220s. Diodoros covers the period 323-301 and Polybios from the 220s and onwards, Shipley 2000, 8f.
467 See also below Political biographies.
Roebuck’s account, too. This is not only evident in his account of the wars and activities of the great men that affect the Messenians, such as Kassander’s and Polyperchon’s activities, but also when Messenia emerges as active. One example is the Messenian intervention in Elis, sometime during the 270s. Although the Messenians attacked Elis, they only seized an opportunity according to Roebuck’s account. That is, the possibility for the Messenians to act was only due to a ‘power vacuum’ on the level of the great men. The turbulence between Pyrrhos and the Antigonids, coupled with the internal strife in Elis, opened an opportunity that the Messenians seized. In the end, it is the development between the great men that is determinative also for the history of Messenia. The Messenians are reduced to a group that reacts. Change is exogenous.

**Political relations with Leagues**

From the 260s onwards it was Messenia’s relations with the Achaean and Aetolian Leagues that were determinative for the political history of Messenia. There is also a distinct difference in the conceptualization of the political history of Messenia from the 230s onwards. Messenia’s relations with other states after the mid-230s are associated more explicitly with a faction — a political party, group, leader or a region — of Messenia. Although possible internal differentiations might have existed earlier, they are not determinative in the ancient accounts. There is a development of disintegration of Messenia (as a political entity) beginning in the 230s and ending in 184/3, when the settlements in Messenia were incorporated in the Achaean League as separate members.

The expansion of the Aetolian League, which began after the repulsion of the Gauls in 279/8, affected also the Peloponnese after a time. There are indications that Messenia approached the Aetolian League from around 260, although a formal treaty was not concluded until around 240 (Polyb. 4.6.11). The Achaean League, which stood in opposition to the Aetolian League, was also increasingly more important on the Peloponnese. Messenia’s alliance with

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468 Roebuck 1941, 61-3.
469 Roebuck 1941, 63.
470 See also below *Political tensions*.
471 These inscriptions, *IG IX*, 1, 12, 17, 18, record individual grants of ‘proxeny’ and ‘isopoliteia’ to Messenians in Aetolia. They record the names of Messenians and are dated to the 260s, see also Roebuck 1941, 67.
472 The inscription *IG V*, 419 (= *SIG*, 472), records the isopoliteia between Messene and Phigalea (just north of the Neda River), mediated by the Aetolians. In effect, this meant that the Messenians were members of the Aetolian League: See Roebuck 1941, 67f.; Fine 1940, 131, 154.

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the Aetolian League can be regarded as an attempt to protect itself from the expanding Achaean League. However, this strategy was not foolproof. On another level, the Aetolian and Achaean Leagues were united in the 230s in their struggles against the Antigonids. This is regarded as the reason that the Aetolian League did not defend Messenia when the Achaean League raided and captured Pylos, and perhaps Kyperassos, in the mid-230s (Polyb. 4.25.4).

Messenia concluded numerous alliances during the late 3rd and early 2nd centuries. The alliances seem to have been concluded primarily in order to secure assistance in case of aggression. As long as the allies could provide protection it seems that exactly whom Messene was allied with was of secondary interest. The switching of alliance was not always due to factors that the Messenians could control. After the Battle of Sellasia in 222 (Polyb. 2.65-69), where the Achaean League with the aid of Philip V defeated the Spartans (thus putting an end to the Kleomenian War 229-222), the Achaean League was the hegemonic power on the Peloponnesian. Messene’s formal alliance with the Aetolian League did not prevent the Messenians from having friendly, not to say co-operative, relations with the Achaean League in the late 220s (in contrast to the preceding decade). The Aetolian League initiated a series of raids on the Peloponnesian in the late 220s.474 The raids were at first directed against Messenia, but also Achaea was ravaged (Polyb. 4.5.5, 4.5.10, 4.6.7-12). These led to the outbreak of the Social War, 220-217 (Polyb. 4.26.1, 4.31.1). The Messenians now received assistance from the Achaean League. In addition, Philip V, through the Hellenic League, sided with the Messenians and Achaean (Polyb. 4.7.1-5, 4.9, 4.15.2, 4.16.1). Not surprisingly, Messenia was incorporated in the Achaean League sometime during or just after the Social War (Polyb. 4.15.2; Paus. 4.29.7).

However, the Messenian siding with the Achaean League was short-lived. Philip V was also allied with the Achaean League, in what was technically organised as the Hellenic League. Messenia was also a member of the latter (Polyb. 4.16.1). Internal conflicts in Messenia in the 210s (see below Political tensions) furnished Philip V with a pretext to attack Messene (Polyb. 7.12.1-14.6.

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473 The date is uncertain. It is associated with other events in 235 by Roebuck 1941, 69. Larsen 1968, 327, is more careful and is content with a delimitation of the events to sometime between 235 and 229. Pylos is on a vulnerable spot; the Illyrians raided Pylus at least once in 230 (Polyb. 2.5.1-2, 4.16.6-7, 9.38.8).

474 The closer relations between Messenian and Achaea are by Fine 1940, 156, regarded to have been perceived as actions of hostility by the Aetolians.

475 See Polybios (4.9.5, 5.3.5, 5.4.4-5, 5.5.1-4, 5.5.11, 5.17.1, 5.20, 5.91.3, 5.92.2-9) for various details concerning Messenia during the Social War. Messenia is in the spotlight during this war.
8.8.1-2, 8.12.1-2, 9.30.2; Plut. *Arat.* 49-51; Paus. 4.29.1-5; Strabo 8.4.8). Philip V’s actions, however, were unusually ruthless, which in turn had the consequence that Messenia approached the Aetolian camp in 213 (Polyb. 9.30.6, 16.13.3). Messene was thus included in the Aetolian-Roman side during the 1st Macedonian War, 215-205, although it was not particularly active until the later phase of the war. The alliance with the Aetolians proved, however, to be ineffective, since the Aetolian League did not assist Messene when the Spartan king Nabis attacked in 201 (Polyb. 16.13.3, 16.16.1-3). Instead, the Achaean general Philopoemen from Megalopolis chased away Nabis. Once again, Messene changed allies and sided with the Achaean League. The consequence of Messene’s siding with the Achaean League should, however, not be exaggerated, since the predominant issue on the Greek political scene at that moment was the unity against Philip V. In other words, the Achaean and Aetolian Leagues, with the support of Rome, were united in their struggles against the Macedonian king during the 2nd Macedonian War, 200-197.

Messenia was no longer one political unity since several settlements were incorporated in the Achaean League around this time. The Roman rejection of Messene’s appeal for restoration of Pylos and Asine in 197 (Polyb. 18.42.7) is regarded as a *terminus ante quem*. This appeal was followed by several others during the 190s and 180s. The Messenian appeals were futile, however, since Rome would not risk provoking the Achaean League. After some unrest Messene was ordered by Flamininus, the Roman commander in Greece, to join the Achaean League in 192/191 (Polyb. 22.10.5-6; Livy 36.31.1-9). The settlements of Mothone, Kolonides, Korone and Kyparissia were also incorporated in the Achaean League on this occasion as separate members. In effect, this meant that Messenia as an independent political unity was dissolved. Messenian discontent with the Achaean League was strong during the 180s and especially in 184/3 when Achaean troops attacked Messene (Polyb. 23.5.1-13, 23.9.12-14, 23.12.3, 23.16.1-17.4, 24.2.3, 24.9.12-13, 24.10.15; Paus. 4.29.11-12, 8.51.5-7; Plut. *Phil.* 18-21; Livy 39.49-50). The Achaean attack was preceded by a Messenian appeal to the Romans for a restoration of lost territories. Nevertheless, the result of the Achaean attack was that the

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476 It should be mentioned that the Spartans also had a treaty with the Aetolians at the time (Polyb. 16.33.3).
477 Messene in turn participated in the Roman-led invasion of Lakonia in 195 (Polyb. 23.5.2).
478 Roebuck 1941, 94 n. 124, gives the arguments.
479 This is about a Spartan embassy to the Romans. The Romans will not act if Peloponnesian states will attempt to leave the Achaean League. It is implied (Polyb. 23.9.14) that the Messenians are already trying to revolt against the Achaean League.
settlements of Abia, Kalamai and Thouria were incorporated into the Achaean League as separate members (Polyb. 23.17.2). Although there is a note about Messenia in connection with the Greek resistance against the Romans in 146 (Polyb. 38.16.3), the final dissolution of Messenia in 184/3 is the last political event in Messenia’s political history that we hear of.  

The culture historical conceptualizations of these events have several tenets that ought to be familiar by now. One is the issue of chronology. That is, history is an issue of solving various chronological contradictions in the ancient sources. For instance, Fine elaborated in 1940 on the issue of Achaeans negotiations with Antigonos Doson (Polyb. 2.47-52). These negotiations involved an embassy sent to Antigonos and usually dated to 229. This is a major problem for Fine, and after an exhaustive discussion he proposes a revised chronology of this embassy to “between the fall of 227 and the spring of 226.”

The argument rests on the improbability that the Achaeans had any interest in negotiating prior to the Kleomenian revolution in 227 in Sparta. That is, the Achaeans acted only when they perceived some kind of threat. The assumption that inter-state relations were governed by hostilities is thus used in order to propose a new chronology. Unfortunately, once again, the interpretation of these events ends with a proposal for a revised chronology. One of the main issues is to establish the spatio-temporal grid.

Another prominent strand is the reliability of the ancient sources. The basic source for this period is Polybios. Polybios, being from Megalopolis and the son of an Achaean general, is regarded to be biased towards the Achaean League and against the Aetolian League. The major issue here is thus whether Polybios can be trusted or not. Walbank in 1933, for instance, accepts Polybios’ descriptions as a whole, while others, like Fine and Larsen, are more eager to argue that Polybios was driven by a prejudice against the Aetolians. Regardless of position, scholars are on some level accepting the ancient accounts. That is, the different opinions within the culture historical model are focused on whether Polybios gave a correct description of what actually happened. Although the prejudices of Polybios are recognised, this has a

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480 See also below Political tensions.
481 Fine 1940, 135-40. Quote on 140.
482 Fine 1940, 141, 146. Makes also the association between Spartan re-organisations, incidentally by strong kings, and a more active Spartan policy.
483 Fine 1940, 142f.
484 E.g. Walbank 1933, 11: “almost everything Polybius says against the Aetolians can in fact be easily justified.”
485 Fine 1940, 130; Larsen 1968, 328.
486 Fine 1940, 134, 150, 162.
minor effect in the end. That is, since history is a matter of establishing the sequel of events, the bias of the sources becomes a minor problem. The representation of the past is not a governing issue, and therefore the limitations of the sources are a problem on the level of whether something happened or not — the past is not explained by ideological or narratological dimensions of the ancient sources.

Larsen’s seminal publication from 1968 on the development of Greek federal states is also firmly grounded in the culture historical perspective. His analytical focus is the history of federal political organisations, and accordingly he identifies and traces the development of political institutions. However, Larsen elaborates also on the Social War. His account is a meticulously detailed description of the sequence of events during the war.487 The focus is thus to fixate the spatio-temporal grid. The naive positivism and its closeness to the ancient sources result in an account that, in a seemingly objective way, narrates what happened. However, the obsession to follow the ancient sources has also consequences. The ancient sources (read Polybios) focus on the actions of the great men, and it is the actions of Dorimachos, Aratos and Philip V that drive the chain of events during the Social War. Given Larsen’s positivism it should thus not come as a surprise that this is mirrored in his account.488 Other aspects, omitted by Polybios, remain unaddressed by Larsen, too.

The predominance of great men is also evident in Roebuck’s account. Messenia’s switching of alliances in the mid-210s is explained as a reaction to Philip V’s ravaging of the Messenian countryside.489 In other words, although Messenia is the primary subject for Roebuck, the Messenians strangely enough do not have the capacity to take their own initiatives. In Roebuck’s account they are also reduced to an entity that perpetually reacts to external threats. The Messenian perspective ends with the collection of the accounts in which the Messenians appear.

The primordial perspective, which gives prominence to ethnic affiliations and which explains history through these categorizations, is not determining.490 However, the culture historical conceptualization of the Hellenistic history of Messenia shares fundamental assumptions with the primordial model. A striking similarity is the assumption that relations across the analytical

487 Larsen 1968, 326-58.
488 E.g. Larsen 1968, 330f.
489 Roebuck 1941, 84.
490 Larsen 1968, e.g. 195f., uses the terms ‘ethnic state’, ‘ethnos’, but this is done in the sense of ‘ethnos-state’. See also above p. 12.
boundaries are generically hostile. The primordialists assume that inter-ethnic relations are hostile, and this is paralleled by the presumed hostility between the different states in the conceptualization of Hellenistic history. The ancient sources, and the scholars within the culture historical model, are explicitly conceptualizing history to be propelled by the individual political and military leaders. However, there is also another, less explicit, reason on a structural level for the actions and events in history in these conceptualizations. The actors — whether small states, leagues, or kings — are all governed by a fear of the others. That is, a basic notion is that the actors are a menace to each other. They are driven by an urge to obtain more power, and as soon as one of them has expanded his power, the others feel threatened and co-operate in order to repulse him. It is this fear that ultimately explains history; Messenia’s fear of Spartan aggression explains the Messenian obsession to seek alliances, and the Aetolian enmity with the Achaean is also explained by a mutual fear that the other will become more powerful. In the end, this results in a conceptualization of history where everybody reacts out of fear — history is an infinite chain of reactions out of fear. Another obvious similarity between the political history of the Hellenistic period and the primordial model, is the simple and straightforward use of labels; analytical entities, whether ethnic groups or political units, are not regarded as a problem. The analytical entities, in both cases, are taken for granted, and this results in an enforcement of the rigidity of these entities. The straightforward use of political labels, without a distancing questioning, inevitably results in essentialism.

Political biographies

The ancient accounts of the Hellenistic period focus more on the great men than do the accounts of the earlier periods.491 This focus in the ancient sources is also mirrored in the modern scholarly conceptualizations of the political history of the period.492 Illustrative is the amount of publications, ranging from the years 1913 to 1997, that are devoted to the life of a single king, general or politician during the Hellenistic period.493 Another illustration of this difference is that the

491 See Momigliano 1993, 8f., for an overview of the ancient development. This is not to say that there do not exist political biographies for earlier periods, or that there are no other kinds of histories for the Hellenistic period.

492 The chronological watershed is the 4th century. Represented by the biographies of Agesilaos by Cartledge 1987 and Hamilton 1991.

493 E.g. Billows 1990; Cartledge 1987; Errington 1969; Gabbert 1997; Hamilton 1991; Lund 1992; Tarn 1913; Walbank 1933; Walbank 1940. The focus on the great men occasionally takes bizarre proportions. Wheatley 1997, for instance, establish the lifespan of Demetrios Poliorcetes down to the month.
Hellenistic period is often sub-divided according to the life spans of powerful great men. The years 321-301 are, for instance, presented as the age of Antigonus Monophthalmos after the most powerful king of the period.\textsuperscript{494} This can be contrasted with the conceptualization of earlier periods; the years 371-362 are, for example, presented as the ‘Theban hegemony’ and not as the age of Epaminondas, despite the fact that Thebes’ hegemony is conceptualized as the work of Epaminondas.\textsuperscript{495}

Typically, political biographies focus on one of the great men. The narrative is structured according to the life of the individual. It begins with the childhood and youth. Of essence here is to pinpoint what influenced and formed the character and/or personality of the individual. This is followed by accounts about the political and military activities of the political leader.\textsuperscript{496} This is, of course, a restricted form of political biography, which keeps the focus on one individual. However, the focus is occasionally expanded to include comments about cultural, religious or social aspects on a more general level of the period. There are also developments within the genre. The biographies published from the mid-1980s onwards are more keen to place the great man in relation to institutions.\textsuperscript{497} In contrast, earlier biographies, if they have a wider focus, account for the more general cultural background in which the individual lived.\textsuperscript{498} Nevertheless, the focus remains on the individual political leader. There is also a remarkable continuity in the genre. For the development of ancient history, it is illustrative that Billows in 1990 can give a similar rationale for his study as Walbank did in 1933.\textsuperscript{499} The focus on the political leaders is

\textsuperscript{494} E.g. Shipley 2000, 41; Will 1984, 39-61. I suggest that this difference in conceptualization is very profound. Compare the headings between Cartledge 1979 and Cartledge and Spawforth 1989. The first publication, ending in 362, does not have a single individual name in the headings. In the second publication, however, with the exceptions of the introductory and concluding chapters, all headings include names of Spartan kings.

\textsuperscript{495} See above The founding of Messene.

\textsuperscript{496} E.g. Walbank 1933; Walbank 1940; Errington 1969; Gabbert 1997.


\textsuperscript{498} A comparison between Tarn 1913 and Gabbert 1997 who both focus on Antigonus Gonatas is interesting. There is, of course ‘new’ knowledge (in a naive positivist way) that has emerged in the intervening years, which differentiates the two publications. The treatment of Gonatas’ contacts with Zeno, Tarn 1913, 31-6, and Gabbert 1997, 4f., is illustrative. Tarn makes more general comments on Zeno’s philosophy than Gabbert who has a clearer, but more isolated, focus on Gonatas’ relation to Zeno. A drawback of Tarn’s wider focus is the moralizing comments he makes. Some are very explicitly essentialistic, for instance the comments about Zeno’s “semitic nature” on Tarn 1913, 31.

\textsuperscript{499} Walbank 1933, i; Billows 1990, 2f. Cf. also Derow 1993, who argues that Billows, despite the claims to make new interpretations, actually addressed the same basic issues as in earlier accounts.
legitimised by the shifting focus of the ancient sources — the positivist fallacy is all too obvious here.

A consequence of this perspective on history is that the political leaders are regarded as active, while other groups, political organisations, etc. are reduced to passive entities. History is conceptualized as being propelled by these persons. The great men direct history. The ‘masses’ are reduced to passive bystanders. They merely react to the stimuli from the powerful leaders. Political organisations are conceptualized as instruments at the mercy of one political leader. The Achaean League is, for instance, regarded as the tool of the Achaean general Aratos of Sikyon.500 The increasing attention to the great men in the ancient sources is, however, not only reflected in the emergence of the genre of political biographies. There is also a notable tendency among ancient historians that do not write political biographies to explain history through the actions of great men. Not only Walbank, in his biography, but also Fine, Roebuck and Shipley, who all focus on other subjects, reduce the Achaean League to an instrument in the hands of Aratos.501

This perspective has also consequences for the explanation of local tensions. It is the actions of great men that also explain internal strife and conditions in cities. The political factions are associated with one of the Hellenistic kings. Local political leaders or parties are thus conceptualized as appointed by the great men. Thus, also local developments are explained by exogenous reasons.502 There is, in other words, a distinct sense of hierarchization in this mode of history, and it is especially the higher levels that scholars devote attention to. The relations between individuals and/or political entities on, more or less, the same level are often regarded as generically hostile.503 That is, as soon as one of the entities on one level grows stronger (for whatever reason), the others on the same level feel threatened. This in turn leads to an intervention by the more powerful figures.

The view that change is exogenous is also one of the fundamental threads in the primordial model. However, the association with the primordial model is not as straightforward as for the earlier periods. That is, ethnicity is not used to

500 Walbank 1933. Aratos‘ predominance is also postulated in Walbank 1933, 1.
501 Fine 1940, 131f., 134, 136f., 139, 144, 145, 148, 156f., 159; Shipley 2000, 138-40; Roebuck 1941, 75f.
502 Fine 1940, 147.
503 See Fine 1940, 145-7. His proposed revised chronology is based on Aratos’ fear of Sparta’s activities directed by Kleomenes. Also Fine 1940, 154, 155.
explain history for the Hellenistic periods. This is illustrated by Hamilton’s study of Agesilaos. He accepts the division between the Lakonian and Messenian helots for the Classical period, and the difference is explained by their different origins. Ethnic identity is thus conceptualized as static, and is a determinant factor, in a characteristic primordial fashion. However, in his accounts of Agesilaos and 4th-century Sparta, he does not use origin or ethnicity to explain history. It is instead the personality — and Hamilton stresses the psychological character — of Agesilaos that determines history. That is, ethnicity is used less and less to explain history with the increasing social complexity. Interestingly, however, it is the primordial static view of ethnicity that is dismissed. Yet another similarity between the primordial model and political biographies is their similar views on boundaries. That is, boundaries are regarded as fixed, and the relations across them are hostile. The increasing political complexity inevitably leads to more boundaries that need to be considered, and there is a complex patchwork of boundaries, though this does not change the fundamental point of view. The analytical entities (i.e., the political entities) are basically conceptualized as fixed and static.

Messenia’s political organisation

The political organisation of Messenia after the founding of Messene has not received much attention. An obvious reason for this lack of interest is the fragmentary ancient record pertinent to this issue. Despite the fragmentary record, the issue of the political organisation remains important, and Roebuck has addressed it.

It is clear that Messenia was regarded as one political entity from abroad. That is, the other Greeks viewed Messenia as one. A second postulation that can be made is that Messene dominated Messenia, by sheer size. Although the exact political organisation of Messenia remains uncertain, it is clear that Messene from the time of founding onwards was the largest settlement of the region. Messene’s domination of Messenia is also clear from a strategic perspective.

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504 At least not on mainland Greece and on the intra-Hellenic level. There are publications dealing with ethnicity in the Hellenistic East, focusing on the level between the conquering Greeks (sometimes Macedonians) and the various local groups.
505 Hamilton 1991, 74f.
507 Gruen 1993, 339, also raises similar points. He emphasises that the research on the Hellenistic period is still conceptualized according to some narratological clichés. That is, the poleis were in the hands of the great powers, and Hellenistic kings determined the fate of the humans within their spheres. Gruen 1993, 339 n. 1, for references.
where the fortification and the position of Messene by the slopes of Ithome, in the middle of the Pamosos valley, made Messene the focal point for life in Messenia.

The view of Messenia as one political entity emerges not only in the works of ancient authors, written from a spatial and temporal distance, but also from the epigraphic evidence. A couple of inscriptions from the 4th century use the denomination ‘Messenians’, without any further specification. The term ‘Messenians’ is, however, specified in two inscriptions from Delphi. Two ‘proxenies’, one to a Messenian from Ithome, and one to a Messenian from Thuria, were granted during the last quarter of the 4th century. In other words, the denomination included Messenians from different settlements. The view that Messenia was a political unity is further enforced by inscriptions attesting that the inhabitants in Messene and Thuria were divided according to the same tribal divisions. Messenia, like other Dorian states, used Heraklids as the eponymous heroes of their tribes.

It seems that Messene was responsible for the defence and external relations of Messenia. Polybios (2.5.2) suggests that it was Messene’s responsibility to defend Messenia against the Illyrian raids in the 230s. Indicative is also that Polybios (23.17.2) says that the settlements of Abia, Thuria and Pharai, were separated from Messene when they were incorporated in the Achaean League as separate members in 184/3. Messene is, in some sense, equated with Messenia by Polybios — even the name of the capital city has changed to reflect the name of the region. Whether Messenia was regarded as a polis-state or ethnos-state is open to discussion. The term ‘polis’, used to denote Messene, is not securely attested prior to the latter half of the 3rd century, when the treaty of the isopolity in 240 is concluded between the cities of Phigalea and Messene. It is also to the polis of Messene that the Delphians express their gratitude in

508 IG II2, 225; IG V1, 1425; SIG3, 224.
509 It should be mentioned that Messene was denominated as Ithome during the 4th century. In addition to the inscription, Diodoros (19.54.4) mentions that Kassander holds all cities in Messenia except for Ithome.
510 FdD III:4, # 5; FdD III:4, # 6. Number 5 is dated to 319/8 by Bourguet, FdD III:5, 321; Number 6 is dated to 326/5 by Bourguet, FdD III:5, 320. The inscriptions are found on the same base as FdD III:4, #1, from the later part of the 5th century, see above p. 110. There are many proxeny inscriptions on this base, ranging chronologically from c. 340 (# 4) to c. 207 (# 24). All, except #5 and #6, are inscribed to Messenians. See also Roebuck 1941, 111 n. 9.
511 IG V1, 1386; IG V1, 1433. The five tribes are thus: Kresphontis, Daiphontis, Aristomachis, Hyllis, and Kleolaia. IG V1, 1433, dated to c. 100; IG V1, 1386 is a Thurian catalogue from 2nd century mentioning Daiphontis, Aristomachis. See also above pp. 62f.
512 IG V1, 419. See also above p. 136, esp. n. 472.
207, since the Messenians had sent troops to defend the sanctuary. On the other hand, the office of ‘demiourgoi’ is attested in Messene sometime during the late 4th/early 3rd century. This office was common in the Arkadian League, and this has been taken to indicate that the political organisation of Messenia in the beginning was modelled after the Arkadian League. Put differently, the Arkadians, who together with the Thebans founded Messene, implemented their political organisation also in Messene. The political organisation of Messenia developed thus from a loose federal organisation towards a more centralised unit where Messene dominated.

This perspective can be contrasted with evidence that indicates a local self-governing. The settlement of Kyparissia could regulate taxes on sea-trade in the late 4th/early 3rd century. Another indication from the same period is that it is Kyparissians, not Messenians from Kyparissia, that are granted proxeny at Lusi. Coinage is usually regarded as an indication of autonomy. There is coinage from the settlements of Korone, Thouria and Mothone within the relevant chronological frame. The date of these coins is, however, uncertain. Roebuck suggests that, given the indications of the strong centralisation of Messenia after 240, these coins were issued prior to 240.

The positivist aim for exactitude has its limits, and the fragmentary evidence regarding the political organisation of Messenia makes it impossible to establish it. The interpretation of Roebuck — and it is perhaps noteworthy that his account is the only one dealing with these aspects — has several threads characteristic of the culture historical model. To begin with, change is exogenous in Roebuck’s account. It is the Arkadians and Boiotians that bring their political organisation to Messenia. The suggested development towards a more centralised polis-state, evident after 240, is also explained by external factors. Although the complete lack of evidence is noted by Roebuck, he nevertheless suggests that it is the Macedonian use of the strong fortification at

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513 *FdD* III:4, # 21; *FdD* III:4, # 23. Another inscription, Kern 1900, 33ff., # 43, referring to the ‘koinon’ of the Messenians, found in Magnesia in Asia Minor is dismissed as indicating a federal organisation in Messenia. See Roebuck 1941, 111.
514 *IG V*¹, 1425.
515 Roebuck 1941, 115.
516 Grandjean 2002 has recently re-examined the issue of Messenia’s political organisation. Despite the criticism of Roebuck 1941, on e.g. 550, Grandjean’s conclusion, 560, differs only in details from Roebuck’s. The theoretical assumptions in these publications are more or less identical.
517 *IG V*¹, 1421 (= *SIG* V, 952).
518 *IG V*¹, 390.
519 Roebuck 1941, 114f. The coinage from Asine is dated to after Asine’s incorporation into the Achaean League. Roebuck revises the chronology proposed by Head 1911, 432ff.
520 Roebuck 1941, 115.
Ithome to control the region that is spread/mimicked by the Messenians.\textsuperscript{521} In other words, again, despite the cautious remark the development is brought in from outside.

**Summary**

By way of concluding, then, ethnicity is a minor issue for the culture historical conceptualization of the political history of Messenia during the Hellenistic period. Nevertheless, although ethnic characteristics are not explicitly used in a primordial sense, similar assumptions govern the conceptualization of the past. To begin with, the political entities are regarded as rigid, fixed and unchangeable. The political entities, labels (i.e., the Messenians), are furthermore taken at face value, and since the content of these labels is not an issue the notion of the past as a mosaic of cultures is enforced. The boundaries between the political entities are static and on the whole impermeable. Furthermore, relations across the boundaries are axiomatically perceived as hostile. This is a basic notion also in the primordial model. The rigidity of the analytical entities is further enforced by the perception that change is exogenous. That is, the relation to others — the Messenians react to initiatives of the Hellenistic kings, or act out of fear of the growing power of the Spartans — triggers the chain of events.

In these accounts the past is a sequence of events. The overriding aim to establish exactly what happened, coupled with the close readings of the ancient sources, results in a conceptualization of the past that focuses on military and political activities, with a particular focus on the individual political leaders. This in turn has the effect that the notion of continuity is not explicitly evoked, and therefore ethnicity is not an issue. The accounts proceed from one event to the next, and due to the amount of events the disentanglement of the complex web of alliances and battles is an end in itself. This obscures the seminal notion of continuity and origins in the primordial and culture historical models. Likewise, the notion of a passive view on culture is less straightforward. Yet, I would maintain that also the political history of Messenia is governed by this notion. The focus on the political leaders inevitably results in a reduction of social groups to passive entities that react to the actions of the individuals. There is a polarisation between active powerful great men and the passive collectives. Furthermore, since culture historical conceptualizations take pride in reading the ancient sources closely, the ancient texts are often taken at face

\textsuperscript{521} Roebuck 1941, 116.
value. That is, the past is not explained by an active manipulation of the narratives by ancient authors. Regardless of opinion, the fundamental issue is whether an episode is transmitted correctly or incorrectly by the author. Put differently, the episodes are passively recorded by the ancient authors.

Nevertheless, despite the emphasis on events, the notion of continuity is implicitly present. In particular this is indicated by the failure to explore the content of the political labels. That is, the political entities are taken at face value, but what these entities constituted or whether they changed is of minor interest. This results, however tacitly, in the enforcement of the essentialistic rigidity that characterises the primordial conceptualization of the past. Let me close with a quote from Roebuck, which serves to illustrate that, despite the focus on the political events, the notion of a primordial continuity is a governing assumption.

Psychologically the consciousness of a distinctive Messenian nationality, which had survived the period of Spartan domination, was fostered by the creation of a historical tradition, for which stories about the early Messenian history were invented. The state was linked to this supposed past by naming the tribes after the Heraclids ... 522

Social history
The conceptualization of the Hellenistic history emphasises the relations between the great men and major political powers. Furthermore, the focus is on major military and political events. Messenia, being a small and peripheral state, is thus of minor interest and surfaces in the ancient record only occasionally. Nevertheless, in comparison with earlier chronological periods Messenia is more frequently mentioned in the ancient sources. Put differently, as soon as there was an independent political entity called Messenia, more attention was paid to it. The conceptualization of the political history has primarily been based on the accounts of Diodoros, Polybios and Plutarch, complemented by epigraphic evidence. Given the tendency to read the sources closely and Pausanias’ relative negligence of political events, it is perhaps only natural that his account has been used rarely. These roles will change in this chapter. Pausanias is the main source, in several different respects, in this chapter, while the accounts of Diodoros, Polybios and Plutarch will be used

522 Roebuck 1941, 116.
rarely; the chapter Political tensions is a notable exception. Put briefly, different sources are used for different purposes.

There is in particular one dimension through which the social aspects of Messenia has been approached, namely religion. With the exception of the internal political tensions more or less everything about Messenia’s social history revolves around religion. This aspect steers Pausanias’ account, and the pertinent epigraphic evidence is also associated with cults. The archaeological activities in Messenia have also by tradition focused on the remains of religious activities. The reuse of Bronze Age tombs in Messenia, but also the excavations in Messene, which are the major archaeological activities in Messenia for this period, have emphasised the religious activities.

There remains to make a remark about minor aspects that are ignored. The economic dimension in the life of the Messenians is a topic that has received very little attention. This is not to say that economics have not been studied, but it suggests that this area has received little attention in the culture historical conceptualization. A major reason is doubtless the scarcity of ancient evidence pertinent to this issue, but also that other, primarily political, issues are regarded as more important. Illustrative is Roebuck’s article, A note on Messenian economy and population. Despite the promising title, the article focuses on calculating the amount of agricultural production and the size of the population in Messenia. Although from a positivistic perspective the conclusion that Messenia was a state with an agricultural economy, and a population of 90 000, might be important, from my perspective it only serves to reinforce my conclusion that Roebuck is firmly grounded in the culture historical perspective. That is, when economy is an issue at all, it is not the socio-economic aspects, which may be pertinent to the issue of ethnic identity, that are addressed; instead the aim is to find out the exact numbers.

Political tensions

The tendency of the ancient sources to focus on the individual determining politicians during the Hellenistic period, and the close reading of the ancient sources in the culture historical accounts, results in a, to say the least, fragmentary image of the social conditions of the Messenians. The unity of the Messenians that predominates in the political history can be complicated by accounts that mention internal political strife in Messene or Messenia. These internal conflicts, however fragmentary and de-contextualised they may be, are

523 Roebuck 1979a, 6, 16.
the most overt indications of differentiations among the Messenians from the literature. Opposing political factions in Greek states were not unusual during antiquity, and these are often conceptualized by their relations with major political powers.

An isolated episode of political tensions among the Messenians is mentioned from the 4th century. The territorial adjustment in favour of Messenia made by Philip II in 338 is associated with the existence of a pro-Macedonian party in Messenia in the late 4th century. According to Polybios (18.14.3, 18.14.6-7, 18.14.15) it was Neon and Thrasylchos, the sons of Philades, who persuaded Philip II to adjust the territories in favour of Messenia. These two are thus inferred to be the leaders of a pro-Macedonian party. In addition, Demosthenes (On The Treaty With Alexander 4, 7) mentions that Alexander restored the brothers to power. This indicates that they spent a period in exile during the 330s-320s. In other words, it seems that there was an anti-Macedonian party opposing the brothers.

Although there are many examples from the Hellenistic period where local political leaders were installed and kept in power by the Hellenistic kings, no such example is explicitly mentioned for Messenia. A polarisation between a group of wealthy timocrats, or oligarchs, and a more popular democratic political camp emerges in the ancient accounts from the 220s onwards, however.

Messenian exiles aided Kleomenes when he attacked Megalopolis in 223 (Polyb. 2.55.3). A possible explanation for the actions of the Messenians was the social reforms implemented by Kleomenes in Sparta. An effect of Kleomenes’ reforms was that the situation of the poorer segments in Spartan society was improved, and the Messenians might have had hopes of improving their situation in Messenia with the help of Kleomenes.

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524 The veracity of this speech has been questioned. It should perhaps be Pseudo-Demosthenes.
525 Demosthenes (De Cor. 295), in his opposition to Macedonia, describes the brothers as traitors. The exact chronology is a problem. Roebuck 1941, 53, argues that they were expelled in 335, and associated the expulsion with a more general revolt in Greece against the Macedonian rule. For the territorial adjustments see above Messenian expansion and geography.
526 Roebuck 1941, 59, deduces that Messenia had an oligarchic regime enforced by Antipater in 322, since Athens and Megalopolis (Diod. Sic. 18.18.4; 18.68.3) had such. The episodes with Kassander and Polyperchon might have had this consequence, too.
527 Plutarch (Cleom. 24) narrates the same episode, but omits the Messenians. He (Plut. Cleom. 24.1; Plut. Phil. 5) mentions, however, that many Megalopolitans sought refuge in Messene. This is an indication of the friendly relations between the Messenians and the Megalopolitans, mentioned above on pp. 129f. Pausanias (4.29.7-9; 8.49.4) tells that the Megalopolitans sought refuge in Messenia; he does not mention the Messenians in exile. Polybios (2.62.10), notes that most Megalopolitans sought refuge in Messenia.
528 See also above n. 458.
In many ways this group of exiled Messenians anticipates the events during the following decades. Polybios (4.31.2) mentions that an oligarchic party governed Messenia in 219. The Messenian actions during the Social War were thus a consequence of the oligarchic predisposition to maintain peace at all costs (Polyb. 4.32.1). However, there was a growing discontent among the Messenians with their political leadership, and this erupted in open revolt in 215/4. The news of political troubles in Messene made Philip V and Aratos hasten to the city to mediate between the opposing groups. Philip V, however, arrived earlier than Aratos, and instigated the opposing groups against each other. He encouraged the magistrates, of the oligarchic party, to enforce the laws, and the demagogues, of the democratic faction, to use violence against the tyrannical leaders. This resulted in a slaughter of the magistrates, and about 200 Messenians were killed (Plut. Arat. 49.2-3). Accordingly, a democratic leadership was established after the stasis and property was redistributed (Polyb. 7.10.1). In addition to these fragmentary notes about the Messenians, Polybios and Plutarch focus on the conduct of Philip V. The ancient authors pay most attention to the episode (Plut. Arat. 50.1-10; Polyb. 7.12) in which Philip V sacrificed on Ithome, and the discussion with Aratos and Demetrios of Pharos as to whether he should garrison Messene or not. Again, the focus is clearly on the conduct of the great men of history. There is a sequel to this episode. Philip V attacked Messenia twice in the following years (Paus. 4.29.1-5, 4.32.2; Polyb. 8.8.1, 8.12.1; Plut. Arat. 51.2).

The next episode of tensions in Messenia elaborated on in the ancient sources is from the 180s. The Messenians, under the timocratic leader Deinokrates, challenged the Achaean League (Polyb. 23.5.1-18, 23.9.8-14). This resulted in an Achaean attack on Messenia, which in turn led to the capture of the Achaean leader Philopoemen. The timocrats and Deinokrates poisoned Philopoemen, in spite of the democratic and popular opposition on this issue. Thereafter the Achaean launched a new expedition against Messenia. The democratic faction in Messenia sided with the Achaeans, and the timocrats were killed (Paus. 4.29.11-12, 8.51.5-8; Plut. Phil. 18-21.2; Polyb. 23.16.1-17.4).

What is striking about the conceptualization of these events is the prominence given to the individual political leaders, not only in the ancient

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529 In addition it is noteworthy that Polybios (7.10.2-5) describes Gorgos, a political leader in Messenia, in more detail than the revolt as such. Philip V’s bad conduct is also noted by Polybios. (7.13.6-8, 7.14.4, 7.14.5).

530 Polybios (22.10.6) makes a cursory remark that the Messenians had disputes among themselves regarding Flamininus’ edict in the late 190s.
accounts but also among modern scholars within the culture historical model. Roebuck’s account of the stasis in 215 is, given the deeply rooted positivism, predictably mirroring the ancient sources, and it focuses on the actions of Philip V and Aratos. The Messenian disturbances in 184/3 are accordingly conceptualized through the actions of Deinokrates. That is, Plutarch’s (Phil. 18.3) characterisation of Deinokrates as a man driven by hatred of Philopoemen is mirrored in Roebuck’s account. Deinokrates together with Flamininus and Philopoemen are the distinct protagonists of this episode. The actions of the Messenians, as a group, are reduced to reactions against or for Deinokrates. Remarkably, even when the issue is the internal conflicts among the Messenians, the emphasis of Roebuck’s analysis is on the interactions between the individual political leaders.

The internal conflicts have also been studied by Robins in 1955. He argues that the history of Messene during the period 222-182 was determined by a long power struggle between the Messenians. These struggles explain why Messenia in 220 sided with the Achaean League and Philip V, against the Aetolian League and Sparta, while ten years later Messenia instead sided with the Aetolian League, the Romans, Elis and Sparta against Philip V and the Achaean League. In Robins’ view this contradictory pattern can be explained by the fact that an oligarchic, anti-Aetolian, party was in power prior to 215 and a democratic, pro-Aetolian, party after 215. According to Robins, then, it was the opposing factions that concluded the alliances. The differences were so grave that the alliances concluded by one of the parties were ignored by the other. Put differently, the change in alliances that was officially made by Messenia was due to the shift in power relations in Messenia. There is a simple and straightforward correlation between a party and the relations to the Aetolian league, in Robins’ scheme. This dichotomy also explains the attacks on Messenia. Philip V’s attacks were directed against the leadership of the democratic, pro-Aetolian party. The puzzling details about Nabis’ attack in 201 can also be explained neatly with Robins’ proposal. Polybios makes a puzzling comment (Polyb. 16.13.3) that Nabis attacked the Messenians while they were

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531 Roebuck 1941, 81-3. See also above Political biographies.
532 Roebuck 1941, 95-102. Also Errington 1969, esp. 183-94, has this perspective. See also above Political biographies.
533 Roebuck 1941, 100f.
534 Robins 1955, 114.
535 Robins 1955, 114f.
536 Robins 1955, 114f. In contrast to Walbank 1940, 72, who characterises the Messenian party in power as pro-Achaean.
allied. According to Robins, then, the treaty was concluded by the democratic party. Due to the fundamental rupture among the Messenians, the oligarchic party did not have any obligations to the Spartans, and Nabis’ attack was a reaction against a planned coup d’état by the oligarchic party.\footnote{Robins 1955, 117.}

Admittedly, Robins credits the Messenians, as a social group, with a more active role than Roebuck does. Nevertheless, Robins’ analysis is also governed by culture historical assumptions. The proposed model of two opposing political blocs is due to the inconsistencies in the ancient accounts. The aim is to solve contradictions and establish one coherent image of the past. What is telling, however, is that the determining factor in the diverging opinions among the Messenians is the relation to the Aetolian League. The ultimate reason for the actions of the Messenians is again exogenous. Robins undermines, on one level, the conceptualization of the Messenians as a monolithic group by making the distinction. Yet, the political blocs are conceptualized as rigid. The novelty in Robins’ analysis is that he draws the analytical lines in a different way. The content within the analytical boundaries is, however, conceptualized in the same rigid, static and fixed was as in a characteristic culture historical mode.

Mendels proposed another explanation in 1980. In order to solve the problem of Messenia’s policy in the 210s he proposed, not one, but two separate revolutions. The first in 219 is associated with Polybios (7.10.1), and the second in 215 is associated with both Polybios (7.12.1) and Plutarch (Arat. 49.2-3). It is the inconsistencies in the ancient accounts that are the issue. The contradictions need to be solved.\footnote{Mendels 1998, 280.} Mendels’ solution is that, since the accounts differ, they must describe different events. Fundamentally, this is a view that takes the sources at face value. It is a passive view on culture since the argument is based on irreproachable trustworthiness of the ancient authors. The discrepancies in the sources are not due to more or less active choices by Polybios or Plutarch. Mendels’ proposed scheme is that after the revolution in 219, the peace-loving, pro-Aetolian, oligarchs were overthrown and a pro-Achaean democratic party ruled until 215. The pro-Aetolian, oligarchic party was re-established in power after the second revolution in 215. Philip V’s attacks the following years can thus be explained as attacks against the oligarchs and attempts to place the pro-Achaean democratic party back in power.\footnote{Mendels 1998, 283.}

In sum, regardless which of the proposed models is correct, it is noteworthy that the argumentation is propelled by the aim to establish exactly what

\footnotesize{\begin{itemize}
\item Robins 1955, 117.
\item Mendels 1998, 280.
\item Mendels 1998, 283.
\end{itemize}}
happened. Roebuck, Robins and Mendels all argue from within the same model — they adhere to a model which regards change as caused by exogenous factors. Accordingly, also the conceptualization of internal strife in Messenia is explained by the relations of the Messenians with other political entities or leaders. It is remarkable that, despite the cursory remarks about possible socio-economic dimensions, these aspects remain unexplored.\footnote{E.g. Roebuck 1941, 81.} Put differently, the negligence of the possible internal Messenian factors in the ancient sources is also mirrored in the culture historical conceptualizations of these events. Ethnicity as a factor is not used to explain the past in this context, and the similarity to the primordial model is restricted to the basic assumption that social groups are coherent and monolithic.

*Archaeologies and religion*

Classics has by tradition paid much attention to the field of religion. In the case of Messenia, it is primarily Pausanias’ account in the *Messeniaka* that has been the determinative ancient source. In the above I elaborated on how Pausanias’ account has been used in the culture historical conceptualization of the early history of Messenia.\footnote{See *Messenian Origins*.} The reliance on Pausanias is also heavy for the conceptualization of the religion of Messenia after its independence.

The religious dimension is one of the prominent notions in Pausanias’ account of Messenia’s history. Famous is the mention of the deities and heroes that the Messenians invoked during the founding of Messene (Paus. 4.26.6).\footnote{The list is long: Zeus Ithomatas, the Dioskouroi, the Great Goddesses, Kaukon, Messene, Eurytos, Aphareus, Kresphontes, Aipytos, and last but not least, Aristomenes.} However, the religious dimension is given even greater prominence in Pausanias’ account. The founding of the city and the independence of the Messenians is foretold by dreams, where heroes appear, and by oracles (Paus. 4.26.3-4, 6-8). Fundamental here is a brazen urn, containing the secrets of the mysteries of Andania, which Aristomenes hid on Mount Ithome (Paus. 4.20.4).

Scholars have, of course, elaborated on these deities mentioned by Pausanias together with other attested deities in Messenia, such as Artemis Laphria. Roebuck, in his discussion, is in many ways representative of the culture historical model.\footnote{Roebuck 1941, 34-7.} Once the existence of the cults to the various deities and heroes are mentioned, his interpretations end. The correlation between the cults and the Messenian population is simple. The cults are taken to reflect different
social or ethnic groups; for example cults to Athena are associated with an older stratum, and the Dioskouroi are very old deities of the folk religion. In addition, the origins of the cults are important: Machon is an indigenous Messenian god, while Apollo Korythos is Messenian in origin. Likewise there were other cults, like Artemis Laphria and possibly Demeter, introduced from abroad. The debate here aims to establish exactly when these cults were introduced into Messenia. Put differently, origins is the crucial notion. The analysis centres on the issue of when and from where the different cults in Messenia were introduced. Once the spatio-temporal distribution of the cults is established, the interpretation ends. This is facilitated by the fundamentally passive view on culture. The distribution of cults mirrors the distribution of the ethnic, or social, group associated with the specific cult. Although change is noticed, it is not a problem. There is admittedly allowance for change, and some cults are perceived to have been introduced later; they are not regarded as authentic Messenian cults. The meaning of this phenomenon is, however, not an issue. Appropriation remains unexplored. This part of Roebuck’s analysis comes closer to the primordial model than does the elaboration on the political history of Messenia, since he explicitly emphasises the fundamental notions of continuity and origins in his analysis of religion. The continuity of the Messenians as an ethnic group is primarily verified by the survival of Messenian cults, in Roebuck’s account. In effect, Roebuck’s analysis is very similar to Zunino’s and Burkert’s. This is not to suggest that there are no differences between them, but these concern details. That is, the difference of opinion is whether one of the cults was indigenous Messenian or not, or with which ethnic group a cult should be associated. On another level, however, they all agree on how the association between cults and ethnic groups should be analysed.

**Messene**

In addition to the verification of cults, Pausanias’ account has been important from another perspective, too. Pausanias is a rewarding read for archaeologists,
since he has described what he saw in the cities and landscapes he passed through. The itinerary Pausanias used through Messene (Paus. 4.31.5-33.1) is a detailed account of sanctuaries and of works of art on display in the city. Pausanias was careful to note which deity or hero/heroine a statue depicted. This description has had a determinative role for the excavators of Messene, since it has served as a manual for the archaeologist. A major issue has been to associate finds with Pausanias’ account.

The archaeological activities in Messene have a long history. French expeditions in the 1830s and 1840s identified several of the major buildings. Greek archaeologists conducted sporadic excavations in 1895, 1909 and 1925. However, it was with Orlandos’ excavations from 1957 to 1975 that substantial investigations were conducted. The last phase of excavation began in 1986 under Themelis and continues to present date.

Orlandos has summarised his activities in an article from 1976. The governing issue for him is to identify the buildings in the Asklepieion. This is primarily accomplished with the help of ancient sources, primarily Pausanias, and epigraphic evidence. That is, archaeology is reduced to a method that verifies the ancient texts. In addition to buildings, Orlandos identifies statues. Occasionally, as in the case of the Bouleterion, he also makes comparisons with other excavated buildings in order to secure the identification. Disagreements between Orlandos and other scholars revolve around the identification of the specific buildings. Chronology is, remarkably, only a second-rate issue in Orlandos’ publication. In addition to attribution, the ancient texts are also fundamental for the establishment of function. The function of the Asklepieion is also solved through the authority of ancient texts. Orlandos accepts Papachatzis’ proposal that the Asklepieion was an ‘eleutheras agora’.

To mention just a few examples: An image of Zeus Sotir and a water-basin called Arsoine are mentioned in the market-place (4.31.6); in the sanctuary of Asklepios he mentions the images of Apollo, the Muses, Herakles, an image of Thebes, Epaminondas, Tyche and Artemis. These were all the works of Damophon (4.31.10).

See Orlandos 1976, 9. The French expeditions are Blouet 1831; Le Bas and Waddington 1847-68. Orlandos 1976, 9; Sofoulis 1895; Oikonomos 1909; Oikonomos 1925.

Themelis 1986, 74-6.

Pausanias is ever-present, e.g. Orlandos 1976, 16, 29, 35.

Orlandos 1976, 12-23.

E.g. Orlandos 1976, 16, refutes proposals that the theater-like building was the ‘synedrion’. He argues, on the basis of Pausanias and an inscription, that the square building Gamma was the synedrion.

Although it occurs. Chronologically, it is the Late Hellenistic and Roman periods that are mentioned. One statue is dated to the 3rd century.

Papachatzis 1967-8; 363-5; Orlandos 1976, 38. Mentioned by Aristotle (Pol. 1331a), Xenophon (Cyr. 1.2.3).
category of agora in ancient Greece functioned as the religious and political centres of cities, while trade, a common activity in agoras, was abolished. It is by turning to the ancient texts that the function of the Asklepieion is established.

Ethnicity is thus not a topic, although one suspects that this is only due to the narrow analytical focus. Orlandos’ way of doing archaeology is fundamentally based on a passive view on culture. The meaning of things is not a problem, since it is assumed to be solved once the things are identified. Likewise, a differentiated and contextualised slippage of meaning over the centuries is not part of the culture historical conceptualization. Therefore, the mere identification of the buildings and objects is the end.

The accordance of Pausanias’ account with the archaeological finds is not only an issue for the archaeologists excavating Messene. Scholars from a historical perspective have also been interested in this accordance. Habicht has defended the reliability of Pausanias as a descriptive source. The accuracy of his description of Messenia is used by Habicht to defend Pausanias. It is interesting to note how Habicht describes the accumulation of correct knowledge about Messene. The archaeologists slowly come to the right conclusion, but only when they realise that the details in Pausanias’ account are correct. The fundamental issue is to correlate finds with texts. The archaeologists solve the problem, which is the issue of identification, only when they take the words of Pausanias seriously, and this is confirmed by inscriptions. Tellingly, archaeology is reduced to a method that confirms the ancient texts. It illustrates and confirms that the texts are evidence of a superior quality. Archaeology is not accredited with the possibility to solve other non-textual problems.

Themelis, like his predecessor Orlandos, relies heavily on Pausanias in his publications of Messene. The governing tenet also for Themelis is to establish secure identifications of specific buildings and finds, primarily works of art. The profoundness of the reliance on Pausanias’ account is illustrated by his obsession to note what Pausanias must have encountered in his itinerary through Messene. However, this is occasionally taken one step further. It is illustrative, for instance, that the buildings and sculptures in the Asklepieion were identified only after scholars had solved which itinerary Pausanias used

\[558\] The reliability of Pausanias is emphasised, e.g. Habicht 1985, 44, 59. See also below pp. 255f.
\[559\] Habicht 1985, 41, is illustrative.
\[560\] Themelis 2000, 7, 28, 32, 42, 43, 53, to mention some examples. This is also a prominent thread in the preliminary reports, e.g. Themelis 1988, 44f. This does not necessarily mean that Pausanias’ account is not problematic. Themelis 1989, 109f., points to a weakness in Pausanias (4.31.6).
and in which order he witnessed the sculptures. That is, only when the problems of Pausanias’ text were solved could archaeology verify the correctness of his text. There is a mutual and intimate dependence between text and artefacts. However, Pausanias’ text is given precedence and archaeology is reduced to a method that empirically verifies the text.

However, sharing a theoretical framework does not necessarily mean complete agreement. The scholars within the culture historical model disagree, too, but the differences in opinion are centred on the attribution of the finds. It is on this level that Themelis disagrees with, for instance, Morizot. The building Morizot identifies as a shrine to the heroine Messene, is by Themelis instead attributed to Artemis Orthia. An important tenet in archaeology, in particular among the more positivistically inclined scholars, is the notion of accumulation of facts. From a naïve, inductive, position there is a simple and straightforward correlation between the amount of finds and the reliability of the archaeological past. That is, the more finds the more ‘objective’ is our image. This is indicative of a passive view on culture, since a governing assumption is that there is an innate and true meaning in the archaeological material and it is enough to describe it. It is to this notion that Themelis turns in order to solve the issue with Morizot. Her proposed identification was made before the excavation of the building was completed, but with the emergence of new facts it has been proven wrong.

Chronology is another basic notion. Themelis identifies three architectural phases in the Asklepieion: the first from the 7th-6th centuries; a second from the 4th century, when the complex was incorporated in the city plan; and a third from the 3rd century with a vast rebuilding of the whole complex. This reorganisation was conclusive, and for instance the cult of Artemis Orthia was transferred and the adjacent building, Omega-Omega, rebuilt. Themelis’
preference for Pausanias is again explicit, since he remarks that the Omega-Omega described by Pausanias (4.31.9) was the same as after this rebuilding in the 3rd century.\textsuperscript{566} It is illustrative of the passive perspective that Themelis does not even raise the possibility that the meaning of the building might have changed in the intermediate four centuries; instead he emphasises continuity.

In addition to the narrow issue of establishing chronologies and identifying objects, Themelis’ archaeology can be characterised as art historical. Archaeological smallfinds from the excavation are only briefly described and dated.\textsuperscript{567} In contrast the works of art, in particular sculptures, are often elaborated on at length. The sculptures are not only dated, but the development of the artistic motives is also traced and attributed to a specific artist.\textsuperscript{568} It is in particular the Messenian sculptor Damophon, mentioned by Pausanias, and his works that Themelis devotes attention to.\textsuperscript{569} Although slightly different, it is still the notion of identification that is the primary issue. However, again, the text of Pausanias provides us with the ultimate solution. Themelis takes Pausanias’ (4.31.10) mention that Damophon made all the sculptures in the Asklepieion, with the exception of the statues to Messene and Epaminondas, at face value.\textsuperscript{570}

Another tenet in Themelis’ archaeology is to associate finds with political history. The extensive reorganisation of the Asklepieion in the late 3rd century is actually associated with the political events in 215/214.\textsuperscript{571} It was after this that the Messenians began to erect the building. Political history is thus used as a chronological backbone, and it furnishes archaeology with more specific dates. The primordial assumptions are not particularly evident as long as archaeology is confined to specific attributions and chronological issues. However, when these are associated with historical events the primordial assumptions are more explicit. According to Themelis, the reason the Messenians decided to rebuild the Asklepieion was to express that they were an authentic ethnic group on the Peloponnese with deep roots in the pre-Doric and Doric past.\textsuperscript{572}

The ethnic identity of the Messenians is conceptualized through the presence of cults and sculptures of deities and heroes. That is, the uniqueness of the Messenians is assumed to have been articulated through the religious

\textsuperscript{566} Themelis 2000, 27.
\textsuperscript{567} E.g. Themelis 2000, 19-23. See also above p. 69, esp. n. 239.
\textsuperscript{568} To mention only one example, Themelis 2000, 70-87, argues that a statue of Theseus is inspired by Polykleitos Doryphoros.
\textsuperscript{569} Themelis has also elaborated on Damophon in Themelis 1994; Themelis 1996
\textsuperscript{570} Themelis 2000, 95.
\textsuperscript{571} The ten dead honoured with an intra muros tomb were killed in the fights in 215/14 according to Themelis 2000, 102.
\textsuperscript{572} Themelis 2000, 95.
dimension. The supreme divinity in the Asklepieion was Asklepios. However, the cult of Asklepios in Messene was of a political character and not in the more widespread form of a healer-god.\footnote{Themelis 2000, 15, 22f., there are finds in the Asklepieion that can be interpreted as votives to the healer-god Asklepios, but they are few. The finds are dated continuously from the Archaic periods onwards. See also above p. 69 and pp. 106f.} This accords with Papachatzis’ proposal mentioned above. Asklepios was venerated as a mythic forefather in the Asklepieion (Paus. 4.3.2). However, origins is important, and Themelis is careful to stress the cultic continuity beneath the temple that was erected after 215/14. The heroine Messene was also venerated in the central temple of the Asklepieion.\footnote{Themelis 2000, 7; Felten 1983, 90.} This reinforces the ethnic character of the Asklepieion. In addition to Messene and Asklepios, it is the cults of Aristomenes and Epaminondas that Themelis emphasises as national in character. The two latter were venerated as hero oikists according to Themelis.\footnote{Themelis 2000, 1f.} Aristomenes was worshipped in a shrine at the Gymnasium,\footnote{Themelis 2000, 28-32, 39. The identification is, of course, based on Pausanias (4.32.2-6; 4.14.7-8).} and Epaminondas had a special status since his cult was in the Hierothysion together with the cults to the Olympian Gods.\footnote{Themelis 2000, 47, 52. For the statue of Epaminondas in the stoa of the Asklepieion, Themelis 2000, 45.}

Archaeological interpretation is reduced to identification in the culture historical conceptualization of Messene. That is, the primary issue is to present a conclusive identification of the finds. This is also the case for the attested cults. That is, the main issue for Themelis is to verify the presence of cults in Messene. The meaning of the cults is, however, self-evidently associated with the ethnic identity. The assumption is that distinctiveness of the Messenians was articulated through the religious sphere. This is coupled with a simple and straightforward correlation of cultural traits with ethnic groups. It is therefore not necessary to address the issue of meaning. The mere existence of Messenian cults proves also the ethnic identity of the Messenians. The possible slippage of meaning is not an issue in the culture historical and primordial frameworks. The emphasis on cults as articulations of identity is, given the straightforward correlation, in some sense resulting in an equating of ethnic identity with the spatio-temporal distribution of cults.

Continuity is, in different ways, a fundamental notion in both the culture historical and primordial models. Archaeologically, continuity is evident in
Themelis’ account through the tracing of origins of cults and ideas. That is, it is of primary importance for Themelis to trace, for instance, artistic influences backwards, and also to establish the origins of the cultic practices in Messene. On another level, the ethnic continuity of the Messenians is also assumed as valid. He traces the origins of the ethnic identity backward to the mythic Doric and pre-Doric periods. This is, of course, only possible to do by adopting a passive view on culture. As long as the content of the Messenian ethnic identity is avoided, the mere attestation of the existence of something denoted as Messenian is sufficient. The ethnonym, together with the assumed cultural articulations, is evidence enough. This is also associated with the notion of authenticity. It is fundamental for Themelis to prove that, for instance, the stories of Aristomenes were kept alive locally by Messenian women through folksongs. The cultural traits need to be authentically Messenian. Change, which at least partly contradicts continuity, is at large not explained but merely noted. That is, few would claim that the cult of Epaminondas was an authentic Messenian cult from time immemorial, but it is nevertheless interpreted as a Messenian cult. There is allowance for change in the pantheon of the Messenians, although exactly how this took place remains unaddressed.

Lastly, two strong traditions in classics are prominent in the conceptualization of Messene. The first is the higher evaluation of ancient texts over material culture. The use of Pausanias in the archaeology of Messene is in fact one of the more blunt illustrations of the reduction of archaeology to the handmaiden of history. Second, the archaeological finds that are elaborated on are the works of art and public buildings. That is, it is the highly esteemed artefacts that are described, while the more mundane everyday artefacts are ignored. The archaeological past is object-centred and de-peopled.

Andania

The mystery cult in Andania plays a prominent role in Pausanias’ Messeniaka. The cult was introduced in Andania already by Kaukon (Paus. 4.2.6), and was given a great importance many years later by Lykos (Paus. 4.1.6). The centrality of the mysteries for the Messenians in Pausanias’ account is further enforced by Aristomenes’ brazen urn, containing the sacred things of the mysteries. Aristomenes hid the urn on Ithome until the founding of Messene, when it was discovered. The symbolic correspondence between the Messenians and the

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578 The chronological spread of finds is important here. The terracotta plaques in particular are used to prove continuity, Themelis 2000, 25-7.
579 Themelis 2000, 32f. See also above p. 68.
mysteries is all too obvious in Pausanias’ account. The secrets of the mysteries were hidden as long as the Messenians were subjugated. The urn was furthermore buried on Ithome, where the principal deity of Messene was venerated. Pausanias (4.20.4) even explicitly connects the fate of the Messenians (as a people) with the fate of the mysteries. According to him, the Messenians will recover their country only if the secrets are kept.

The mysteries of Andania are also important because of the unusually long inscription, found already in the 1858 by the French expedition, regulating the mysteries.\textsuperscript{580} It is traditionally dated to 93/2 BC,\textsuperscript{581} and contains a detailed regulation of various practical aspects of the cult: it postulates dress, the responsibility of officials, fines for breaking various rules at the festivities, and so on.\textsuperscript{582} The scholarly discussion has primarily revolved around details in the inscription.\textsuperscript{583} An important issue has been whether the ‘Megaloi Theoi’ were the Dioskouroi or the Kabeiroi.\textsuperscript{584}

Nevertheless, there are some distinct primordial tenets that are articulated in the culture historical attempts to situate the mysteries in a social context. Georgountzos, from 1979, focuses on dialectological issues and grammatical forms in the language of the inscription.\textsuperscript{585} In his initial discussion, however, where he situates the inscription in the Messenian history, there is two notions that are predominant: continuity, and a passive view on culture. To begin with, he accepts and emphasises the mythic genealogies by which the ancient Greeks conceptualized their past. According to Georgountzos, Andania was inhabited from the Early Helladic period by the peoples Leleges and Kaukones, which were Pelasgians. Andania was furthermore the first capital of Messenia, and the first king was Polykaon, who was married to Messene.\textsuperscript{586} The founding of Oichalia by Eyrutus is in addition taken to reflect the coming of the Aeolians to

\textsuperscript{580} IG \textsuperscript{V}1, 1390 (= SIG \textsuperscript{3}, 736)
\textsuperscript{581} Deshours 1999, 46f. Deshours, and Roebuck 1941, 35, propose 91/0 BC as the date for the inscription.
\textsuperscript{582} See Meyer 1997, 51-9, for an English translation of the text.
\textsuperscript{583} Müller 1993, Zunino 1997, 301-34. Deshours 1999, focuses on another detail, namely that the Messenians turned to the oracle in Argos in order to sanction the regulation. Piolot 1999, in addition is also careful to collect references.
\textsuperscript{584} This debate goes back to 1860. Georgountzos 1979, 7f., follows Sauppe who proposed that it was the Kabeiroi that were venerated in a dissertation from 1860. Another issue is whether the offices mentioned in the inscription are offices of the Messenian state or of the state of Andania. Andania might have been an independent settlement at this time. Georgountzos 1979, 10f., 37, associates the mysteries with the smaller state of Andania.
\textsuperscript{585} Georgountzos 1979, 42f. His main conclusion is that the language in the inscription is basically Doric but has also influences of the Alexandrian koine, which thus undermines Pausanias’ (4.27.11) statement that the Messenians had the purest Doric in his day.
\textsuperscript{586} Georgountzos 1979, 3.
Messenia.\textsuperscript{587} Georgountzos takes this naive acceptance of the ancient mythic genealogies one step further. He concretises these narratives since he proposes that Polykaon introduced the mysteries probably before 3000 BC. The mysteries were then practised continuously until 710 when the Spartans conquered Messenia. During the Spartan period, the genos of the priests sought refuge in Eleusis, keeping the tradition of the mysteries alive, only to return to Messenia with the liberation and reintroduction of the mysteries.\textsuperscript{588}

Ethnic categorizations are given precedence in Georgountzos’ conceptualization of the past. It is fundamental for him to note that the ethnic groups Pelasgians or Aeolians inhabited Messenia at a given time. However, there are several levels of ethnicity. The mysteries are practised continuously from the introduction until the subjugation of Messenia. That is, the mysteries are associated with the Messenian ethnic identity. Political freedom is crucial here. As long as the Messenians are independent, regardless whether they are Pelasgian Messenians or Aeolic Messenians, the mysteries are practised. Georgountzos adheres to the characteristic primordial simple correlation between cultural features and an ethnic identity. The Messenian ethnic identity is symbolised by the mysteries of Andania. The ethnic category ‘Messenians’ is furthermore postulated, but the content of the identity remains unaddressed. The notion of continuity is also fundamental for Georgountzos. The mysteries are practised from time immemorial when they are introduced by the first Messenian king. However, there are also temporal variations in how the mysteries are preserved. The genos of the priest in exile preserves the secrets during the Spartan occupation, which makes it possible to reintroduce the authentic cults with the liberation of Messenia. Georgountzos’ conceptualization is fundamentally based on a passive view on culture. The mythic genealogies in Pausanias’ account are taken at face value, taken to represent authentic historic facts. It is illustrative that Georgountzos, although he only relies on the inscription and Pausanias’ narrative, manages to propose a date for the existence of the first Messenian king Polykaon some 3000 years earlier.

\textbf{A comment on other sanctuaries}

In addition to the archaeological activities in Messene, at the Bronze Age tombs, and the discussion about the mysteries at Andania, there are two other

\textsuperscript{587} Georgountzos 1979, 6.
\textsuperscript{588} Georgountzos 1979, 8f.
sanctuaries that have been excavated in Messenia: the sanctuary of Apollo Korythos,\textsuperscript{589} and the sanctuary at Aghios Floros.\textsuperscript{590} Versakis' publication of the Apollo Korythos sanctuary from 1916 is a preliminary report, and as expected he describes and dates architectural features and finds. Chronology is fundamental, and the activities at the site range from the 8\textsuperscript{th} century to Roman times.\textsuperscript{591} It is important to Versakis to note the influence, or origins, of the finds, often according to political (ethnic) categorizations.\textsuperscript{592} Finds from the 5\textsuperscript{th} and 6\textsuperscript{th} centuries are, for instance, attributed to a Lakonian workshop.\textsuperscript{593} Parallels to the Apollo Amyklai cult in Sparta are also drawn for this period. The delimited analytical focus, however, has the result that the finds, beyond the association to the major political periods, are not historically interpreted. Thus, although finds are attributed according to ethnic categories, the cult is not associated with any ethnic group. Ethnicity is thus of minor importance despite the distinctly culture historical focus of the publication.

Valmin’s publication from 1938 of the sanctuary to the river-god Pamisos at Aghios Floros is in many respects similar to Versakis’ publication. Valmin, too, focuses on describing and establishing a chronology of the architectural features and finds. There are finds ranging from the 6\textsuperscript{th} century to the Roman period at the site.\textsuperscript{594} Ethnic categorizations are again used to classify the finds.\textsuperscript{595} Valmin additionally presents a historical interpretation of the temple. The proximity of the sanctuary to hot springs, together with the character of the finds and in particular the inscriptions, makes Valmin conclude that Pamisos was venerated as a healer-god.\textsuperscript{596} Noteworthy is that the interpretation of the cults is firmly anchored in Pausanias’ text. Thus, once more archaeology is reduced to a method that empirically verifies the ancient sources. Valmin, like Versakis, does not associate the cultic activities with an ethnic group.

\textsuperscript{589} Versakis 1916. Meyer 1978, 196f., collects the references.
\textsuperscript{590} Valmin 1938, 417-65, is the principal publication. But also Valmin 1933-34, 20-3; Valmin 1934-35, 42f. Meyer 1978, 183f., collects the references.
\textsuperscript{591} Versakis 1916, 117f.
\textsuperscript{592} Tellingly, the spear butt that has received attention lately is merely attributed to the Methanioi, but the interpretation ends there, Versakis 1916, 114f. See also above pp. 109f.
\textsuperscript{593} Versakis 1916, 100-3.
\textsuperscript{594} Valmin 1938, 441, 445, for finds from the Archaic period, some narrowed down to the later half of the 6\textsuperscript{th} century. Valmin 1938, 454, pottery from all periods from the Archaic to the Roman Imperial period has been found.
\textsuperscript{595} Valmin 1938, 455, where pottery is Lakonian or Messenian.
\textsuperscript{596} Valmin 1938, 464f.
Hero cults

The later reuse of the Bronze Age tombs has received considerable attention in the last decades. The archaeological evidence in Messenia has a unique distributive pattern and in contrast to the other regions, primarily Attika and the Argolid, where the reuse peaks quantitatively in the Geometric-Archaic period, there is a second intensive phase of reuse in the Late Classical-Early Hellenistic periods in Messenia. The following 25 Bronze Age tombs contain evidence dated to the Late Classical and/or Hellenistic periods;\textsuperscript{597} Voidokoilia; Tragana (Tholos 2); Osmanaga (Koryphasion); Volimidia Angelopoulos 4; Volimidia Angelopoulos 5; Volimidia Angelopoulos 2; Volimidia Angelopoulos 6; Volimidia Kephalovrysys 2; Volimidia Angelopoulos 10; Volimidia Angelopoulos 11; Volimidia Kephalovrysys 4; Volimidia Voria-Tsoulea 1; Routsi (Myrsoinochori), Tholos 2; Papoulia; Koukounara 4; Kremmidia; Tourliditsa; Nichoria-Vathirema; Nichoria-Karpophora (Akones); Dafni-Daras; Antheia (Thouria); Vasiliko; Psari; Kopanaki; and Peristeria.

The traditional interpretation of reuse in the tholos tombs is that they result from religious activities. Exactly which category of cult has been practised is to for controversy. Hero cult is still the dominating concept, but also ancestor cult, tomb cult, and cult of the dead have been proposed.\textsuperscript{598} Later burials are also attested at several of the sites.\textsuperscript{599} The religious dimensions of the reuse have been called into question, and more profane explanations have been proposed. This questioning has, however, primarily concerned individual sites. The reuse overall is still primarily associated with religious activities. Chronologically, the reuse in Messenia was most intense in the Late Classical-Early Hellenistic periods, in absolute dating ca. 350-300.\textsuperscript{600} There is of course variation among the sites, and in some instances the reuse continued well into the Roman period.\textsuperscript{601}

Religion is a sphere that has been credited with a fundamental centrality in the conceptualization of antiquity. A governing tenet in classical studies is that social groups and identities were articulated through cults. Typically, in the culture historical model, the issue has been to establish which group(s)

\textsuperscript{597} This number is based on Boehringer 2001, 309, table 16. See Table, pp. 72f., for references.
\textsuperscript{598} See also below p. 210.
\textsuperscript{600} Korres 1981-82, 371.
\textsuperscript{601} E.g. Marinatos 1953, 244f., argues that the cult in Volimidia Angelopoulos 6, was continuous from the Hellenistic to the Roman period. On the other hand, Marinatos 1955a, 255, the finds in Papoulia are attributed to one isolated event. Boehringer 2001, 260, dates these finds to the first half of the 6th century.
practised which cult(s). A category of cult, which more directly evokes the notions of continuity, is hero cult, and in particular perhaps the hero cults practised at the Bronze Age tombs. Fundamental to the conceptualization of Messenia is the unusually many examples of Late Classical-Early Hellenistic activities in the tombs. The evolutionary model proposed by Nilsson in 1927, explaining hero cult as a development of the Mycenaean cult of the dead, is perhaps abandoned nowadays, but nevertheless continuity is still an important dimension.602 Both Valmin and Marinatos emphasised the notion of continuity in their interpretations of the tombs they excavated.603 Although the break in the archaeological record at most of the sites makes it impossible to argue for continuous cultic activities from the Bronze Age to the Roman period, ethnic continuity is still invoked.604 The considerable break in the archaeological record during the Archaic-Classical period is explained by a Spartan prohibition. Nevertheless, the primordial explanation of the resurrected intense activities in the 4th century is that the Messenians preserved their traditions during the Spartan period. Fundamentally, ethnic continuity explains the temporal variation in the archaeological record. Other scholars, for instance Pantelidou, Peppa-Papaioannou, and Korres, have adhered to this basic, and primordial, model proposed by Marinatos.605

Korres resumed archaeological investigations of the Bronze Age tombs in Messenia in the 1970s. The main issue for Korres is to differentiate between different kinds of reuse. He questions the a priori assumption that evidence of reuse is the result of cultic practices. Many of the activities identified as cultic are in Korres’ view instead the result of profane reuse, such as shelter, refuse dumps, animals falling accidentally through the ceiling of the tombs, etc.606 In addition, Korres is also careful about the issue of who was venerated, leaving open the possibilities that it was specifically named heroes, anonymous heroes, or ancestors.607 Put differently, Korres postulates strict criteria in order to accept archaeological material as proof of cultic activities. In effect, it is only the finds of terracotta plaques and/or votives that conclusively prove cult in Korres’

603 See above pp. 70f.
604 There are, of course, exceptions. Thus Marinatos 1960a, 198f., argues for continuity from Archaic to Hellenistic periods, in Volimidia Angelopoulos 10 and Angelopoulos 11.
606 Korres 1981-82, 442, Tragana was used as a shelter; 436, Dafni was a dump of dead or deceased animals; 417, Koukounara 4, a pyre is not evidence in itself for cultic activities; 440, Papoulia a refuse dump.
607 Korres 1981-82, 366f.
view. The presence of prepared animal bones also indicates cult, but only if osteological examinations prove that they were prepared. The postulation of the strict criteria can be attributed to an influence of the processual urges to develop more scientific models in archaeology. This means often that ‘scientific’ methods are invoked as proof. Korres is, in other words, one of the scholars that are influenced both by culture historical and processual archaeology.

Nevertheless, the culture historical, and primordial, assumptions are in the end governing Korres' interpretation. Let me return to the animal bones. Although Korres accepts these as proving cult only after osteological examinations, he further argues that bones are evidence of cults only if they derive from animals mentioned as sacrificial animals by Pausanias. In other words, Korres evaluates the ancient texts higher than the archaeological evidence in a culture historical way. The restricted analytical focus on the description of the material record, combined with the absence of a socio-dynamic explanatory model, further enforces the culture historical side of Korres' archaeology. This leaves little room for interpretation. Yet, Korres' brief historical interpretation is governed by primordial assumptions. Although Korres refutes the association of the Dorian invasion with the collapse of the Bronze Age palaces, he nevertheless accepts the veracity of the Dori ans. Pausanias' (4.3.6) mention of the co-existence of the Dori ans with the native Messenians is taken at face value by Korres. Consequently, according to Korres the native Messenians practised cult in the Bronze Age tombs. Korres, like Marinatos, argues that the Spartans prohibited the Messenians to practise their cults. However, the Messenians preserved the tradition and resumed these practices intensively during the period 350-300. In the end, then, the ethnic continuity ultimately explains the phenomenon. The association of the cultural

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608 These have also been found at the Voidokoilia-tholos. Peppa-Papaioannou 1987-88; Korres 1988a; Korres 1987, 735f. It is illustrative that Korres 1985, 163, refers to the terracotta plaques found at Voidokoilia as ‘proof’ of chthonic and hero cult. Themelis has also found the same kind of plaques in Messene, see above p. 69, esp. n. 239. Peppa-Papaioannou and Korres restrict the date to the second half of the 4th century, while Themelis argues for a continuous tradition. Illustrative is Korres interpretation of Peristeria. He questioned cult at this site until a terracotta plaque was found in the vicinity of the tholos, Korres 1988b, 26f. Korres 1988a, 325; mentions also that a plaque was found in Antheia in 1984.

609 Renfrew 1985, 11-26, by now classic identification of criteria for interpreting cultic activities, is perhaps a not too farfetched parallel, despite the differences.

610 Korres 1981-82, 377. It remains unclear which passage in Pausanias he has in mind.

611 Korres 1981-82, 369.

612 Korres 1981-82, 370.

feature (despite the scrutinisation of it by Korres) and an ethnic identity, or group, is again simple and straightforward in an explicit primordial way.

**Summarising remarks**

The culture historical conceptualizations of the history of Messenia during the Late Classical and Hellenistic periods focus on two subjects: political history and religion. With the founding of Messene in 369, the Messenians gained their own independent political entity. Consequently, despite the uncertainties concerning the political organisation of Messenia, Messenia enters the field of political history of ancient Greece. The ancient sources, however, focus on the actions of the political and military great men of history, and minor players surface predominantly when the major powers are concerned with them. Primary issues for scholars dealing with political history are thus the events and relations between political entities. Change, from a Messenian perspective, is caused by external factors. This, coupled with the culture historical obsession of strict adherence to the textual sources, results in a past propelled by individual political leaders, while social, political and/or ethnic groups are reduced to passive collectives at the mercy of these leaders. The restricted analytical focus on political events, may on a superficial level, convey an impression of a dynamic conceptualization of the past. Nevertheless, on another level the primordial essentialism is prevailing. There is a distinct supremacy of political boundaries and identities in the culture historical conceptualization of the past. The dynamic and flexible image of the past, with endless political alliances and military campaigns, is due to the restricted analytical focus and only enabled by a negligence to address the issue of the content of the political entities. That is, since exactly what it means to be a Messenian remains unaddressed, and thus the validity and content of this categorization is a priori assumed, the prevailing perception of ethnic identities as monolithic, static and fixed is further enforced.

The distinct focus on events results also in less interest in ethnicity than for previous periods. Since ethnic identities are regarded as static, ethnicity as a concept is deprived of any explanatory value in the field of political history. This stands in sharp contrast to studies that focus on religion. In addition to ancient texts, archaeological evidence has been used in the culture historical conceptualizations of Messenian religion and culture. Regrettably, however, archaeology is reduced to a handmaiden of history — a method to confirm ancient texts. Archaeological publications describe and date the evidence, and interpretation ends when finds are fixed on the spatio-temporal grid. Naturally,
studying Messenian religion is thus a matter of verifying cults. The temporal variation in practice is explained by the Messenian ethnic continuity. That is, the resurrection of cultic practices attested both through Pausanias and the archaeological excavations proves the preservation of the Messenian ethnic identity during the period of Spartan domination. Put differently, the ethnic identity of the Messenians is explicitly conceptualized as static, fixed and unchangeable. Since the scholarly discussion pays more attention to the origins of cults than to the meaning, the association between an ethnic identity and cultural features is again perceived as simple and straightforward. Thus, the characteristic primordial feature of a passive view on culture is again evident.

The primacy of the Dorian identity in the conceptualization of the earlier periods is now replaced by the Messenian ethnic identity. This is, in my view, an effect of the dominance of political history in classics. With the independence of Messenia, this identity is turned into the primary analytical entity. The absence of meaning, as an issue, has thus a profound effect since political categorizations are accredited with a normative role, governing all other aspects of life.
Primordialism — a reiteration

The primordial model is characterised by the ultimate assumption that ethnic affiliations are universally determinative for human interactions. The ties between members of ethnic groups are unusually strong, since they are founded on the sharing of the same given social life, such as common blood, language, territory, religion, etc. Ethnicity is an innate, primordial, quality. Furthermore, the characteristics of an ethnic group are perceived as unchangeable by the primordialists.

The primordial model is, strictu sensu, an anthropological model, originating in the works of Shils and Geertz and focusing on the issue of ethnicity. Although the conceptualization is cast in a new analytical terminology — i.e., ethnic groups are analysed instead of races or nations — the primordial model can, in my view, be regarded as a continuation of the preceding wider race and nationalism discourses, since they emphasise similar notions. One such notion is that national, racial, or ethnic divisions are assumed to be the most relevant characteristics for human nature. Scholarship can therefore restrict its analytical focus to the identification of characteristic cultural traits of ethnic groups. The tendency in classics to end archaeological interpretation once artefacts are attributed to a specific group, is illustrative of this. On another level, features in the past, ranging from characteristic archaeological artefacts to social institutions, are explained by innate qualities of the ethnic, national, or racial identities. Although there is an admitted cultural variation, this is conceptualized as superficial with little or no bearing on the deep-seated characteristics of the ethnic groups. Since identities are regarded as static, the content is a minor question. Ethnicity or ethnic identity can be established from more well-known times, occasionally even in the present, and then traced backwards. The focus on the characteristic traits of the ethnic groups, in turn results, on the whole, in a neglect of the context of the group. Ethnic groups are, in a sense, de-historicized since their essential traits prevail through time and place. In addition, human interaction is conceptualized as axiomatically governed by in-group amity and out-group enmity. That is, people always prefer to interact with other persons from the same ethnic group, while having, in general, hostile relations to members of other groups.

Scholarship is influenced by the socio-political context in which it is practised. The focus in classics and archaeology on nations, races, and ethnic
groups as prime analytical entities can be attributed, in some sense, to the influence of the wider discourse of nationalism of the 19th and 20th centuries according to which the world was conceptualized as a mosaic of nations. Another way to put it is that nations, races and ethnic groups are normative for the conceptualization of the past, since the past is ordered according to these entities. Academic disciplines tend to formalise and focus on their specific issues. Indeed, there is a remarkable continuity in classics, since many fundamental issues formulated in the 19th century still receive considerable attention. The scholarly tendency to focus on restricted minute details, often resulting in an un-reflected utilisation of ethnic labels, only serves to enforce this view. To categorize the past ethnically without a distancing scrutiny of the labels inevitably results in essentialism.

Some tenets, for instance the notion of origins, are fundamental in classics and archaeology, but receive little attention by the primordial anthropologists. Classics differ also in that language has been given a primary role for the conceptualization of the past; ethnic identities have often been equated with dialectological groups. Nevertheless, on a more abstract level the disciplinary differences are minor. Essentialism prevails across the disciplinary demarcations. Likewise, the image of the mosaic of cultures encapsulates conceptualizations beyond classics. Lastly, the passive view on culture, which means that the evidence is interpreted as straightforward reflections of reality, is also a method that cannot be confined to the studies of antiquity.

A fundamental notion for the conceptualization of ancient Messenia, within the culture historical tradition, is to establish exactly what happened. A consequence of this aim is the need to establish one authoritative version of the past. Inconsistencies in the evidence are regarded as major problems and must therefore be solved. The density of the evidence has profound effects on the scholarly debate. A governing principle is that the more detailed the ancient accounts are, the more focused on details is the scholarly debate. The tension between literary and archaeological evidence is discernable here. Classics have, traditionally, evaluated the literary evidence higher. Accordingly, the general framework of the early history of Messenia presented in the literary sources, particularly Pausanias’ text, is on the whole accepted and the archaeological evidence is situated within it. Indeed, archaeology is primarily used to fix finds on the spatio-temporal grid. Put differently, archaeology is reduced, in effect neutralised, to a handmaiden of history.

The subordinate role of archaeology is facilitated by the passive view on culture. Since the essential traits of a culture are assumed to be unchangeable,
archaeology can focus on the distribution of artefacts while the content and meaning can be ignored and explained through the literary evidence. It is exactly because culture is perceived as static that the notion of origins is crucial. The passive view, coupled with the axiomatic assumption that culture is static, makes it possible to use Pausanias’ genealogy of the first Messenian kings as authentic and preserved traditions about the earliest history of Messenia. That is why a 5th-century vessel bearing the inscription ‘Pohoida’ is regarded as evidence of the existence of a contemporaneous Achaean sub-stratum in Messenia, or that Messenia was Achaean prior to the Dorian intrusion, some five to seven centuries earlier. These assumptions in turn, coupled with the notion that ethnic divisions are most relevant, result in the tendency to classify artefacts according to ethnic labels.

National independence is another fundamental notion. Messenia is, with the notable exception of the revolts, absent in the ancient literary sources for the period of the Spartan occupation. The everyday life of the subjugated groups in the Spartan state is of no relevance to the ancient historians since they focus on political events. The close readings of the ancient sources, accompanied by the view of the past as a mosaic of cultures, results in an enforcement of this neglect in the primordial model. In other words, the conceptualization of the past as consisting of bounded monolithic entities means that dependent groups are deprived of their place in the past. The essentialistic entities are either politically independent or simply absent. Put bluntly, from a generic, primordial position there is no Messenian history for the Classical period. Nevertheless, despite the silence the Messenians managed somehow to preserve their identity. The Classical period is, then, from a primordial Messenian perspective, conceptualized as a period of transition.

However, although the Messenians are deprived of a proper history of their own, in the confined primordialist perspective, during the Classical period, there is a history of Sparta. The conceptualizations of the relations between the Spartans and the helots or Messenians can be divided into two positions. One group of scholars conceptualize the Spartan society as governed by a tension between helots and Spartans. This explanatory scheme is, needless to say, embedded in essentialistic notions since these social groups are perceived as monolithic bounded entities, although ethnic divisions are downplayed. The ancient sources, however, do not present such a simplistic view of the Spartan-helot relations. In addition to the political turbulences, there are also accounts that present more friendly relations; these are harder to explain for this group of scholars. A second explanatory scheme upgrades the ethnic divisions and
draws an analytical boundary between Messenian and Lakonian helots. The hostile relations between helots and Spartans are accordingly associated with the Messenian helots. Friendly relations, in turn, describe the interaction between Lakonian helots and their masters. Thus, this group of scholars not only subscribes to essentialism, but also credits ethnic affiliations with a universally determinative role. The primordial notion of generic hostile relations between different ethnic groups is all too obvious. A final remark remains to be made; both models are bipolar, and the perioikoi — the third major social group in the Spartan society — are not included in them.

Continuity and preservation are other governing tenets in the culture historical and primordial models. These notions are in particular conceptualized through religious structures in ancient society. A fundamental thread in classics, traceable back to the 19th century, is that social groups in ancient Greek culture were articulated through religious structures. Social, including ethnic, groups descending down to family units, all had their own cults. Typically, a cult, a mythic narrative or a specific religious feature is regarded as emblematic of a social group. This, coupled with the essentialistic perspective, results in a tradition that focuses on the distribution of cults. That is, religious studies within the primordial and culture historical model, like archaeology, focus on identification and distribution of the evidence. Parenthetically, the notion of identification is more widespread. For instance, when economy is discussed, the focus lies on establishing exact numbers, while socio-economic aspects remain unnoticed. Since the scholarly focus, in addition to the association of cults with particular groups, is on the establishment of distributive patterns, ethnic identities are reduced to cultural traits. Variations in the practice of the cults are not regarded as possible re-formulations of meaning, but rather as directly correlating to the presence or absence of ethnic groups. Within the primordial model, the existence of Messenian cults prior to and after the Spartan period proves, in other words, that the Messenian ethnic identity was preserved.

The assumed structural stability in the religious sphere stands in sharp contrast to the prevailing image of the Hellenistic political history, which consists of a seemingly endless web of wars and alliances. The past is conceptualized as a long sequence of events and is, on a superficial level at least, dynamic. The complexity in the political landscape further provides the scholars with a perfect rationale to focus on establishing exactly what happened. Thus, the focus on great men in the ancient literary sources, and the positivistic adherence to close readings, results in a discourse blinded by the
military and political actions of individual leaders. In other words, the past is
dynamic as long as it is restricted to the higher levels of the political hierarchy.
There is a conceptual polarisation between active powerful great men and
passive collectives. Social groups are reduced to being passive bystanders,
merely reacting to the external stimuli. Put differently, the Messenians are, also
during the Hellenistic period, one monolithic entity. The boundaries between
the political entities are static, and overall impermeable. The political entities,
labels (i.e., the Messenians), are taken at face value, and since the content of
these labels is not an issue the notion of the past as a mosaic of cultures is
enforced.

One basic tenet in classics remains to be addressed. According to an
evolutionary perspective traceable back to the 19th century, the ancient Greek
culture is conceptualized as increasingly complex. With the increasing socio-
political complexity, causation is to a higher extent attributed to cultural factors
and individuals. Ethnicity, defined as static in accordance with the primordial
model, is thus deprived of its explanatory value. That is, ethnic affiliations are
used less and less to explain the past. The terminological shift, however, does
not have the effect that the Hellenistic period is conceptualized as less
essentialistic than the preceding periods.
Instrumentalism

There was one movement which dominated much of the nineteenth century Europe and was so pervasive, so familiar, that it is only by a conscious effort of the imagination that one can conceive a world in which it played no part: it had its partisans and its enemies, its democratic, aristocratic and monarchist wings, it inspired men of actions and artists, intellectual elites and the masses: but, oddly, enough, no significant thinkers known to me predicted it a future in which it would play an even more dominant role. Yet it would perhaps, be no overstatement to say that it is one of the most powerful, in some regions the most powerful, single movement at work in the world today; and that some of those who failed to foresee this development have paid for it with their liberty, indeed, with their lives. This movement is nationalism.

Berlin 1979, 337.

Instrumentalist Ethnicity

It is possible to regard the conceptual shift from race to ethnicity, which gradually took place in the 1950s and 1960s, as a way to undermine the essentialistic assumptions of the race and tribe discourse. This aspect is more evident in the instrumentalist model, which came to dominate ethnicity studies during the 1970s and 1980s, than in the primordial. A larger number of scholars had an instrumentalist perspective than a primordial. Instrumentalism includes, accordingly, a greater number of diverging opinions, in part focusing on different aspects. In general the instrumentalists delimit ethnicity from culture and society, in contrast to the primordialists who equate it with culture and society. According to the instrumentalists, ethnicity is not an innate and universal phenomenon, but a flexible strategy that is highly dependent on the contemporaneous context; ethnicity is a dynamic, not a static phenomenon. An important issue is also the varying degree of salience of ethnicity. It does not always govern what people do; instead, its relevance depends on the context. The context or situation is furthermore given a determining role, since ethnicity
is regarded as a process that emerges from interaction. Ethnicity has two facets: inclusion (it promotes in-group identity and cohesion); and exclusion (it excludes the others from the group). Ethnicity can, but does not need to, be a defining aspect for human interaction.614 This delimitation of ethnicity was taken one step further by some instrumentalists, who even argued that ethnicity as a phenomenon (in reality) emerged in the 1950s.615

Although, needless to say, strictu sensu instrumentalism is a heuristic condensate, and there are several instrumentalists incorporating primordial aspects in their positions, it is possible to discern a few schools within it. The publication Ethnic Groups and Boundaries from 1969, edited by Barth, must be said to epitomize the instrumentalist position. It marked a turning point in ethnicity studies. Barth and his followers argued that what is important is what the individuals believe themselves to be — an emic position — not what the scholar categorises them to be. He also argued that we should focus our interest on the boundaries between groups. The Manchester school among others Cohen, Epstein and Mitchell comprised a second school of instrumentalists, and consisted mainly of anthropologists focusing on the organisational aspects of ethnicity. They studied ethnicity in the Third World and argued that ethnicity varies with the situation. They are often labelled situationalists. Finally, a third school is the political scientists from the US, who studied ethnic groups in their own country. They too focused on the organisational aspects of ethnicity. Although organisation in general was important for the instrumentalists, the two latter groups focused particularly on political organisation. This categorization is one of many possible ways to categorize the instrumentalist position.616 There is a terminological slippage here; instrumentalism can denote the whole range of scholars — including the tensions between the various positions — or only, more concretely, Barth or the US political scientists.

Another way to differentiate scholars in the instrumentalist model is between subjectivists and objectivists. In the first group we can place those who focus on the individuals, and like Barth they argue that ethnicity should be studied through the conception of the actor. The second group consists of

614 There are abundant short descriptions of the instrumentalist position, e.g. Bentley 1987, 26; Scott 1990, 148.
615 Glazer and Moynihan 1975, 16
616 Banks 1996, makes a similar categorisation. There are, however, many other ways. The different scholars were inspired also by other models outside the ethnicity field by which they can be labelled; Jones 1997, 72, for instance, labels Barth 1969b, cultural ecologist; Eidheim 1969, social interactionist; Hechter 1976, neo-marxist. Cf. Calhoun 1994; Ortner 1984, for differences and similarities between the various models.
scholars who emphasise the collective aspects of ethnicity, and like Cohen they focus on the organisational aspects of ethnicity.\textsuperscript{617} However, this distinction is also relevant on another level. In a broad sense the subjective, or emic, tradition in social sciences regards ethnic groups as culturally constructed groups that affect behaviour, and this is characteristic of instrumentalists at large including both Barth and Cohen. The objectivist, or etic, tradition in the same broad sense regards ethnic groups as distinct cultural groups which are conceptualized in isolation.\textsuperscript{618} There is yet another terminological confusion around the corner here. The primordialists are overall objectivists, and the instrumentalists in general are subjectivists. This dichotomy can, however, be used with the instrumentalist model; there are instrumentalist subjectivists and instrumentalist objectivists.

**Barth and the Emic Perspective**

Barth’s publication from 1969 epitomizes the instrumentalist position.\textsuperscript{619} He developed his position in opposition to the traditional (read primordial) conceptualization of ethnic groups in anthropology. To repeat, the traditional conceptualization holds, in essence, ethnic groups to be biologically self-perpetuating; to consist of shared cultural values (displayed through unity in cultural forms); to be a framework of interaction; and to be clearly distinguishable from each other. Distinctions of separate peoples are furthermore primarily conceptualized through culture, while differences in cultural repertoire are perceived as differences in ethnicity.\textsuperscript{620}

Barth departed from this simplistic view and argued instead that ethnic groups are social organisations and that culture is often the result of ethnic group organisation. An ethnic group can be spread over different ecological

\textsuperscript{617} Jones 1997, 72, 75.

\textsuperscript{618} Jones 1997, 56f. In the early days, prior to the polarisation of primordialism and instrumentalism in the 1970s, these positions were highlighted by the debate between Narroll 1964, Narroll 1968, (objectivist) and Moerman 1965, Moerman 1968, (subjectivist) on the Lue in northern Thailand, see Jones 1997, 58f.

\textsuperscript{619} Barth’s influence cannot be overestimated. Olsen and Kobylniski 1991, 6, mentions that Despres 1975, 189, divides ethnicity studies into before and after Barth. Another indication is Vermeulen and Govers 1996, a publication which is the result of a congress devoted to an evaluation of Barth 1969a. Tellingly Banks 1996, repeatedly states the relation between various scholars, including primordialists, and Barth 1969a. It is primarily the introduction, Barth 1969b, 9-38, that has been influential. See also Eriksen 1993. There are also misconceptions floating around about Barth’s position; e.g. Malkin 2001b, 12, claims that Barth argues that there is no ‘core ethnicity’, which ignores Barth’s case study.

\textsuperscript{620} Barth 1969b, 9-12.
milieus, as in his own case study of Pathan identity, and can show differences in organisation and cultural repertoire within the group. In contrast to the traditional conceptualization, he also argued that ethnic distinctions are not the result of isolation, but in fact depend on interaction between the groups. Inter-group interaction does not result in the fading of distinctions, but instead these often persist, not to say increase, with interaction. Fundamentally, Barth anchors his view in three theoretical assumptions: (1) it is the actor's conceptualization of his/her own identity that should be the focus — the emic position — not the other way around in which scholars categorize people into ethnic categories; (2) scholars should focus on the processes that maintain and generate ethnic groups; and (3) in order to observe the processes, the investigations should focus, not on the internal structure and history of the groups, but instead on the boundaries and boundary maintenance.

To state the obvious, ethnic affiliation is thus not a matter of a scholarly categorization of different cultures through the identification of different traits that are held to reveal an essentialistic feature of the group. Instead, according to Barth, ethnicity should be regarded as social processes that determine the interactions of actors. Although ethnic affiliation can be articulated through cultural traits, it does not need to. Barth departs from the one-to-one correlation between ethnic groups and cultural unity. Parenthetically, Barth denotes two analytical categories with the term 'culture': first, overt signs of ethnic affiliations (symbols); and second, basic value orientations (behaviour). Furthermore, it is important to recognise that it is not the sum of objective, cultural, differences that is relevant, but only the specific traits that are considered significant by the actors themselves. Still on the individual level, Barth acknowledges that single actors can switch ethnic affiliation. Since ethnicity is a self-ascription, an individual can both augment and diminish ethnic identity depending on the situation, and also pursue a new identity — to cross the boundaries between ethnic groups. Ethnicity is a flexible instrument.

There is also flexibility on the collective level. Since ethnicity is flexible in Barth’s view, it becomes impossible to investigate only cultural characteristics as expressions of ethnic affiliations without considering their deployment. The notion of boundary is crucial in this respect; it, not the cultural stuff, defines the

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621 Barth 1969b, 11, 13.
622 Barth 1969b, 10.
623 Barth 1969b, 10.
624 Barth 1969b, 13.
625 Barth 1969b, 14.
Instrumentalism

The articulations of ethnic affiliations are not directed exclusively to members of the same group, but perhaps more crucially, also towards others; the boundary is drawn between two or several groups. They form a kind of symbolic boundary that delimitates the group. Expressions of ethnicity are thus in particular maintaining the boundary. There are two aspects of the flexibility of the boundaries: (1) they are permeable for individuals, but persist despite the flow of persons over them; and (2) they move back and forth depending on, primarily, socio-political circumstances — some things may be part of the boundary at one moment, and others at another moment. The fluctuation of the boundary depends on the groups on both sides of it. In other words, the boundary is partly constituted and determined by the very interactions across it. Ethnicity, as regarded with the instrumentalist position, is relevant both internally and externally — it is about both inclusion and exclusion. Thus, an ethnic group cannot be delimited once and for all; both the limits of it and what it is constituted of are variable. Shifting the focus from the cultural stuff to the boundary has one other fundamental consequence for Barth. The continuity of an ethnic group is not traceable through cultural traits. Ethnic categorizations persist, firstly, only if they are socially significant in a wider context, and secondly, as long as the boundaries are maintained.627

Although Barth regards ethnicity to be a fluctuating phenomenon, he also argues that when it is salient in a social context, then it is impossible to disregard ethnicity. It is superordinate to every other categorization, and constrains the behaviour of the actor in these situations.628 Behaviour is yet another key term in Barth’s account. Ultimately, ethnicity is determined by behaviour, and this becomes evident in his case-study. A Pathan is a Pathan when he is ‘doing Pashto’, which comprises a set of customs and common ways of thought.629 In a sense then, at least in this case-study, Barth posits essential characteristics of an ethnic group. He comes close to the primordial position here, since on the collective level he does not elaborate on the organisational aspects, but argues that an ethnic categorization rests on certain cultural stuff, such as patrilineal descent, Islam, and Pathan customs.630 Individual Pathans,

626 Barth 1969b, 15.
627 Barth 1969b, 14f., 38. Cf. also Banks 1996, 12f.
628 Barth 1969b, 17.
629 Barth 1969c, 119.
630 The internal tensions of the instrumentalist model are evident here. Cohen 1974, xii, xv, criticised Barth for taking a primordial position. Interestingly, one of the major issues raised against instrumentalism, namely that ethnic categories are regarded as empty vessels, is also raised by Cohen 1974, xv, against Barth. See also Eriksen 1993, 54-6.
however, may cross ethnic boundaries (due to economic and/or political factors); thus on an individual level ethnicity takes the form of a strategy.

Finally, what ultimately governs the social organisation are the socio-economic and political aspects. Ethnic categorizations, and the utilisation of culture, are organised, or more correctly perceived, as adaptations to the ecological niches occupied by the group. This aspect is in retrospect one of the more crucial in Barth’s study from an archaeological perspective, since this largely influenced the processual instrumentalist position. Barth was, needless to say, also influenced by the social theories of the time; there is a thread of social interactionism in his work. He emphasizes ‘status’ and ‘role’, and ethnicity is regarded as a strategy.631

In particular Barth’s introduction in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* has been influential. The various theoretical proclamations, however, were also elaborated on in the case-studies of the volume. Barth’s own case-study has already been mentioned. Another example is Haaland, who elaborates on the notion of boundary in his study of the Fur and Baggara in Sudan. Actors cross the boundary for socio-economic reasons and ethnicity is regarded as a strategy, but the boundary does persist. Ethnic groups are social organisations, and the determinant for them is the mode of subsistence.632 One problem for both Barth and Haaland is that they neglect the wider context of the social systems under discussions. That is, the relations of the ethnic groups are detached from the state and national identities, which presumably affects the relations, too.633 Eidheim focuses on the relation between the Saami and the Norwegians in his case-study. Ethnicity is viewed by Eidheim as a personal strategy, which is augmented or suppressed depending on the situation. He coins the term ‘stigmatized identity’ — identity with negative connotations that is suppressed in various situations — to describe Saami identity on the individual level. On the collective level, ethnic categorizations are regarded as full-fledged roles that the individuals enter.634

**Situationalism**

Barth and his (Norwegian) colleagues focused mainly on the flexibility of ethnicity on an individual level. Ethnic categories on the collective level were

631 Barth 1969b, 10, 22-4; Jones 1997, 73f.
632 Haaland 1969.
on the contrary regarded as relatively fixed and stable entities, despite the stressed elusiveness of the boundaries. Ethnic identities were regarded as full-fledged roles into which the actor entered, and thus there is a core of the ethnic groups — albeit consisting of behavioural schemes and not of cultural traits. The instrumentalist position should, however, not be reduced to Ethnic Groups and Boundaries; it is time to turn to other instrumentalists who focused on the collective level.

Cohen’s Introduction to Urban Ethnicity from 1974 is perhaps the most programmatic contribution from the Manchester school. He focused on the collective level and regarded ethnic groups as interest groups. They are collective organised strategies, maintained in order for the members to improve their economic and political situation. Like the Norwegian school, culture is in Cohen’s view utilised in order to organise social conditions and maximize economic and political interests. Cultural traits do not reveal ethnic groups, but are manipulated to some degree in order to articulate, for instance, ethnicity; both these analytical notions are, however, secondary to socio-political and economic factors. Ultimately, ethnic affiliation consists of shared practices, which are a mode of behaviour. Normative behaviour, which is socially constructed and objectively represented through cultural traits, is the analytical key. Ethnicity is separated from culture, but can be partially revealed through it. In Cohen’s account, what people think is what people are influenced to think through the objective cultural forms, but this is of secondary importance; it is what they do that matters. Furthermore, ethnic groups are regarded as part of a larger social system, in which they interact with other groups; ethnic groups cannot be studied in isolation. The organisation of the group is given primary importance by Cohen, and at one point he even equates the group with the organisation. Finally, Cohen stresses a typical instrumentalist feature. Ethnicity, for him, does not denote cultural differences between isolated societies, but is a feature in societies with a high degree of interaction, particularly in cities. Dense inter-group interaction augments ethnicity as a factor in that particular social system.

The instrumentalist perspective peaked in the mid-1970s. Another of the more important publications in the instrumentalist model is Glazer and Moynihan’s publication, Ethnicity: theory and experience from 1975. The two editors, and most of the contributors, are political scientists who primarily...
elaborate on ethnic minorities in the US; this is the third instrumentalist school. Ethnicity for them is a new phenomenon in the world. According to them, the world changed drastically after the Second World War. One example of this profound change was the failure of the idea of the US as a melting pot. Ethnicity, as a phenomenon in reality, is in their view a new phenomenon in the post-Second World War world. The conceptual shift from race to ethnicity is thus paralleled by a new reality.\textsuperscript{638} Ethnic groups are in their account regarded as interest groups in a political system. An ethnic group (and they focus on the collective level) is accordingly an organisation through which political claims can be made against the central authorities.\textsuperscript{639} Culture is of secondary importance for them, but also a problem. They recognise that the (originally) divergent cultures of the ethnic groups have become more and more similar, yet the emotional attachment persons feel to their culture seems to have increased.\textsuperscript{640} In their view, concrete cultural differences have declined in the West and they are merely symbolic today. However, social differences based on (cultural) traits such as religion, language and national origin have something in common and can therefore be referred to by the new term ‘ethnicity’.\textsuperscript{641} In other words, Glazer and Moynihan are not part of the emic position, since ethnicity for them is an objective strategy in a political system. Arguing for the novelty of the ethnicity, they also distance themselves from the primordial position since many ethnic groups, despite their primordial claims, are relatively recent creations (i.e., the existence of the particular groups, not the phenomenon itself).\textsuperscript{642}

In general instrumentalists, then, argue that ethnicity is a strategy that is salient due to socio-political conditions, and culture is utilised to express ethnicity and other aspects. The 1970s saw, metaphorically speaking, an explosion in ethnicity studies, and exactly which aspects in the socio-political system were the prime determinants of ethnicity was an important issue. Different scholars focused on different aspects. Hannerz, for instance, in his 1974 study of ethnic solidarity in urban America regarded ethnic groups as interest groups that used ethnicity strategically. Despres and Otite, both published in 1975, focused on inter-group competition. Another major theme


\textsuperscript{639} Glazer and Moynihan 1975, 7, 10f.

\textsuperscript{640} Glazer and Moynihan 1975, 8.

\textsuperscript{641} Glazer and Moynihan 1975, 18.

\textsuperscript{642} Glazer and Moynihan 1975, 19.
was the political mobilisation of ethnicity, which was the major issue for Vincent in 1974, Bell in 1975, Ross in 1980, and Roosens in 1989.643

Ethnicity is one of many possible ways to organise a society. Arguing that ethnicity is a strategy in the modern world means also that ethnicity can be placed close to other categories; the two most obvious are gender and class. As far as gender goes, it is remarkably absent from the ethnicity discourse. Class and its relation to ethnicity has been an issue for some instrumentalists. Patterson, writing in 1975, is perhaps the strongest advocate of the equating of ethnicity with class in stratified societies. Put briefly, Patterson argues that ethnic affiliations are a matter of choice that ultimately depends on the socio-economic factors of the context; the only condition for ethnic groups, he states, is that the members themselves identify with each other.644 Ethnic groups exist only as long as there is an economic benefit in ethnicity.645 It is an instrument for the actors by which they maximize their interests. Furthermore, Patterson argues that it is a matter of choice; the actors choose to emphasise their ethnic identity when they need to, and in other situations they repress it. The cultural traits are of no interest, since the relations of cultural traits to an ethnic group are arbitrary.646 Class precedes every other affiliation, and is regarded as the most determinative social category in a society. Patterson also traces a development whereby ethnic groups are slowly absorbed by dominant groups.647

Another important contribution in Glazer and Moynihan’s publication is Horowitz’ *Ethnic Identity*. He accepts the importance of boundaries, but develops Barth’s elusiveness to include the group itself. In Horowitz’ account the group identity as such is also in constant flux, a flux that has been underestimated.648 Horowitz’ discussion is guided by several characteristic instrumentalist assumptions. Ethnic (group) identity is a putative ascriptive identity that is heavily dependent on the context. He also emphasises that ethnic identity is dependent on the relation to others, and thus it is a result of

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643 I follow Jones 1997, 75, here; Hannerz 1974; Despres 1975; Otite 1975; Vincent 1974; Bell 1975; Ross 1980; Roosens 1989. See also Eriksen 1993, 47f.

644 Patterson 1975, 305, 308, esp. 309. Patterson has, in other words, also an emic position. Patterson 1975, 306, 312, means that the view that ethnic identity is involuntary and cannot be changed is a fallacy — explicitly contra Isaacs 1975, see above p. 42.

645 Patterson 1975, 337, 347, 348.

646 Patterson 1975, 306. One sentence in particular can be read as a fundamental critique of archaeology: “A theory of ethnic cultural elements and symbols is an absurdity, because these symbols are purely arbitrary and unique to each case.”

647 Patterson 1975, 320.

interaction. In Horowitz’ opinion, although culture is important it is determined by the social factors.\textsuperscript{649} Despite the emphasis on the fluidity of ethnic identity, Horowitz means that identity tends to crystallize around symbols (mostly cultural traits), and it is through them that we can study ethnicity. There may also be differences on various levels of identity in Horowitz’s account — he allows for multiple identities. Since the relation between identity and symbols is so variable, Horowitz makes a distinction between indicia and criteria (this distinction has been influential on later scholarship). The importance of the various symbols depends on the context, and shifts perpetually. An ethnic criterion is the symbol(s) ascribed with an absolute determining value. That is, something is invested with a determining meaning in the specific context, and members of a group have to share the symbols in order to be considered as members of it. The indicia are operationally indicating ethnic groups, but are not determining. They are shorthands of ethnic differentiations in a context. The emphasised fluidity means also that the relevance of indicia might increase, and thus it might become a criterion, and vice versa.\textsuperscript{650}

Horowitz can be regarded as representative of a wider group in the instrumentalist model, which stresses the fluidity of both individual and collective levels of ethnic group identity. This is clearly a development in the instrumentalist model that departs from Barth and Cohen, who to some extent reified ethnic groups. Horowitz together with Vincent, Handelman in 1977, Wallman in 1977, and R. Cohen in 1978 attempted to avoid such reifications by investigating the perception and expression of ethnicity.\textsuperscript{651}

A general problem of the instrumentalist approach, in anthropology, is the negligence of the past. It has been pointed out that already Barth’s analysis of ethnicity is ahistoric. Ethnicity, in the instrumentalist conceptualization, is governed by the contemporary conditions; and the past, traceable through culture, is at best an ‘empty vessel’ invested with meaning by the present. Usually, however, the past is not taken into consideration at all. In the end, if the past is considered at all, it is regarded as a contemporaneous construct in order to achieve certain goals.\textsuperscript{652} It should be mentioned that this seems to be characteristic of anthropology on a wider level, and structural-functional approaches in general neglect the past. The implicit position on history in the

\textsuperscript{649} Horowitz 1975, 114, 118f., 137.
\textsuperscript{650} Horowitz 1975, 119f. His discussion has influenced Smith 1986 and Hall 1997. See above pp. 14f.
\textsuperscript{651} I follow Jones 1997, 75, here. Handelman 1977; Wallman 1977; Cohen 1978. See also Eriksen 1993, esp. 43f.
\textsuperscript{652} Eriksen 1991, 128f. Also Chapman, et al. 1989, 3f.
instrumentalist model would be that the present invests and invents meaning in the past. That is, the past is used to some extent in the present for various means. This was explicitly discussed during the 1980s. In The Invention of Tradition from 1983 scholars elaborate on how the past, or more precisely traditions, are invented by ethnic and/or national groups in order to legitimise their position in modernity. This is also the general theme of History and Ethnicity from 1989. The fundamental question in this volume is ‘How did the present create the past?’

The polarity in ethnicity studies between the primordialists and instrumentalists seems to decline in the 1980s. This does not mean that instrumentalist assumptions were altogether abandoned. However, a development is discernable, and studies attempting to reconcile the two models emerged. As so often in the humanities and social sciences, a new theoretical model does not replace earlier ones, but continues parallel to them – influencing each other to some degree. This account of the instrumentalist position, however, ends in the mid-1970s, primarily due to the fact that from 1977 onwards archaeology developed its own instrumentalist discussion, in particular influenced by Barth’s study.

The attempt to question the essentialism of the primordial model did not end with the decline of the instrumentalist model. On the contrary, it was strengthened by the development and introduction of post-structuralist ideas in the 1990s. Instrumentalism was confined within the realist tradition, and the scholarly representation of reality was never an issue. Neither did the instrumentalists manage to escape essentialism on all levels, since in many respects ethnic groups on collective levels were still regarded to have some essential core characteristics. With post-structuralism (and it seems to be the label ‘social constructivism’ that is used most often in ethnicity discussions) the essentialistic notions are questioned on a more profound level. The constraints of culture and language, or more accurately, representations are stressed. There is, of course, a wide range of positions within post-structuralism. The more moderate variants of it come close to the instrumentalist position. This tension is familiar and cuts across most of the disciplines in the humanities and social sciences in the 1990s.

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653 Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983.
655 E.g. Smith 1986.
The instrumentalist position includes a greater variety of opinions than the primordial. What is even more striking is that there was considerable disagreement between different scholars, focusing on different aspects, within the instrumentalist model. Nevertheless, I think it is valuable to summarise the criticism of the instrumentalist model as a whole in a couple of points. The criticism came from many different positions, but perhaps foremost from primordialists. Jones, however, conveniently summarises it, and I follow her in this section.657

Firstly, instrumentalists often fall into a reductionistic trap, since ethnicity is often defined by observations from specific contexts, and then assumed to universally conform to the particularities from the specific context. Often, due to the inclination to study modern political minorities, ethnicity is reduced to manipulation of culture within the interest groups. Taking the instrumentalist position to its extreme, ethnicity is regarded merely as an instrument that serves the purposes of (the leaders of) interest groups.658

Ethnic groups are, secondly, regarded as empty vessels (e.g., by Barth) into which aspects of culture may be poured. Since ethnicity is reduced to economic and political relationships, the cultural aspects are frequently neglected. Culture is separated from ethnicity and given a secondary role, determined and/or manipulated in accordance with socio-political factors. One consequence of this is that instrumentalists take the existence of ethnic group identity, and cultural traits symbolising this identity, as self-evident. Some even go so far as to say that culture is irrelevant to ethnicity.659

Thirdly, although instrumentalists elaborate on the flexibility of ethnic identity — both in the sense that it changes due to contextual determinants, and that the relevance of ethnic identity differs — they ignore the psychological processes on which ethnicity is fundamentally based. Ethnic identity is regarded as a putative self-ascribed identity based on diversity, but also as something that is manipulated. However, instrumentalists tend to ignore the issue of why individuals accept the manipulations.660

The instrumentalist position, fourthly, assumes that human behaviour is rational, governed by an urge to maximize the interests. On an individual level,
actors can switch identity when it suits their interests (political or economic). On a collective level, ethnic groups are regarded as interest groups (primarily political organisations) that serve to maximize the interests of their members. Essentially this means that all members of a group pull in the same direction. Conflicting interests within a group, perhaps due to power structures, are ignored. Likewise, they do not elaborate on the possibility that various subgroups perceive their identity differently. Arguing that ethnicity is a strategy and individuals can switch identity has a problematic consequence. If ethnicity is a matter of choice in order to maximize the interests, then stigmatised identities are a major contradiction to the instrumentalist position. In fact, stigmatised groups show not only a remarkable continuity, but ethnic identity is often more salient for these groups than other groups. Another related aspect is that ethnic groups are sometimes hard to distinguish from other interest groups, such as class or political organisations, in instrumentalist accounts. There are also instrumentalists that regard ethnic groups as a variation of class.

The last more general problem of the instrumentalist position is the past. One tenet running through instrumentalism is its ahistoric approach, a feature present already in Barth’s study. The instrumentalists argue that ethnicity is a strategy dependent on socio-political factors, and delimits thus ethnicity (or a specific form of ethnicity) to be relevant to specific contexts only. Ethnicity is a result of interaction and socio-political conditions in a given situation. A major problem, however, is that members of an ethnic group argue for the primordiality of their group. In other words, the emic answers (which the instrumentalists hold to be more true) contradict the instrumentalist position. Furthermore, regardless whether ethnicity draws on an invented past, the perceived past can nevertheless be a considerable factor in a given situation, which instrumentalists tend to ignore. The past is also ignored on an analytical level; in the sense that instrumentalists de-contextualize the social system, they study from the past.

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661 Jones 1997, 79; Eriksen 1991, 128f. This aspect of the instrumentalist model seems to have been part of a wider thread in anthropology and sociology, see e.g. Ortner 1984, 141-4, whose characterisation of the ‘political economy’ school comes close to the instrumentalist model.
663 Eriksen 1991, 128f.
664 Suny 2001, 862–5, mentions the strong emotional reactions caused by his constructivist analyses of Armenian identity.
Instrumentalist Archaeologies

The instrumentalist model shares many features and assumptions with the processual model in archaeology. Both models can be characterised by functionalism as well as by the use of systems approach and ecologism. Furthermore, both models stress that human actions are motivated by an urge to maximize interests, and that the mode of subsistence is crucial for differentiation between social groups. In essence human activities, culture, are conceptualized as adaptations to ecological factors. Furthermore, society is a system in, or a striving for, equilibrium with its environment. A final, and perhaps more elusive, trait that I regard as similar in the two models, is that they both delimit their objects of study. That is, instrumentalists delimit ethnicity from other features in society. Processualists, likewise, delimit for instance the economic from cultural or ideological features. The processual delimitation is on a wider scale, since it does not focus on ethnicity specifically but on archaeology in general. In fact it is somewhat ironic that the two theoretical models (instrumentalism and processualism), both of which are anchored in functionalism, differ so much. That is, ethnicity was broadly rejected as a topic with the help of functionalism in archaeology, while instrumentalism developed a new framework with the help of the same model. Lastly, it should be noted that archaeology, on a worldwide scale and also within classics, is still dominated by the culture historical approach.

The instrumentalist model was introduced in archaeology in 1977 when Hodder published his study from the Baringo district in Kenya, and in the same year the *Norwegian Archaeological Review* contained a couple of articles with an instrumentalist view on ethnicity. These instrumentalist studies in archaeology are also from an archaeological perspective firmly anchored in the processual model. Studies concerning ancient Greece lagged behind as usual (one is tempted to say), however. The instrumentalist approach did not have an impact until 1997 when Hall’s *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity* was published.

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666 Olsen and Kobylinski 1991, 10. See also above, pp. 16f.
Processual Instrumentalism

It should again be mentioned that processual archaeology generally did not pay much attention to ethnicity. Ethnicity had been an intrinsic part of the culture historical archaeology, and one expression of the processual reaction against this dominant model was to shift attention to other issues. Although ethnicity and identity were a minor and peripheral issue for processualism, ethnicity nevertheless is present in Binford’s programmatic Archaeology as Anthropology from 1962. Ethnicity, identity, and group solidarity are manifested through stylistic variation of artefacts in Binford’s account. The stylistic variations are separated from the three categorizations, ‘technomic’, ‘sociotechnic’, and ‘ideotechnic’, which are based on the adaptive function of artefacts. The stylistic qualities cross-cut the functional categories. The formal, stylistic qualities of artefacts have the function of “promoting group solidarity and serving as a basis for group awareness and identity”; and Binford continues: “stylistic attributes are most fruitfully studied when questions of ethnic origin, migration, and interaction between groups is the subject of explication.” Thus, Binford delimits ethnicity to stylistic variation, but maintains culture historical assumptions. That is, ethnic groups are perceived as coherent entities, and artefactual variations (albeit restricted to a limited part of the artefact) corresponding to ethnic variations. In other words, processual studies on ethnicity were typically restricted to the study of stylistic variation. Furthermore, in accordance with the culture historical tradition, the perception of material culture is not an issue, and the appropriation of stylistic variation is assumed to be straightforward and coherent — it is a passive, un-reflected relation. In short, Binford accepted in many respects the normative tradition, albeit implicitly, since he focused on other issues.

A governing distinction in processual archaeology was between style and function. It was not until the late 1970s that this came under fire, with the debate between Sackett and Wiessner. Ethnicity was passively reflected in

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667 Fotiadis 1997, elaborates on this. He identifies two reasons; (1), 108, the changed general intellectual context during the Cold War; and (2), 106, the method of conducting studies on a regional scale.
668 Binford 1962, 219.
669 Binford 1962, 220.
670 Jones 1997, 110f.; Fotiadis 1997, 103f. Fotiadis detects an anxiety in Binford’s account when he deals with identity, explained perhaps by the necessity to accept culture historical explanations.
stylistic variation, according to the processual model.\textsuperscript{671} The fundamental break came when archaeologists began to discuss style as active communication. In opposition to Sackett, Wiessner argued that artefactual style is active communication. According to her, style is one of many ways through which identity is actively communicated to others.\textsuperscript{672}

Hodder’s ethnoarchaeological studies in the Baringo district of Kenya epitomise the instrumentalist approach in archaeology. It is with the impact of these studies that archaeologists broadly realised the complexity of the relation between material culture and ethnic boundaries. Hodder argues against the common assumption that similarity in the material record is the result of interaction between groups.\textsuperscript{673} The different ‘tribal’ groups in the district maintain cultural differences through some parts of the overall material assemblage, for example dress and daily-use items such as pots. As far as economy or subsistence patterns are concerned, there are no major differences between the groups. Thus, the only way to explain the differences between the tribal groups is to regard material culture “as a language, expressing within-group cohesion in competition over scarce resources.”\textsuperscript{674} In border areas with a small degree of economic ‘stress’ (abundant resources to exploit and thus also less competition) similar artefacts are found across the boundary. The boundary maintenance is higher and more clear-cut in other border areas with a higher degree of economic stress. In other words, differentiation in material culture is not due to ethnic differentiation but due to competition between groups. The need to articulate the identity increases with conflict; material traits are used to express internal cohesion.\textsuperscript{675} Specific artefacts can be used to express in-group cohesion when there are tensions; in other words, increased differentiation in specific categories of material culture can be viewed as increased exchange between the groups. The spatial distributive patterns develop as the result of tensions.\textsuperscript{676} Hodder means therefore that it is “invalid to tot up the numbers of cultural similarities and differences between archaeological assemblages, erect “cultures,” and assume that these have some ethnic, linguistic, or other significance.”\textsuperscript{677} Put differently, archaeology cannot identify ethnic groups in the past, but can study ethnicity, which in Hodder’s view is the processes “by

\textsuperscript{671} Jones 1997, 112f. Also Wobst 1977, see Olsen and Kobylinski 1991, 14f.
\textsuperscript{672} Jones 1997, 113f, 119. Sackett 1991, summarises this debate. See also above p. 35.
\textsuperscript{673} Hodder 1979, 446. Hodder 1977, for details.
\textsuperscript{674} Hodder 1979, 447.
\textsuperscript{675} Hodder 1979, 447.
\textsuperscript{676} Hodder 1979, 448, 450f.
\textsuperscript{677} Hodder 1979, 452.
which interest groups use culture to symbolize their within-group competition in opposition to and in competition with other interest groups.” In other words, ethnicity is a strategy utilised by interest groups that try to maximize their interests. Ethnicity is furthermore regarded as part of a larger system, and there are also other categorizations expressed in the material culture, for example sex and/or age groups. The systems approach, characteristic of processual archaeology, is also revealed in the importance Hodder ascribes to the concept of stress. In functionalist systems approaches, societies are viewed as having a natural equilibrium between different parts. Stress indicates an imbalance that the system tries to correct, in this case through the construction of in-group cohesion achieved through overt signalling of identity; ethnicity is explained through its function. Although this view is part of the instrumentalist model, there is also a difference to Hodder’s account. Material culture is used actively to articulate cohesion. The differences in material culture are not due to passive practices, but to active communication of identity. The need to communicate an identity is triggered by subsistence stress, and is not a universal feature of human practices.

Not only Hodder turned to the instrumentalist school in the late 1970s. From 1977 onwards ethnicity was a topical issue among Norwegian archaeologists such as Haaland 1977, Kleppe 1977 and Odner 1983. Olsen and Kobyliński summarise the Norwegian school, in 1991. They were influenced by Barth’s study, and devoted their attention to Saami ethnicity. The Norwegian interest in ethnicity was in general one of eco-functionalism, where ethnicity is regarded as a strategy with a system. Importance is placed on boundary and boundary maintenance, and modes of subsistence are crucial for differentiation. The different scholars pursued different threads in their studies. Barth’s influence on these studies is stressed, and elaborated on by Olsen and Kobyliński. Their survey of ethnicity studies ends with a proclamation of what ethnicity is in their view. They regard it as a dynamic phenomenon, a strategy for the pursuit of different interests, but also an identity, or a way to articulate cultural
expressions. Due to the complexity of the phenomenon, ethnicity consists of many variables that could be “combined in different ways, under different circumstances.” They mean that ethnicity studies thus should move beyond the long tradition of identifying ethnic groups, by focusing beyond the boundary and considering both content and form. Their proposal is thus one that urges archaeologists to synthesize the primordial and instrumentalist position. However, they emphasise aspects that are closer to the instrumentalist side, which becomes evident in the following concluding remark: “ethnicity studies should be shifted from attempts to identify and name particular ethnic groups to studies of the phenomenon of ethnicity.” In other words, ethnicity is a process, and although manipulated, it is only manipulated as long as the cultural traditions of a people accept the manipulations. The manipulations need to resonate with the traditions; ethnicity is not an empty vessel.

Historical archaeologists in America have also dealt with ethnicity, for instance McGuire in 1982. He is clearly influenced by the instrumentalist position. It is by analysing boundaries (read symbols) — their emergence, stabilisation, maintenance and disintegration — that we can study ethnicity in McGuire’s view. Ethnicity in the instrumentalist model is primarily perceived as a behaviour (which to some extent is articulated in symbols). Ethnicity is regarded by McGuire as a behavioural pattern which can result in material correlates (read symbols) through which archaeology can determine ethnicity. He identifies three material correlates that particularly pertain to ethnicity: food remains, ceramics and architecture. It is noteworthy that these “data classes would yield sufficient information to make ethnic identifications.” Thus the archaeological record, albeit delimited to specific traits, should be used to identify ethnic groups. Boundary maintenance is important in McGuire’s view, but in opposition to amongst others Barth and Hodder, who argue that resource competition determines ethnic boundaries, McGuire means that it does not explain why the group formation is channelled along ethnic lines. In his view, power relations between the groups determine the degree of boundary maintenance. The more unequal the power relations, the higher the boundary...
maintenance between the groups. Another clear indication of the processual position taken by McGuire is that he aims to formulate a general theory of ethnicity. According to McGuire’s theory, then, three factors explain the variation in boundary maintenance. Resource competition motivates group formation, which is channelled along ethnic lines due to ethnocentrism, and the power relations between the groups determine the character of the relationship. This hypothesis can be tested through studies that focus on the ‘ethnically sensitive’ categories of the archaeological record, together with the historical data that can provide further information by documents recording income, taxes, etc. McGuire’s study combines several aspects of the processual and instrumentalist models. Ethnicity is a process of interaction between groups; he formulates a theory that can be tested. It is also interesting that he elaborates on both historical and archaeological evidence. For McGuire the historical data are more trustworthy, and he adopts a common view in the processual model whereby historical archaeologists are claimed to be in a favourable position to test various theories, thanks to the more abundant record.

The various theoretical demarcations are not always clear, and there are publications incorporating aspects of several models. Shennan’s volume *Archaeological Approaches to Cultural Identity* from 1989 is such an example. In its *Introduction* Shennan sets the theoretical scene, and due to its wide influence it is worthy of a discussion. From the perspective of ethnicity studies, this introduction is definitely an instrumentalist study, and this is even more obvious in the different case-studies in the volume. Washburn’s and Dolukhanov’s chapters, for instance, are instrumentalist. The introductory theoretical discussion by Shennan incorporates, from an archaeological perspective, aspects of both processualism and post-processualism. In a sense it can be placed within the post-processual model; there is a profound interest in the history and politics of archaeology. Shennan furthermore argues against the possibility that the concept ‘archaeological culture’ can be a neutral term. It is preconditioned by the political significance of archaeological cultures in his

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688 McGuire 1982, 172. McGuire is one of few to elaborate on power relations in ethnicity studies, see Olsen and Kobylinski 1991, 22.
689 McGuire 1982, 159.
691 McGuire 1982, 174f.
692 McGuire 1982, 175. Similar claims have also been articulated by classicists, e.g. Dyson 1993, 205.
693 Dolukhanov 1989, esp. 269; Washburn 1989, esp. 158.
He has a moderate post-processualist position. He argues against the relativism as represented by Shanks and Tilley, and does not agree that the past is solely constructed by present conditions; it is also constrained by the objects we study. In other words, although Shennan accepts a profound influence of the present conditions on our conceptualization of the past, he argues for an objective existence of the past we study. Ethnicity (as a phenomenon in reality) should be distinguished from spatial variation (the instrumentalist and processual distinction of ethnicity from culture) and be regarded as a “self-conscious identification with a particular social group at least partly based on a specific locality or origin.” Adopting this position, however, challenges the possibility to discuss ethnicity in prehistoric times. In Shennan’s view, ethnicity, as an objective phenomenon in reality, is confined to the wide horizon of early states — in other words, to the periods and places from which we have at least some textual evidence mentioning various groups. Although these ethnonyms are only pertinent to specific conditions, for instance the political sphere (i.e., the mention of ethnic groups should not be regarded as relevant to all spheres, and should thus not be taken as essential entities), ethnicity is a real, albeit subjective, phenomenon. Furthermore, ethnicity is a process that is preconditioned by a re-evaluation of other kinds of identity existent in states; kinship is mentioned as an example. ‘Archaeological cultures’ as a concept is rejected, in particular the idea that cultures are entities that determine the development. Following Mann, Fried and Geary, who all argue that ‘societies’, ‘tribes’, and ‘peoples’ did not exist as essential entities, and when they are found in the historical and/or archaeological sources are only situational shorthands, Shennan means that it is the contemporary socio-political conditions that have been projected on to the past.

It is time to summarise the processual and instrumentalist positions. Ethnicity is delimited and distinguished from material culture. That is, the culture historical assumption that spatial variation in archaeological material

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694 Shennan 1989, 6.
696 Shennan 1989, 3f.
697 Shennan 1989, 14.
698 Shennan 1989, 17.
699 Shennan 1989, 15f.
700 Shennan 1989, 11-4. Mann 1986; Fried 1967; Fried 1968; Geary 1983. Shennan 1989, 11: “Mann (1986) has argued that individual ‘societies’ do not exist; instead we should think in terms of overlapping social networks of varying scales relating to different types of social power, whether ideological, economic, military or political.” This quote comes close to Jones 1997, 123f., conclusion. Shennan’s introduction anticipates in many ways Jones’ study. See above pp. 35f.
reflects ethnic variation, is refuted. Ethnicity is a strategy that emerges through, and is determined by, socio-political factors. It is a factor used by social groups, depending on the conditions. Material culture is in some sense reduced to symbols manipulated along ethnic lines in order to enforce and express strategies; it does not always reveal ethnic groups.\textsuperscript{701} The salience of ethnicity is also an issue, and in contrast to the primordial and culture historical position ethnicity is not regarded as a perpetually determining aspect. Ethnicity is only relevant in interaction between different groups. No ethnic identity, or group, exists in isolation, since there is no need to differentiate along ethnic lines in these situations. Since ethnicity is a strategy, the instrumental position also allows for changing or shifting identities. That is, individuals can pursue new identities. Although these are distinct differences, there are also similarities between the instrumentalist and primordial conceptualizations of ethnicity. In addition, the processualists posit ethnic groups as entities with an unchangeable core, albeit allowing for fluctuating boundaries and individuals to cross the boundaries. Another similarity is that they do not discuss the perception of the surrounding world. That is, both models assume that all persons within a context perceive and evaluate the same things in the same way. Differences due to, say, political or power relations within the groups are not an issue. Likewise, the issue of how and why people conceptualize their world tends to remain unaddressed. Since these issues are ignored, the manipulation stressed by the instrumentalists is sometimes taken too far. That is, they ignore the issue of why people accept the manipulations as ‘authentic’. This remains an unsolved issue for the instrumentalist position.

**Instrumentalist Greeks**

Classics has shown a dramatically increased interest in ethnicity in ancient Greece during the last couple of years. Although archaeology is one of the profound traditions in the studies on ancient Greece, there are also overt differences between archaeology in general and classics. Not least, there are institutional boundaries that certainly affect the agendas of the different disciplines. The recent interest in Classical Greek ethnicity shares many features with the instrumentalist model, as well as with the archaeological discussions about ethnicity from the 1970s onwards. Ethnicity is thus regarded as a dynamic, flexible, situational strategy. It is also a phenomenon that emerges

\textsuperscript{701} Jones 1997, 119.
and persists in contrast, or opposition, to ‘others’ according to these scholars. In short, they argue against the essentializing notions of culture history and primordialism. However, there are also differences between the discussions in classics and archaeology. This is partly due to the available sources. Ancient texts are an important — in fact generally considered to be the primary — category of material for classics. The archaeological record is usually subordinated to the ancient texts. The discussion about ethnicity is no exception. This recent interest in ethnicity is clearly inspired by Barth. A number of British and American scholars, for example Hall and McInerney, notably champion it. These (as a heuristically coherent group) argue for the emic position and the primacy of myths as expressions of ethnicity in antiquity. Although the polarisation between instrumentalists and primordialists is history by now, and these scholars repeatedly claim to reconcile these positions, they are clearly closer to the instrumentalist than the primordial position.

However, instrumentalist influences are also discernable in other publications.\textsuperscript{702} Before I turn to Hall, I will consider a couple of other attempts. Melas’ study from 1988 focuses on the situation of the Dodecanese during prehistory. He regards groups, denoted as ethno-linguistic groups, like the Karians and Luwians as homogeneous and continuous entities during prehistory. These are also denoted as populations, and occasionally Melas discusses the “racial composition of settlements.”\textsuperscript{703} Melas is careful not to use the term ethnicity for prehistoric conditions. He breaks on a superficial level with the culture historical approach, since ethnicity is restricted to modern times, and we should avoid applying modern criteria to prehistory. Nevertheless, he manages to define ethnic groups as follows: “a group of people, territorially grounded or not — identifiable by a common cultural or “racial” background — that defines its physical or cultural boundaries in moments of crisis and change.”\textsuperscript{704} In other words, ethnic groups are bounded and continuous groups that define boundaries when they come under fire, a position that incorporates both the weaknesses and strengths of Barth’s model. This is contrasted with the prehistoric societies on the Dodecanese, which are regarded as open and flexible societies, and thus ethnic affiliation and ethnicity cannot be a relevant factor. Societies are regarded as systems, in a processual manner. Melas argues that there was a population continuation on the Dodecanese during prehistory. The introductions of innovations are not

\textsuperscript{702} One example, Alty 1982, has already been mentioned above n. 166.

\textsuperscript{703} Melas 1988, 118.

\textsuperscript{704} Melas 1988, 115.
regarded as reflections of new populations, but due to “socio-cultural and political-ideological transformations”. Innovations are thus due to external factors that were imposed on the population of the Dodecanese, which adapted to these changes. Ultimately, then, there is a cunning and adaptive Dodecanesian sub-stratum, in Melas view, which persisted through the various externally imposed changes. Effectively, then, populations are regarded as continuous and coherent, although societies are regarded as open and flexible systems. Ethnicity is dismissed as a modern phenomenon, which is contrasted to the open social system of Dodecanesian prehistory. In other words, Melas ironically refutes a primordial and culture historical defined ethnicity and takes a processual view on prehistoric societies, but he manages to reinforce essentialistic notions about social groups (read populations). This is a good illustration of the instrumentalist position, since instrumentalists, while arguing for the dynamic aspects of ethnicity, nevertheless consider ethnic groups to be relatively coherent units.

Yet another attempt to use the instrumentalist position is Hannestad from 2001. Barth’s trademark, the emic perspective, is her theoretical basis for this study. Focusing on pottery, Hannestad states her emically inspired method in this way: Ethnicity should be studied through “the interaction between ceramics and identity from the “inside”, i.e. to study to what extent Greeks living outside the Greek core region used Greek ceramics”; this is contrasted with the view from the outside, which is often studied with the concepts of trade and export. The presence of Greek pottery, and in particular pottery shapes characterised as Greek, are taken as evidence for the presence of Greeks in the Hellenistic East. That is, the culture historical assumptions about culture are not only present but also explicitly governing in Hannestad’s study. Despite a cursory disclaimer that Greekness was not defined by the use of Greek pottery, she assumes that Greeks used Greek pottery. The emic point of view is reduced to mean the presence of Greek pottery shapes in Greek communities — in other words, the distribution of artefacts is assumed to correlate with the distribution of an ethnic group. Furthermore, ‘Greek identity’ and ‘Greek pottery shapes’ are taken for granted, and thus these essentialistic notions are reinforced by Hannestad’s study. In other words, this study is governed by

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705 Melas 1988, 118. Also, 115-7.
708 Hannestad 2001, 10.
culture historical and primordial labelling despite the initial evocation of Barth.\textsuperscript{709}

An intriguing attempt to discuss ethnicity is McInerney’s publication, \textit{The Folds of Parnassos} from 1999, devoted to ancient Phokis.\textsuperscript{710} He holds an instrumentalist position; the mode of subsistence and the physical environment are regarded as determining for ethnic identity. Furthermore, McInerney also articulates the instrumentalist tenet that ethnic affiliations are constructions in a present due to the wide socio-political situation.\textsuperscript{711} Mythological narratives are an important category of evidence for McInerney since it is through them that ethnicity is articulated.\textsuperscript{712} Different mythological traditions, particularly genealogical myths, are seen as articulations of different, contrasting, ethnic identities during the Archaic period. Interestingly he is also explicitly inspired by Braudel and the \textit{Annales} school. In other words, he tries to write a total history of Phokis, and elaborate on ethnicity through the divergences of different narratives (e.g., a topographic, a demographic and a political narrative).\textsuperscript{713} Unfortunately, however, the contrasts and constraints, of the different narratives have the effect that ethnicity becomes less and less discussed in McInerney’s study. Ethnicity is elaborated on for the Archaic period, when the study focuses on mythological and archaeological material, but it disappears in the political narrative, which is the main theme of the Classical and Hellenistic periods.\textsuperscript{714} In other words, ethnicity is implicitly more or less equated with the political development of the periods for which we have sufficient sources (read ancient texts). It is noteworthy that one kind of literary testimony, namely accounts of mythological narratives, is used to reveal the contested nature of ethnicity in Archaic and pre-Archaic periods while the political narratives and events after ca. 500 are not. Furthermore, the contested nature of ethnicity is also evident in the discussions based on archaeological evidence — and that breaks with the usual predominance of textual evidence in classics.

Although different scholars adopted the instrumentalist position more or less independently in the 1990s, it was with Hall’s \textit{Ethnic Identity in Greek
Antiquity from 1997, and the attention it received, that the instrumentalist position became widely recognised in classics. Hall’s argument is that every attempt to construct an essentialistic (primordial) model of pan-Hellenic and sub-Hellenic identities has failed, since identity is never such a simple and straightforward phenomenon. These constructs often equate the limits of the spatial distribution of cultural traits with ethnic boundaries. However, as Hall clearly demonstrates, for every such argument there are also studies that contradict these equations. Given the evaluation of texts as a superior category of evidence by classicists, and by extension language and linguistics, it is primarily dialects that have been equated with ethnic groups in ancient Greece. Typically, a governing assumption is that speech and identity are correlated with each other. Hall’s refutation of this correlation in particular is convincing. He argues for the emic perspective, and against the predominance of etic categorizations.

Nevertheless, Hall works within a realist framework and his aim is to elaborate on ethnicity in Ancient Greece. Hall proposes the following model for the development of ethnicity in ancient Greece. Prior to the Persian Wars it was sub-Hellenic identities — i.e. Doric, Ionian, Aeolian, etc. — that were of prime relevance. The emic negotiations of various contrasting ethnic identities were, according to Hall, primarily expressed through mythological genealogies; various (sub-)Hellenic groups conceptualized their relation to each other through the narratives of fictive kinship and descent. Furthermore, ethnicity was characterized by an aggregative mode in the Greek world. That is, various ethnic groups constructed fictive kinships in accordance with various needs, by which inter-group relations were conceptualized. These fictive kinship bonds developed and became increasingly larger and wider. The relation with ‘others’ (and this is an aspect that, despite his instrumentalist position, Hall manages to ignore) is primarily one of inclusion, or ‘connecting’. The aggregative mode changed during the 5th century due to the effects of the Persian Wars. Ethnic identities, were from the 5th century onwards, characterised by an oppositional

715 Cf. also Jones 1998, 271; Renfrew 1998, 275; in spite of Hall’s claims that the instrumentalist model is dead. Hall has presented his view in a number of publications. Although his position develops and becomes more absolute and definite in his last publication, I treat his position as relatively coherent. The major difference between Hall 1997 and Hall 2002 is that he focuses on the Argolid in the first, and widens the scope to include the whole of ancient Greece in the second.


mode — the ‘other’ (Persian, Barbarian, etc.) was much more prominent in this mode for the construction and perception of identities, according to Hall. However, it was not only the form of ethnicity that changed, but also the content. That is, with the oppositional form of ethnicity, Hall argues, identities in the Greek world also became less ethnic and more cultural (this is an effect of Hall’s strict definition, see below). It was not until the aftermath of the Persian Wars that a pan-Hellenic identity developed according to Hall’s scheme, and this identity was cultural. Hall is, however, anxious to emphasise that cultural identity did not simply replace ethnic identity; the two are not mutually exclusive. Ethnic identities based on fictive kinship continued to exist also in later times, particularly on the sub-Hellenic level.719

The definitions of ‘ethnicity’, ‘ethnic identity’ and ‘ethnic group’ are crucial for Hall. As mentioned above, Hall holds an emic perspective; what matters is what the ancient Greeks, not the contemporary scholarly community, held to be true. However, Hall is not satisfied with an elusive emic definition, such as “ethnic identity is socially constructed and subjectively perceived.”720 He argues that we must define the terms strictly; otherwise they lose their analytical value.721 Therefore, ethnic group is defined as “a putative subscription to a myth of common descent and kinship, an association with a specific territory and a sense of shared kinship.”722 This not only determines membership in an ethnic group, but also distinguishes ethnic groups from other social groups. The restricted definition Hall proposes has problematic consequences, in my view. Ethnicity is contrasted to culture. Culture, and cultural identity, is, however, not defined in such a restricted way as ethnicity. Cultural identity remains elusive, and there are many sub-varieties (to borrow Hall’s expression) of it, such as linguistic, religious and occupational identities. Ethnic identity is thus a “specific type of cultural identity”.723 Hall does not confine this definition to ethnicity in ancient Greece but presents it as the universally valid definition of ethnicity. Hall returns to the definition proposed by Weber in 1922.724 The reason scholars have been reluctant to use this definition, according to Hall, is an ideological discomfort since it comes close to the biologically based notions of race. He is

722 Hall 2002, 9. This is perhaps the major difference between Hall 1997 and Hall 2002. Ethnicity is not restricted as explicitly in Hall 1997, although fictive kinship is the criterion for ethnicity, e.g. 25f.
724 Hall 2002, 10.
anxious to underline that this strict definition is not based on proven kinship but merely putative kinship.\footnote{Hall 2002, 13-7, esp. 15 for the emphasis on the belief not scientifically proven.}

Hall’s strict definition of ethnicity marks a (re)turning point, in my view. One of the more profound threads in ethnicity literature is that ethnicity, as an elusive term, was adopted precisely because of the strong essentialistic notions of earlier terminology. That is, one of the advantages of the terminological elusiveness is that it contributes to undermine the essentialistic constructs of social groups and identities. The avoidance of defining ethnicity in the restricted sense that Hall does, might certainly in part be due to the ideological discomfort, but I suspect that an even stronger reason is the anti-essentialistic conceptual baggage of the term.\footnote{This is pointed out repeatedly, e.g. Jones 1997, 141; Suny 2001, 868f.} Identities are always elusive, and the only way to avoid essentialism is to allow for elusiveness in the discussions of these issues. Restricting ethnicity by way of a contrasted delimitation against culture, is in the end, nothing other than essentializing. Furthermore, the scientifically based race discourse that Hall is so anxious to distance himself from becomes instead an issue. Emically, the race discourse was an intrinsic part of the conceptualization of ethnic, racial and/or national identities during much of the 20th century. That is, scientific discourse can be regarded as a strategy by which ethnic claims were made; the fictive kinship was conceptualized through biologically proven similarities. Hall’s anxious disclaimer that the notion of kinship does not need to be scientifically proven in his definition is futile, since kinship was merely one of many strategies to conceptualize ethnicity. To equate ethnic identity with one specific trait still means that ethnicity is ascribed with an essentializing notion, something that was one of the fundamental tenets in the race discourse and the relevant theoretical models. Ethnicity comes very close (in my view confusingly close) to race; the difference is that race was proven with biological arguments and ethnicity is not.\footnote{A distinction needs to be made. Hall’s discussion of ethnicity is not essentializing. He demonstrates the flexibility and dynamic aspect of identities in ancient Greece. However, ethnic groups, and ethnicity (as analytical tools) are equated, as a consequence of his definition, with one specific trait. It is this equation that falls into an essentializing trap.}

Let me return to the analytical value, which after all is the reason for Hall to define ethnicity so strictly. Following his scheme, identity in ancient Greece developed from being ethnic to becoming cultural. Fictive kinship was not a defining criterion for identity after the Persian Wars, but was demoted to being equal to several other (cultural) traits. Identities were based on other traits; these ranged from material culture, livelihood, cults, laws and cultural
‘personality’, in Herodotos’ accounts,728 to sharing a culture according to Isokrates.729 These different traits were drawn upon differently in various situations. In accordance with Hall’s strict definition of ethnicity, therefore, identities are cultural, not ethnic. However, if we contend with a wider definition of ethnicity (but nevertheless accept Hall’s scheme) we would say that ethnic identities in the ancient Greek culture changed from being based on genealogies to identities based on other cultural features; ethnic identities became more and more elusive, at least judging from the available (textual) evidence. Interestingly enough, Hall’s cultural identities are very similar to what Barth characterises as ethnic identities: that is, ethnic identity is based on a mode of behaviour; to be Pashto is ultimately about ‘doing Pashto’ in Barth’s account; to be Greek in Isokrates’ definition is in the end also about doing things the Greek way.730 The analytical pay off (other than for Hall of course) of this neologistic scheme is at best marginal. In other words, once again one is tempted to say that the issue of ethnicity becomes one of defining the terms. I have to evoke the following statement by Eriksen here: “attempts to define ethnicity substantively as a comparative concept … [have] proven curiously fruitless in analysis.”731

Hall’s analysis is ultimately based on textual evidence, according to the well-established tradition in classics. Archaeological evidence is considered to be of second-hand order. It can be used as an additional and complementary source, but is in itself considered to be insufficient. Hall, predictably, refutes the validity of archaeology; it is in the textual evidence that we can find the emic perspective. This is taken one step further, since he argues that what people think (and say) is more important than what they do.732 Thus, archaeology is given a very restricted possibility by Hall, namely to illuminate how material culture is used once ethnicity has been constructed and established by other categories of evidence. He dismisses altogether, however, the issue of ethnicity

728 Hall 2002, 192f. The locus classicus is of course, Herodotos (8.144.2), mentioned on 189, according to which Greekness is characterised as consisting of “kinship of all Greeks in blood and speech, and the shrines of gods and the sacrifices that we have in common, and the likeness of our way of life”. In the characterisation mentioned above Hall, follows Redfield 1985, 98 who has collected references to Herodotos’ descriptions of cultures. See also below n. 746.
729 Hall 2002, 209. Isokrates (Paneg. 50): “the name ‘Hellenes’ suggests no longer a race but an intelligence, and that the title ‘Hellenes’ is applied rather to those who share our culture than to those who share a common blood.”
730 Barth 1969c, 119. See also above p. 179.
in prehistoric archaeology.\footnote{Hall 1997, 142. Cf. Morris 1998a, 270; Jones 1998, 272. Also, Hall 2002, 19-29, for an attempt to clarify his position.} Besides the compulsory urge for a contextual approach,\footnote{Hall 1997, 136.} archaeological evidence is only occasionally used in order to complement the textual evidence. Hall’s dismissal of the possibilities of archaeology is revealing of his position. Ethnicity as a phenomenon in reality is thus delimited to the times and places with a literary record. It cannot be discursively constructed otherwise. A paradoxical consequence of this is that the emic discourse of ethnicity (which is Hall’s aim), is delimited by the availability of a literary record.\footnote{Interestingly, Smith 1986, see above n. 19, and Shennan 1989, see above p. 194, delimits ethnicity to the same horizon.} In other words, in order to have a fruitful discussion about ethnicity we need to prove the discursive construction of it. Ethnicity is thus something more than a heuristic device,\footnote{Despite Hall 1997, 15.} since we cannot think through it unless we can prove it discursively through literary sources.

Arguing that myths were of pivotal importance for how the ancient Greeks conceptualized their world, is a common feature in classics.\footnote{Noteworthy, is Gehrke 2001 who has an instrumentalist perspective and comes close to Hall. Gehrke, too, emphasises the importance of kinship and common origins for identities on 307. Gehrke elaborates on how myths were used to articulate concerns with the past in ancient Greece; his case-study is Magnesia on the Maeander. Gehrke, 298, regards myths as intentional (read emic) history.} Hall’s reading differs in some sense from the historic positivistic tradition that he identifies and argues against. A traditional, historic positivistic reading of myths uses them in order to verify earlier events, most notably population movements at the end of the Late Bronze Age. That is, according to this view, which is similar to the passive perspective, myths reflect real events and can thus be used as arguments for what actually happened.\footnote{Hall 1997, 41.} In Hall’s reading various, partly conflicting, mythological narratives are regarded as residues of ethnic affiliations on a structural level. The myths do not express one authoritative view, but various expressions of ethnic strategies (i.e., one particular myth is regarded as the expression of ethnic claims made by one particular group, which may or may not contradict claims made by other groups). In particular, the mythological genealogies are regarded as expressions of claims by different groups; through the myths, the Greeks conceptualized their affinities with each other, primarily prior to the end of the 6th century.\footnote{Hall 1997, 44.} However, placing such prominent relevance on genealogies has its problems. In order to construct the
genealogies Hall has to rely on textual evidence that chronologically spans over a considerable period. In fact, his method is to collect all variants and then contrast the different narratives with each other.\textsuperscript{740} Thus, on a structural level, the myths in the texts of Pseudo-Hesiodos’ \textit{Catalogue of Women} from the 6th century, and, say, Apollodoros, in the 2nd century and Pausanias in the 2nd century AD, are regarded to reflect ethnic claims and contestations from Archaic times. That is, one particular mythological narrative is (re)constructed from fragments written down from different periods. To complicate the issue even further, these fragments are used to elaborate on flexible ethnic claims prior to 500 BC. Every such narrative then is transmitted, without any major changes, through the passing of a couple of centuries. This is contradictory if we keep in mind that he views ethnicity and culture as flexible. The issue here is whether the accounts of Pausanias and Apollodoros were not influenced by ethnicity in the Hellenistic or Roman periods. The form and content of ethnicity changed drastically in Hall’s own scheme due to the Persian Wars, and thus the conceptualizations of ethnicity would presumably have changed as well.\textsuperscript{741}

Another recent publication in which scholars have adopted instrumentalist positions is \textit{Ancient Perceptions of Greek Ethnicity} from 2001. This volume includes many different approaches, which also shows the complexity of ethnicity in antiquity. Despite the variety of case studies, there is certainly also theoretical unity in it. Most contributors emphasise the instrumentalist approach, with a focus on the emic perspective. They also often argue against the essentializing primordial constructs of identities in ancient Greece. Ethnicity is generally considered to be a dynamic, flexible and contested phenomenon. Nevertheless, the primordiality of ethnicity from an emic perspective is recognised.\textsuperscript{742} It is also noteworthy that these scholars in general accept Hall’s model for the development of ethnicity in ancient Greece.\textsuperscript{743} A theme in this publication is the urge to distinguish between the emic primordiality and the etic instrumentality,\textsuperscript{744} that is, to distinguish between past realities and the emic ‘invented traditions’. I am afraid that I do not see this as a central issue. This distinction shows that identities are constructs, but in the end every identity is

\textsuperscript{740} Hall 1997, 65.

\textsuperscript{741} Hall 1997, 34-66. Cf. also Morris 1998a, 270. This is also a problem for McInerney 1999, see above p. 198.


\textsuperscript{743} Malkin 2001b, 7, 9-12; Cohen 2001, 236f.; Konstan 2001, 36; Antonaccio 2001, 115, 125.


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no more or less than exactly that — a constructs. This distinction is crucial because of a higher evaluation of the etic, objective, past, and it indicates a fundamental positivism. I wonder what would be proven if we can show that an identity is constructed? Would it invalidate the emic perception? From an emic perspective the invention is taken for granted anyway.\textsuperscript{745}

The contested nature of ethnicity is primarily elaborated on through the textual evidence from antiquity. It is in particular Herodotos\textsuperscript{746} and Pausanias\textsuperscript{747} that are discussed in this volume. The divergence of the complexity and contested nature of the ethnicity is exposed by pointing to various, in part contradictory, aspects of the texts. The multifaceted image of ethnicity that emerges has two levels. First, it is shown that the described identities were of a contested and flexible nature. Identities were constructed and conceptualized in different ways — ethnicity was a multifaceted phenomenon. Second, it is argued that the accounts are part of ethnic strategies held by the authors. That is, the elaboration, and exclusion, of certain features of a presented identity is regarded as revealing of the authors’ conceptualization of ethnicity.\textsuperscript{748}

Before I conclude, I will also briefly mention that art historians, and the art-historic tradition in classics, have also used the instrumentalist position. Typically, representations in art are regarded as expressions of various tensions of identities, and not as straightforward depictions of various ethnic groups.\textsuperscript{749} By way of concluding then, the instrumentalist position has only recently been used in discussions about ethnicity in ancient Greece. In part this discussion differs from the archaeological and anthropological. What is notable is that literary evidence is to a higher degree considered as articulating an emic perspective. The archaeological material is used to complement the textual evidence, much in accordance with a long and well-established tradition. There are of course exceptions to this; McInerney and Hannestad have already been mentioned. Another characteristic feature of the instrumentalist position in classics is the strong connection between ethnic groups and mythological genealogies. There seems to be a general agreement that ancient Greeks conceptualized these issues through these narratives. But this has also a consequence. The flexibility of ethnicity is primarily attested to the period prior

\textsuperscript{740}Hall 2001, 172, characterises this as a redundant issue.
\textsuperscript{In particular, Herodotos (8.144.1-2) receives attention.}
\textsuperscript{742}Konstan 2001.
\textsuperscript{743}Konstan 2001, 37, 40f., shows in particular the contested nature of ethnicity by Pausanias’ choice to exclude the Athenian autochthony myth from his account of the Athenian origins.
to the Persian Wars. The axiomatic flexibility of ethnicity, fundamental to the instrumentalist position, is not exploited to the same degree after 500. There are several different reasons for this: in Hall’s case, because of his proposed definition of ethnic identity (the continued flexibility is cultural not ethnic); in McInerney’s study, because of the strong reliance on political history for the period after the Persian Wars. In general, however, the issue of how people came to conceptualize their similarities and differences, on a psychological and perceptual level, is absent. Likewise, the issue of appropriation is absent. That is, fundamentally people within a culture or society are assumed to value specific traits in the same way. Last but not least, the aim is still to analyse the perception of ethnicity among the Greeks. That is, ethnicity is not regarded as an analytical tool by which we think about the past, but as an objective phenomenon in antiquity that, albeit elusive, should be determined.
Instrumentalist Messenians

Perhaps the most fundamental difference between the primordial and instrumentalist conceptualizations of the past lies in their views on culture. That is, whereas the primordial model has a passive view on culture, the instrumentalist position has an active one. The active view on culture is characterised by the notion that cultural features are utilised for specific, primarily socio-political and economic purposes. Ethnicity, like any other part of culture, is also regarded as an instrument utilised for a purpose.

One effect of processual archaeology is that the validity of evidence becomes more restricted in time and place, which results in a higher number of analytical boundaries and entities. Different parts of culture (e.g., the political, religious sphere, etc.) are analytically separated to a greater extent. This in turn means that the correlation between the various parts of culture becomes an issue, and simple and straightforward correlations are undermined. Therefore, it becomes important to establish the association between ethnic groups and cultural features. It is not the whole that reflects an ethnic group but parts of the overall assemblage, which are used to articulate ethnicity, depending on the situation. Put differently, ethnic identity and ethnic groups are conceptualized as dynamic and flexible. The content of ethnic identity, and the articulation of it, changes with time and place to a great extent as a result of the situation.

The active view on culture, coupled with the eagerness to confine the evidence, results also in a more sensitive view on chronology. On one level, the spatio-temporal grid is also fundamental for the instrumentalists, since it is important to verify when and where things happened. Exactitude is thus fundamental to both models. However, there are also differences. In many instances, primordial conceptualizations are characterised by a straightforward identification of objects or features. Since ethnic and/or political boundaries are normative the association is taken for granted. This in turn is turn facilitated by the passive view on culture and enforced by the notions of origins and continuity. The specificity of a culture is explained by the conditions of earlier periods in the primordial model. The active view on culture negates this possibility for the instrumentalists. Since culture changes, the explanations are sought in the specific contemporaneous conditions. Accordingly, continuity is not a pivotal notion in the instrumentalist model.
A major difference between scholars of the primordial and the instrumentalist model is how they date the emergence of Messenian ethnic identity. That is, the primordialists argue that the Messenian ethnic identity existed prior to the Spartan occupation and was resurrected with the founding of Messene. On the other hand, the generic instrumentalist position is that the Messenian ethnic identity emerged during the 5th century in opposition to the Spartan hegemony. This is partly an effect of the confined view on evidence. Since there is no conclusive evidence of a Messenian ethnic identity from the 8th century, we can not assume that it existed. Thus, the instrumentalists argue that the Messenian identity emerged during the 5th century, when there is more written evidence. Two fundamental notions of the instrumentalist model are evident here. First, ethnic identities are regarded as processes that evolve and change. Second, the contemporaneous situation is of primary importance. Ethnic identities are defined in relation to something else. The aspect of exclusion is more prominent in the instrumentalist model.

The history of the early periods plays a prominent role in the primordial conceptualization of the Messenian ethnic identity. In contrast, the earlier periods do not receive any greater attention in the instrumentalist conceptualizations of the Messenians. It is illustrative that both Alcock and Luraghi, who both have a basic instrumentalist perspective, considered the evidence from the period prior to the Spartan occupation as too fragmentary to allow for any accurate historical treatment. The instrumentalist conceptualizations of Messenian identity do not, in other words, treat the Geometric periods and the Messenian Wars in themselves, but rather as parts of a tradition that was constructed by the Messenians after the founding of Messene. The Messenian Wars are thus interesting as part of the constructed past of the Messenians.

As I have pointed out several times, a pivotal tension in classical studies is that between text and artefact. Archaeology is often reduced to confirming the ancient texts in the culture historical model. The role of archaeology in the processual/instrumentalist model is double-edged. A higher stringency means that archaeology is more fine-tuned (so to speak), which means that archaeology has a more independent role and is allowed to question the supremacy of the ancient texts. That is, archaeological evidence is regarded as potential evidence of other facets of life, which the ancient authors do not

750 See Messenian Origins.
751 Alcock 2002a, 132; Luraghi 2002a, 45f., esp. 46 n. 3. See also below Becoming Messenian and Being Messenian.
comment on. This is partly illustrated by the regional archaeological projects in Messenia, where population growth, economic and ecological factors are important aspects unexplored by the ancient texts. On the other hand, the higher evaluation of archaeology in the processual model remains restricted by the ancient texts. For instance, the emergence of the Messenian identity in the 5th century is due to the secure attestation of the term 'Messenian' from this period. Although the veracity of the ancient texts is more narrowly confined, the texts nevertheless remain more important than archaeological evidence from the historical periods.

Due to the narrower confinement of evidence and the active view on culture, the structure of this chapter will differ from the primordialist chapter. The ancient sources have been accounted for in the earlier chapter and I will therefore not treat them as elaborately here, but instead refer to the primordialist chapter when necessary. In addition, this chapter will be structured around issues and themes that govern the instrumentalist conceptualization of the ancient Messenians. This structure will on some level also correspond closer to the instrumentalist conceptualization of the past, which focuses on how the ethnic identities are used in different situations. The thematic structure will follow a basic line. I will begin with the issue of hero cult and continue with the regional archaeological projects. I will then turn to the conceptualizations of helotism, and lastly I will turn to elaborations on the Messenians after their liberation.

Hero Cults

One of the features in the archaeology of Messenia that has received considerable attention is the reuse of the Mycenaean tombs.\textsuperscript{752} Messenia, however, is not unique in this aspect, and both the Argolid and Attika have a widespread reuse of tholos tombs during the 8th-6th centuries. The emergence of the instrumentalist perspective can be illustrated by the elaborations on hero cults by Snodgrass and his pupils during the 1980s. The variations in the proposed explanations illustrate both the differences between the primordial

\textsuperscript{752} There is vast literature on hero cults in ancient Greece, with many facets. I will restrict this discussion to proposed explanations of the reuse of Mycenaean tombs. For instance Pirenne-Delorge and Torre 2000; Hägg 1999; Calligas 1988; Boehringer 1996; Visser 1982; Welwei 1991; Bohringer 1979; Nagy 1979; Nock 1944; Kearns 1989; Kearns 1992; Ekroth 2002; all elaborated on specific aspects of hero cults, that fall outside the scope of this thesis.
and instrumentalist perspectives, and the divergences within the instrumentalist model.

Parenthetically, the terminology as such has been an issue in these discussions. For instance, Antonaccio has made a distinction between hero and tomb cults.753 In the end, I find these terminological debates to be dead ends. The proposed terms have not gained wider acceptance, and other scholars continue to use the term hero cults. I will accordingly also use the term hero cults.

The emergence of hero cults in the late 8th century was, in the primordial model, associated with the spread of the Homeric epics. This hypothesis, proposed by Farnell in 1921, gained adherence with the archaeological finds interpreted as hero cults to Menelaos in Sparta, Odysseus on Ithaka, and Agamemnon in Mykene.754 Cook and Coldstream associated also the emergence and spread of hero cults with an influence from the Homeric epics.755 The ‘Homeric explanation’ was questioned from different perspectives in the 1970s and 1980s. Hadzisteliou Price argued that Homer was aware of hero cults, and thus the phenomenon must have antedated the Homeric epics.756 Nevertheless, the criticism of the ‘Homeric explanation’ was articulated within the culture historical model, and the ethnic identities of the Dorians and Achaeans were taken for granted.757 Hadzisteliou Price ultimately based her criticism on a more restricted view on culture. Snodgrass used the same strategy in his criticism.758 However, in addition he proposed an alternative sociological explanation. With the population growth, peasants began to cultivate new land in Greece. Snodgrass proposed that these free peasants practised hero cults in order to legitimise their claims to the land that they cultivated.759 Put differently, one cultural feature — the practice of hero cults — is explained by the socio-political

753 Antonaccio 1995, 6, elaborations on the differences between hero and tomb cults. Also Alcock 1991, 448 n. 3.
754 Whitley 1988, 174 n. 6, for references to these excavations. These have been re-examined by Ratinaud-Lachkar 2000, who argues for local explanations of the cults. See Antonaccio 1994, 389-97, for a review of scholarship.
755 See also above p. 74.
756 Hadzisteliou Price 1973; Hadzisteliou Price 1979. A similar argument was made by Hiller 1983, who posits an unbroken tradition from the Mycenaean Age as the explanation.
757 Hadzisteliou Price 1979, 219f., 228.
758 Morris 1988, 754f., summarises Snodgrass’ arguments against the Homeric explanation: (1) art-historical: the Homeric figures are not the most popular heroic figures on Athenian vases in the 8th century; (2) archaeological: Homer’s heroes cremated their dead, but in the reused tombs there were inhumations; (3) philological: the word ‘hero’ is an elusive and problematic term.
759 Snodgrass 1980, 37-40; Snodgrass 1982, esp. 117. See Malkin 1993, for a criticism of Snodgrass’ theory.

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situation. This is one example of an active view on culture, since part of the material assemblage is explained by the conscious use for specific purposes.

However, Snodgrass’ theory did not take into account the regional variations of the archaeological record. Whitley in his study from 1988 emphasised the regional differences between the Argolid and Attika. He concluded that hero cults in Attika were practised by a rural elite in reaction to the growing central power of Athens. These practices, he stated in contrast to Snodgrass, were associated with old well-established settlements in the Attic countryside. The rural aristocracy forged a link with the past. Claiming to be the indigenous inhabitants of Attika, they also claimed ideologically to be more important than the new settlements, according to Whitley.760 On the other hand, the Late Geometric-Archaic practices in Argos are associated with territorial claims and explained by the competition between Argos and other settlements, primarily Mykene. Hero cult, according to Whitley, “legitimised the rights of the Argives as a group [i.e., as citizens] to the territory”.761 Thus, Whitley’s explanation focuses on the regional political situation. Furthermore, he underlines the different political functions of hero cults.

Morris, also from 1988, situates the emergence of hero cults in the ideological conflict between the diminishing Dark Age aristocracy and the rising polis ideology. He is careful not to reduce the meaning of hero cults to one, but stresses in contrast that these practices meant different things to different groups.762 Morris, too, regards the socio-political situation as governing. The practice of hero cults gives authority/power in the present. In other words, the past is manipulated due to contemporary conditions — cultural features are used for socio-political purposes. Morris emphasises the multi-functionality of the archaeological record, one of the characteristic features of post-processual archaeology, which illustrates that the instrumental perspective bridges the polarity between the processual and post-processual perspectives.763 Noteworthy is that the ethnic categorization of the Dorians surfaces in Morris’ article: “It was probably already believed in the 8th century that the speakers of the Doric dialect had only entered the Greek peninsula in

760 Whitley 1988, 178.
761 Whitley 1988, 181. Whitley, follows de Polignac 1995 for the Argolid. See also Snodgrass 1988, 25f. See also Whitley 1995, which in addition, 44-9, also includes an assessment of the Saxe/Goldstein hypothesis. The Saxe/Goldstein hypothesis, see Goldstein 1981, emphasises that funerals and burial places can be used to legitimise collective group rights by their continuous use.
763 Morris 1988, 752, 758, stresses ambiguity and the symbolic aspect.
the ‘Dorian invasion’ during a period of chaos after the Trojan war”.764 The word ‘believe’ is central, since it reveals that Morris holds the emic perspective to be true, in contrast to the primordial etic categorizations. The difference between the primordial and instrumentalist models is not on the level of acceptance or rejection of facts, but rather how these are explained. Whereas from a primordial perspective hero cults are explained by reference to ethnic categorizations, the instrumentalists focus on the socio-political situation and conceptualize ethnicity as a feature actively utilised for various contemporary purposes.

Antonaccio, writing in 1995, also elaborated on this topic, and in contrast to Snodgrass, Whitley and Morris she carefully re-examined the archaeological evidence and provided a comprehensive description of the sites and finds.765 Her main argument is that hero cult should be distinguished from tomb cult and the cult of the dead. In other words, Antonaccio draws strong analytical boundaries between the different kinds of activities. Hero cults involve repeated activities and cults to named heroes, whereas tomb cults tend to be isolated events, venerating anonymous persons.766 In addition to the proposed differentiation, Antonaccio associates these activities with notions of kinship and ancestors.767 Influenced by Hodder’s contextual archaeology, she is careful to stress elusivity and flexibility.768 The kinship structures in ancient Greece were notoriously flexible, with a short time-depth stretching only a couple of generations. That is, although from an emic perspective kinship structures stressed their longevity, in reality they were constantly changing.769 The scrutinisation of the archaeological material results in a very differentiated image, and earlier proposals to associate it with socio-political conditions fail to capture the variability, according to Antonaccio.770 The archaeological variation is thus best correlated with the variation in kinship structures in Antonaccio’s mind. There is a difference from scholars mentioned above in the sense that Antonaccio does not give the socio-political conditions prominence. Archaeological material reflects social conditions in a more straightforward way. The flexibility of the social structures, which are stressed in a characteristic contextual fashion, is reflected in the archaeological record. Nevertheless, due

764 Morris 1988, 756. My emphasis.
765 Antonaccio 1995, 70-102, for the Messenian evidence. See also above Table, pp. 72f.
766 Antonaccio 1995, 6; Antonaccio 1994, 399f.
767 Antonaccio 1995, 2; Antonaccio 1993, 47.
768 Antonaccio 1995, 9; Antonaccio 1993, 46; Antonaccio 1994, 398.
769 Antonaccio 1995, 252f.
to the flexible kinship structures Antonaccio’s model allows for a manipulation of the past, through the claim to heroes and ancestors.\footnote{Antonaccio 1993, 65.} In other words, although she downplays the political conditions, the cultural features are regarded as instruments that can be used for various purposes in a present.

To sum up, then, the ultimate basis for the conceptualization of the past is the socio-political conditions.\footnote{Malkin 1987; Malkin 1993; the proposal that ‘oikist cult’ was the origin of hero cult falls also within the limits of instrumentalism, but has not influenced the discussion about the Messenian cults. Another issue that has received considerable attention is the excavations at Lefkandi, and whether the so-called ‘heroon’ can be regarded as an origin of the phenomenon, see e.g. Calligas 1988; Mazarakis Ainian 1999.} The past is ultimately explained by these conditions — cultural features are manipulated according to them. The past is furthermore regarded as dynamic, and the process of the ‘rise of the polis’ is the wider process to which hero cults are associated.\footnote{de Polignac 1995; Bérard 1982; Bérard 1983, in addition to the mentioned scholars, makes the same basic associations. Also Snodgrass 1988, 23.} The past is regarded as a scarce resource in the present, and the practice of hero cults, through which the past is mediated, gives authority, power, or legitimacy to territorial claims.\footnote{It is, of course, the one-liners of Appadurai 1981 and Bloch 1977 that are paraphrased here. They are ever-present in these accounts.} The fundamental active view on culture negates the possibility of explanations based on static ethnic sentiments, since these are constantly evolving. In other words, diachronic explanations are improbable, and the analytical focus shifts instead to synchronic, contextual, conditions. A second aspect is the relation between text and artefact, which is more complicated in the instrumentalist perspective. In contrast to the primordial conceptualizations where archaeology is reduced to a handmaiden of history, the differences are instead promoted. The obvious supremacy of the literary record in the primordial model is questioned by the integrated approach that these scholars follow. There are several features of this. The regional variations are endorsed and, in contrast to earlier pan-Hellenic proposals, which ultimately were based on the higher evaluation of the Homeric epics, different explanations based on the archaeological record are proposed for different regions. The contrasts between the literary and the archaeological record are underlined. Archaeology has thus a more independent role and is issued to complement, or even question, the literary record. Discrepancies are instead interpreted, in particular by Morris and Antonaccio, as a reflection of the plurality of meanings.

The analytical focus on regional entities has consequences, however. Although Messenia, together with the Argolid and Attika, has the most
examples of hero cults in the Late Geometric-Archaic period, it is curiously absent from the proposed instrumentalist explanations. Snodgrass contends with a cursory remark to state that he has no explanation for the Messenian case. According to him, it could have been the Spartans that practised hero cults, but in that case it is strange that there is so little evidence from Lakonia. On the other hand, it could also have been a local Messenian practice in opposition to the Spartans, but in Snodgrass’ view it is then strange that the Spartans allowed it. Whitley merely notes that Messenia does not fit into his explanation, and Morris that the functions of these practices must have changed radically between the 8th and 4th century. Antonaccio takes a position similar to Snodgrass, and concludes that the tomb cult in Messenia might have been an expression of resistance to Sparta or as indicating competition among the Messenians. I suspect that a major reason for such positions is the exceptional political development in Messenia. The interest in the Bronze Age tombs in Messenia cannot be associated with the rise of the polis. There are limitations to theoretical assumptions.

In contrast, the re-emergence of hero cults in the 4th century in Messenia has received considerable attention from an instrumentalist perspective. The reuse of the Mycenaean tombs in Messenia has a second peak in the Late Classical-Early Hellenistic period, around the time when Messenia became independent. The reuse of Mycenaean tombs in Messenia has a different chronological development than in the Argolid and Attika, since in the two latter regions the second peak of activities is absent. Alcock, 1991, has elaborated on the reuse of Bronze Age tombs in Greece, including Messenia, during the Late Classical and Hellenistic periods. Alcock, too, has a basic instrumentalist perspective. Considering the emphasis on contemporaneous conditions by the instrumentalists, the explanation of the post-Classical reuse must of course differ from the Late Geometric-Archaic reuse. After a review of the archaeological evidence, which at least for Messenia follows Antonaccio’s examination, Alcock turns to suggestions of how post-Classical hero cult should be interpreted. She rejects the possible association of post-Classical hero cults

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775 Snodgrass 1988, 26; Snodgrass 1982, 117f.
776 Whitley 1988, 182.
777 Morris 1988, 756.
778 Antonaccio 1993, 61.
779 Alcock 1991, 448, proposes this neologism to denote the Late Classical and Hellenistic periods. I find it convenient and will therefore use it.
780 Alcock 1991, 449-51, 469-7. See also above Table, pp. 72f. Alcock follows Antonaccio 1987 which is the dissertation published as Antonaccio 1995.
with competition for resources — in effect a testing of Snodgrass’ proposal — as a too universal explanation. \(^781\) Likewise, she dismisses the proposed explanation for the Archaic reuse in the Argolid, that tomb cults were territorial markers, as valid for the post-Classical practices. \(^782\)

The explanation that Alcock suggests for the cult practices in Messenia is nationalistic. She concludes: “one reading for Messenian tomb cult in post-Classical times emerges: a use of the past to unite a previously fragmented population, to define and defend a long suppressed regional identity.” \(^783\) This resonates with the primordial conceptualizations, and illustrates that some conclusions bridge my analytical polarisation. Some primordialists, for instance Roebuck, argued for the invention of a Messenian past at the time of the founding. However, he also argued that the Messenians had preserved their ethnic identity during the Spartan occupation. To be sure, there is allowance for variation also in Roebuck’s explanatory scheme, but it is still based on the assumption that ethnic identities are stable and prevail through the centuries. Paradoxically, Alcock’s interpretation of the Messenian case is an enforcement of primordialism on one level, since she gives precedence to ethnic sentiments.

Nevertheless, Alcock has fundamentally an instrumentalist perspective. First, it is illustrative that she phrases the nationalistic explanation as ‘one reading’. She allows thus for several meanings, in a post-processual way. Second, she regards the past as an instrument, manipulated due to contemporaneous socio-political conditions. The practice of hero cults has a political function for the Messenians. This active view on culture, and the emphasis on the contemporaneous political conditions, is also evident in Alcock’s analysis of the post-Classical hero cult more generally.

To begin with, Alcock characterises the post-Classical period as a time of stress and socio-political pressure for the cities. \(^784\) In this situation, the local political elite attempted to seek legitimisation by using the past. This was manifested in various ways. \(^785\) One important structural change was the more

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\(^781\) Alcock 1991, 454f.

\(^782\) Alcock 1991, 455.


\(^784\) Alcock 1991, 448.

\(^785\) Alcock 1991, 456-8; Alcock 1997, 30. Alcock 1997, discusses also the use of Mycenaean features in the Hellenistic period, but turns to other examples. Theoretically it is very similar to Alcock 1991.
elaborate commemorations of dead persons, not least manifested through the
more widespread phenomenon of heroizations of prominent individuals, which
gave authority not only to the dead person but also to his/her living relatives.
The interest in the past is thus explained through the contemporaneous socio-
political situation. The emphasis on stress, and the active manipulation of
cultural features in accordance with the socio-political conditions, suggests also
a processual perspective. That is, the local elite’s interest in the past is an
adaptation to the external pressures on the Greek communities. There is a mix
of different theoretical positions in Alcock’s article, ranging from the primordial
explanation of the Messenian activities, to the more instrumentalist outlook on
Greek culture in general. In addition, there is also a twist of occasional post-
processual vocabulary.

Van der Kamp, 1996, has also attempted to explain the hero cults in
Messenia. His main argument is that hero cults were a West-Messenian
phenomenon. The tenet that the past was used due to contemporaneous socio-
political conditions is present also in van der Kamp’s elaboration. This
instrumentalist notion is coupled with the notion of stress. He associates the
first peak of hero cults, dated to after the 1st Messenian War, with a Spartan
threat. Due to the political development in Messenia, there was no perceivable
threat until after the 1st Messenian War when the Spartans had conquered the
Pamisos valley. The West-Messenians began thus to practise hero cults as a
reaction to the Spartan threat. Van der Kamp accordingly follows the
scholarly tradition, arguing that the Spartan subjugation of Messenia was
gradual and that the western parts of Messenia were independent until around
600. The West-Messenians practised hero cult during this century-long
period. When this process ended the Spartans prohibited the local traditions.

The second peak of hero cult, concentrated to the first half of the 3rd century
according to van der Kamp, is also explained by a threat — but this time from
Messene. The western parts of Messenia, most notably Pylos and Kyparissia,
were only reluctantly incorporated in the Messenian state, in his view. He
means that the few instances of hero cult in the Late Classical period illustrate
that the western parts of Messenia were autonomous until Philip II’s territorial
adjustments in 338. There was neither a tangible threat, nor a prohibition, and
therefore people could practise their traditions. It is indicative of a naive
processual position that van der Kamp assumes a straightforward correlation

786 van der Kamp 1996, 73.
787 van der Kamp 1996, 73, 76. See above p. 80.
788 van der Kamp 1996, 85.
between the degree of threat and the number of hero cults.\textsuperscript{789} After 338 Messenia was organised as a loose ethnos-state, and it became gradually centralised into a polis-state under the domination of Messene from the second half of the 3\textsuperscript{rd} century. In van der Kamp’s explanatory scheme, then, the hero cults peaked during the phase in Messenia’s history when the state was loosely organised.\textsuperscript{790} The cult ended when the settlements in Messenia became self-governing members of the Achaean League, and therefore the West-Messenians no longer had any use for their ancestors.\textsuperscript{791}

However, I wonder if not the primordial tenets in the end are stronger in van der Kamp’s elaboration. He argues for a new analytical entity, namely the West-Messenians. The spatial distribution of the hero cults is thus correlated with an identity in a straightforward manner. Furthermore, the notion of continuity, one of the governing tenets in the primordial perspective, is also fundamental for van der Kamp. The West-Messenian identity prevailed through the centuries and explains also the second peak of activities, according to him.\textsuperscript{792} This is further enforced by the cursory remark that the inhabitants in the western part of Messenia were the descendants of the pre-Dorian population.\textsuperscript{793} The cult activities in Nichoria, dated to the late 5\textsuperscript{th} century, are explained by a combination of continuity and contemporaneous political conditions. The local inhabitants of this area had a strong bond with their ancestors, but this was only facilitated by a more general liberal attitude of the Spartans towards the helots during this period.\textsuperscript{794} In sum, then, despite the influence of processual issues, such as the notion of stress, and the importance placed on the contemporaneous socio-political conditions, van der Kamp adheres to hard culture historical notions, too. That is, although he is careful not to stress the pre-Doric identity and instead propose a regional West-Messenian identity, primordial essentialism prevails in his analysis. That is, hero cults are ultimately regarded as an intrinsic characteristic of the West-Messenian identity.

Perhaps the most meticulous and thorough examination of the archaeological evidence of hero cults in Greece has been published by Boehringer in 2001.\textsuperscript{795} He has fundamentally a socio-functional approach and

\textsuperscript{789} van der Kamp 1996, 79.
\textsuperscript{790} van der Kamp 1996, 81, 85f.
\textsuperscript{791} van der Kamp 1996, 86.
\textsuperscript{792} van der Kamp 1996, 78f., 85f.
\textsuperscript{793} van der Kamp 1996, 73.
\textsuperscript{794} van der Kamp 1996, 76-8.
\textsuperscript{795} Boehringer 2001, 243-372, for the Messenian activities. See also above Table, pp. 72f.
considers hero cults as indicators of group-formation processes.\textsuperscript{796} Boehringer further enforces the socio-functional perspective, since he dismisses the issue of whether archaeology can retrieve the actual beliefs of the ancient Greeks. However, he can afford to dismiss this issue because he is so firmly anchored in the Durkheimian functional tradition.\textsuperscript{797} Accordingly, Boehringer’s analytical focus is on social integrative aspects of cults. The function of cults is to create solidarity and integration.

Boehringer, on the basis of his re-examination of the archaeological material, distinguishes the hero cults in Messenia into two, partly different, practices. He differentiates between cults practised by an elite and by the Messenians at large. The archaeological ceramic record from the Late Geometric period — for instance from Volimidia Angelopoulos 4, Angelopoulos 5 and Koukounara 4 — consists of both local and imported fine ware. These cults are therefore associated with a well-to-do Messenian elite by Boehringer.\textsuperscript{798} The Spartan conquest of Messenia was in Boehringer’s view gradual, and the western parts were only conquered in the late 7th century.\textsuperscript{799} He is careful not to accept a simple correlation between the political history of Messenia and the cultic activities. Nevertheless, the hero cults ended around the time Messenia was conquered by the Spartans, which is explained by an emigration of the elite that practised these cults.\textsuperscript{800} There is thus a correlation between the political history and the cults for the first phase. However, such a straightforward correlation is impossible to make for the Classical and Hellenistic activities, in Boehringer’s view.\textsuperscript{801} The cultic activities from the 5th and 4th centuries are in contrast characterised as popular by Boehringer, since the ceramic finds consist of coarse ware and cheap mass-produced votives and terracotta plaques.\textsuperscript{802} These practices had accordingly another function, and Boehringer argues that they indicate self-consciousness among the Messenians.\textsuperscript{803} Put differently, the cultic activities from the 5th century onwards functioned as expressions of group solidarity. They indicate the emergence of a new self-awareness among the Messenians. Boehringer, thus, implies an ethnogenesis process here. A Messenian ethnic identity was emerging in the 5th century.\textsuperscript{804}

\textsuperscript{796} E.g. Boehringer 2001, 45f., 321f., 371.  
\textsuperscript{797} Boehringer 2001, 19-21.  
\textsuperscript{798} Boehringer 2001, 321f., 361-3.  
\textsuperscript{799} Boehringer 2001, 330-4.  
\textsuperscript{800} Boehringer 2001, 361f.  
\textsuperscript{801} Boehringer 2001, 340.  
\textsuperscript{802} Boehringer 2001, 321f., 361-3.  
\textsuperscript{803} Boehringer 2001, 340.  
\textsuperscript{804} See also below Becoming Messenian.
Continuity is one of the fundamental notions in the primordial model. Although instrumentalists tend to place less emphasis on this aspect, they are occasionally, forced to address this notion due to the available evidence. Boehringer identifies a hiatus in the archaeological record in the Archaic period, and he emphasises the differences between the cults on either side of this analytical break. However, the hiatus is not absolute since the cultic activities in Messene, in particular in the building Omega-Omega, were continuous. These finds, as well as those in some other sanctuaries such as Aghios Floros, display a Spartan influence. Boehringer even raises the possibility that the Spartans practised the cult here. However, he also emphasises that the cults probably meant different things to the Spartans and the Messenians. Thus, although he cannot but acknowledge some restricted Spartan influence, he nevertheless underlines the function of the cults for the Messenians. On the basis of the variability in the archaeological record, in particular the emergence of new cults, Boehringer concludes that the cults from the 5th century onwards had a different function than during the Geometric period. The possible continuity is instead situated in an oral tradition, by which the Messenians remembered their past. This allows for a considerable transformation of the Messenian collective memory, which is reflected in the cultic variations. Themelis also proposed an oral tradition in Messenia, but since he worked within the primordial model he underlined the preservation and continuity of the local traditions. This illustrates one of the fundamental differences between the primordial and instrumentalist perspectives. Whereas the primordialists stress static continuity in their interpretations of the cultural features, the instrumentalists stress dynamic development.

To sum up, then, Boehringer has a distinct instrumentalist perspective. However, in contrast to the previously mentioned instrumentalists he does not emphasise the socio-political context. Boehringer underscores instead gradual development, which also is a characteristic trait of the instrumentalist perspective. There are also several notions from the processual model present in Boehringer’s publication. He emphasises, for instance, the function of the cults. He is also eager to point out the importance of asking the right questions. That is, Boehringer is very conscious of the constraints of the different categories of

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805 Boehringer’s position stands in sharp contrast to Zunino 1997 who argues for a religious continuity. See above pp. 63-5.
806 Boehringer 2001, 364-6. The terracotta plaques are viewed as a Spartan influence, and they were later spread from Messene to Voidokoilia, Peristeria, 297f. The mythic genealogies in Messenia are also regarded as 5th century inventions, 359f.
807 See above p. 68.
evidence that he works with. Another indication is that origins, which is a fundamental notion in the culture historical model, is not an issue for Boehringer. Neither is it important for him to trace the myths of the Messenians as passively transmitted traditions containing some kernel of truth, which is so important to the primordialists. They are, on the contrary, conceptualized as dynamic traditions open to manipulations. Boehringer adopts an active view on culture. The processual perspective is also enforced by the remarkable negligence of issues raised by the post-processual perspective.

Summarising remarks
In conclusion, the instrumentalist interpretations of hero cults have a couple of characteristic features. The cults are not explained as the result of intrinsic characteristics due to ethnic identities and categories. The notions of continuity are not important, and the explanatory schemes instead focus on contemporaneous socio-political conditions. The emphasis on contemporaneous explanations is also associated with an active view on culture. The basic view that culture is dynamic and changeable makes it impossible to seek diachronic explanations. There is a higher degree of sensibility to analytical boundaries in the instrumentalist model than in the primordial. One effect of this is that ethnic characteristics are deprived of their explanatory value. Ethnic sentiments are thus dethroned as the primary explanation and are replaced by contemporaneous socio-political conditions. Ethnicity is reduced to one of many notions that can be manipulated for specific socio-political reasons. That is, ethnic identities are a consequence of actions and not the other way around.

Regional Messenia

The University of Minnesota Messenian Expedition
The analytical concept ‘region’, and the associated regional archaeological projects, is one of the hallmarks of processual archaeology. Messenia was early on the scene for regional archaeological projects, and the ‘University of Minnesota Messenian Expedition’ (henceforth UMME) was one of the first in

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Greece, carried out in the 1950s to 1970s. UMME has had a profound effect on the development of archaeology in Greece, and the analytical shift that this project has come to represent was soon copied by many other projects. The prime determinant in the view of the UMME was the physical environment and the human interaction with it. This and the regional focus stand in sharp contrast with traditional classical archaeology, which focuses on specific sites, often public buildings and sanctuaries, and which pays more attention to artworks and finer ceramic ware than ordinary mundane finds. Another novelty that McDonald, the director of UMME, stresses in order to distance himself from the ‘great tradition’, is the interdisciplinary approach. Experts from other disciplines were integrated into the fieldwork and invited to write part of the publication. UMME shares, indeed, many features with the wider model of ‘scientific humanism’ of the post-Second World War period. That is, natural sciences served as a prototype for the humanities, and research turned to notions such as universally applicable laws and behaviour. The universal laws through which culture could be analysed were in turn determined by the environment, technologies, and social institutions. In contrast, race and ethnicity were regarded as minor factors. This envy of the sciences had a couple of noticeable consequences in the publication; for instance, the research agenda of the project is explicitly accounted for. Another feature is the prominence given to method. The practice of archaeology is systematised. There are accordingly abundant charts, tables, statistics and mathematical calculations of primarily the population size and agricultural production in the publication. The analytical focus of the UMME is, in a distinctly processual way, placed on the hard, social and environmental aspects.

The ‘great divide’ is an analytical concept that has gained wide acceptance. It articulates the differences between the traditional, culture historical, classical archaeology and the anthropological, processual, archaeology. One aspect is

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809 In McDonald and Rapp Jr. 1972, tellingly the word region is consistently emphasised in the introduction. I am well aware that the 1950s may be too early a date for processual archaeology. However, as McDonald 1984, 185-7, explains the aims of the project changed during the years.

810 Fotiadis 1995, 59-61, accounts for the impact of UMME.

811 McDonald and Rapp Jr. 1972, 6.

812 Themelis 2000, is representative of the traditionalist perspective.

813 McDonald and Rapp Jr. 1972, 3, 9, emphasises the interdisciplinary approach. See also the various chapters.

814 I follow Fotiadis 1995, 65, here. See also above p. 4.

815 McDonald and Rapp Jr. 1972, 6-9. Figure 1-1, 6, and the 36 question, 7f., of the project are illustrative.

816 E.g. Fant and Loy 1972; Aschenbrenner 1972

817 See Fotiadis 1995, for a trenchant critique of UMME and its legacy.
that archaeologists who analyse historical (text-based) periods tend more often to adopt a traditional perspective, while the processual perspective more often inspires prehistoric archaeologists. The general approach of the UMME is on the anthropological side. However, the diachronic emphasis, which for UMME meant working backwards from present conditions through history until the target phase of the Late Bronze Age, meant also that the historical periods (here shorthand for the Geometric to Hellenistic periods) were analysed. The tension of the great divide is visible when the analysis of the historical periods is compared with the general aims of the UMME. The archaeological elaboration on the historical period has a processual perspective, since the primary issue is the demographic development of the region.

However, Lazenby and Hope Simpson elaborate on the historical period in Messenia in one chapter. Although an initial interest in environmental, economic, and demographic aspects is hinted at, these issues are, due to the constraints of the ancient sources, dismissed as impossible by the authors. An account elaborating on these issues would be in line with the processual perspective, but the presentation of the historical period focuses on political history. In effect, this chapter is indistinguishable from culture historical accounts discussed in Primordialism. The authors, needless to say, are bound to have opinions about specific details. Lazenby and Hope Simpson adopt the passive view on culture, which is so intimately connected with the primordial perspective. Accordingly, they accept the tradition of the Dorian emigration to Messenia, and the mythic genealogies are viewed as passively transmitted traditions containing some grain of truth. Furthermore, according to them, the pre-Dorians were pushed out of the Stenyklaros-area but allowed to control the peripheral areas of Messenia. Ethnic identities are also given a prominent and explanatory value. The diverse reactions of the Messenians after the 1st Messenian War, when some emigrated while others co-operated with the Spartans, are explained by the ethnic diversity in Messenia at the time. Not only are the essentializing ethnic categorizations of the literary traditions taken at face value, but the notions of continuity and preservation are also endorsed;

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818 McDonald and Rapp Jr. 1972, vii.
819 See also above p. 149.
820 Lazenby and Simpson 1972.
821 Lazenby and Simpson 1972, 81.
822 E.g. Lazenby and Simpson 1972, 86, they accept that Messenia was conquered completely in around 600; Lazenby and Simpson 1972, 87, they solve the inconsistencies in Thucydides’ account of the helot revolt in the 460s, by accepting a 10-year duration. It begun in 470, and became more intense after the earthquake in 464.
823 Lazenby and Simpson 1972, 82-4.
the Messenians had preserved their “national feeling” during the Spartan period, according to Lazenby and Hope Simpson.824

The conscious aspirations of a new approach by UMME did not substantially affect the conceptualization of the historical period, and the conceptualization of it is indeed embedded in primordial assumptions. One tenet in the scientific humanism was the stronger delimitation of the validity of the evidence. More fine-tuned analytical boundaries were drawn, and the relevance of evidence across these is an important issue. This is not exclusively confined to the scientific humanism, and there are well-known predecessors. Grote, for instance, identified one paramount analytical break in the mid-19th century. A consequence of the more restricted view on evidence is also that contemporaneous conditions are used more often to explain things. The mythologies are not regarded as unchanged traditions, as Lazenby and Hope Simpson regard them, but rather as manipulated features, used because of contemporaneous concerns. The processual perspective is thus confined to the archaeological parts of the UMME, while the historical period, conceptualized through literary evidence, is bluntly primordial. Put differently, the great divide cuts right through the publication.

The activities of the UMME included also an excavation at the Nichoria ridge, which has been published in three volumes.825 The processual characteristics, the emphasis on environmental aspects and methodology, in the UMME publication are also present in the Nichoria publications. For instance, the methods and techniques used during the excavations are extensively described.826 However, as in the UMME publication the analyses of the historical periods again resemble traditional classical archaeology to a greater extent than the elaborations on the pre-historic periods. The interpretation of the evidence is not substantially different from the culture historical interpretations. The difference lies in the widening of the analytical focus to include complementary descriptions of scientific methods. It is illustrative that Wilkie’s elaboration on the reuse of the excavated tholos tomb stresses the same aspects as Marinatos, from the 1950-60s, and Valmin from the 1920s.827 The holistic approach focusing on human interaction with the physical environment

824 Lazenby and Simpson 1972, 89. This echoes Roebuck 1941, 116, see above p. 148.
826 The first, Rapp Jr. and Aschenbrenner 1978, of three volumes is devoted entirely to methods and environment. See also Fagerström 1988, for a criticism of the Nichoria publication. His criticism is articulated from a processual perspective and focuses on methodological aspects.
is reduced to a descriptive account of the finds, which is followed by an interpretation of the activities emphasising continuity.

The Pylos Regional Archaeological Project

The interdisciplinary UMME was followed by the multidisciplinary ‘Pylos Regional Archaeological Project’ (henceforth PRAP) in the 1990s. This self-styled shift in denomination indicates a conscious distancing by PRAP from its predecessor. The differences between UMME and PRAP are visible in publications of individual members of the PRAP and in their joint publication *Sandy Pylos* from 1998. However, let me begin with the preliminary reports that have appeared. PRAP can in some respects be regarded as a continuation of UMME. Firstly, PRAP, too, emphasises the environment, and scientific investigations are a major part of this project as well. Secondly, the regional focus is also a common denominator. Thirdly, method is extensively addressed in both projects. A last similar feature is the diachronic analytical focus. Although Davis mentions the Annales school as a strong influence for PRAP, I fail to see any profound difference between the projects in how the long-term relationship between environment and human activities is conceptualized. There are, of course, bound to be differences between the projects due to methodological developments and the emergence of new facts (in a naive positivist sense). PRAP, for instance, implemented a strategy of intensive survey and studied specific delimited areas in the western parts of Messenia, while UMME had a larger spatial focus and a more *ad hoc* survey strategy. One concrete result is, for instance, that PRAP verified the lack of dispersed farms in the studied area during the Archaic and Classical periods. This is a regional variation, since dispersed farms are regarded as typical of these periods in

828 Davis 1998e, xx. The term ‘multidisciplinary’ is used very often by PRAP to characterise its own approach.

829 Davis, et al. 1997; Zangger, et al. 1997; Lee 2001. At the writing of this text, three preliminary reports were announced as forthcoming, Stocker Forthcom.; Davies Forthcom.; Alcock, et al. Forthcom., has not appeared. Likewise, the final publication has not appeared.

830 Davis, et al. 1997, 391-414, 397 for Annales school evocation; Zangger, et al. 1997 is dealing only with the scientific methods. I do not see a major difference as far as the conceptualization of antiquity goes. There are, however, differences in other respects. Lee 2001, in an ethnoarchaeological study, emphasises change and dynamism in rural present-day Greece, and stands in sharp contrast to the ethnoarchaeological study in UMME, which constructed a timeless image of rural Greece, see also Fotiadis 1995, 68-72. I wonder, however, if this is due to the inspiration of the Annales school.
Greece. The Messenian exception is associated with the Spartan domination over Messenia.831

Although the preliminary reports, addressed to specialists and colleagues, display a processual perspective, there are additional publications from PRAP that complicate this characterisation. *Sandy Pylos* is not only addressed to colleagues but also to non-specialists interested in the archaeology and history of western Messenia. There are, of course, constraints due to the genre. It is hard to be too technical in a publication directed to the interested non-professionals, which certainly can explain why the presentations of the scientific parts of the project are less technical and of a more narrative kind.832 Nevertheless, several major tenets of the post-processual perspective are present in this publication. The mere fact that PRAP makes the effort to publish a book for the general public is an indication of the post-processual concern to reach out to the public and engage the local communities in research.833 Additionally, the relation between the present, scholarly production and the conceptualization of the past is an issue that is complicated in the post-processual perspective. The generic position is that the past is constructed by present practices. There are several aspects to this notion: archaeologists construct the past(s) through their practice; communities — ranging from families, local and regional groups, to nations — construct their, in part conflicting, versions of the past. These versions focus on different aspects and change with the passing of time. The past is thus generically regarded as dynamic and flexible, and there are multiple versions of the past. This is not only true of the conceptualization of the past in the present modern world, but also of how the past was perceived and used in antiquity.834 The concern with

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831 Davis, et al. 1997, 456. This questions the assumption of Cartledge, see above p. 101, that the Spartans organised the helots into small isolated farmsteads instead of letting them live together. Also pointed out by Harrison and Spencer 1998, 161f.; Alcock 1998a, 183; Alcock 2002b, 195f.; Alcock 2002a, 142f. Kaltzas 1983; Kaltzas 1988, rescue excavation at Kopanaki of a large estate, originally identified as a Late Roman villa, but later dated between the 6th and second quarter of the 5th centuries, confirms the settlement pattern of PRAP.
833 Davis 1998b, 291. A trend in archaeological projects in Greece which emerged in the 1990s, is to include other historical periods. Davis, et al. 2000, discusses the Ottoman period. Although the analytical focus is widened, the approach is often similar. The mentioned study focuses on demographic and economic conditions in the Ottoman period in the Pylos-region. It should also be mentioned that this is a difference, since UMME, despite its diachronic aim, clearly focuses on the Bronze Age. This chronological bias is less evident in PRAP.
834 Davis 1998c, xi; Davis 1998b, 273-91; Davis 1998d, 292-7. This is also occasionally remarked about concrete aspects of the Messenian history, e.g. Harrison and Spencer 1998, 161; Alcock 1998a, 183. One side is the elaborations on the activities of the earlier archaeologists. I find, however, the hagiographic tone in Lolos 1998; Davis 1998a, in disagreement with the general critical tone of post-processualism.
the politics of the past — in this case that the emerging nation-state of modern
Greece emphasised specific parts of the past — is thus only a logic extension of
this fundamental view. The publications of PRAP can thus be placed
somewhere along the continuum between processual and post-processual
archaeology. The preliminary reports can be characterised as distinctly
processual, while Sandy Pylos articulates a post-processual perspective. Perhaps
I am making a mountain out of a molehill, but it seems indicative of a
theoretical conformity in classics that the basic issues raised by the post-
processual critique are not addressed within the discipline but marginalised to
publications aiming at a wider audience. I wonder, however: are we in
agreement that the past is constructed in the present, or is it the other way
around, namely that we are so firmly anchored in the positivist tradition that
these issue are a priori viewed as non-issues?

However, there are also differences in the conceptualization of the past
between UMME and Sandy Pylos on a more basic level. The ancient literary
evidence was read in a passive way in UMME. This stands in sharp contrast to
the conceptualization in Sandy Pylos, which can be characterised as active.
Pausanias’ account, for instance, is not conceptualized to preserve unchanged
centuries-old traditions, but is instead viewed as a narrative in which the author
emphasised specific aspects. In other words, Pausanias’ narrative is one of
many possible versions. Pausanias is credited with an influence on the
narrative. Furthermore, the representation of the past emerges as an issue.

Spencer, a participant in PRAP, has published another article from 1995 in
which the post-processual perspective is evident. Influenced by the landscape
archaeology in British prehistoric archaeology, Spencer points to the fact that
the Bronze Age Palace at Pylos was constructed in a landscape embedded in
meaning. He draws attention to earlier architectural structures in the
surrounding landscape, and argues that the palace was built in relation to
these. This illustrates the emphasis on symbolic meanings and the use and
negotiations of the past, which is a key-theme in post-processual archaeology.
Although the focus is on the use of the past, through the symbolic meaning of
earlier architectural features in the landscape, Spencer also detects a continuous
concern with the past in Messenia. He emphasises that the Messenians
minimised the memory of the Spartan period and therefore constructed other

835 Davis 1998c, xxxix-xl.
836 Alcock 1998a, 190f.; Davis 1998c, xxxvii. Alcock 1998b, repeats, overall, the arguments from
Alcock 1991, see above pp. 214-6. See also below The myopic gaze of Pausanias.
837 Spencer 1995, esp. 277, 286.
pasts, through their practice of cults in earlier tombs and through oral traditions.\textsuperscript{838} Thus, although continuity is emphasised by Spencer it is, in contrast to primordial continuity, dynamic and flexible. The pasts were used, and perpetually re-interpreted, by the Messenians in accordance with contemporaneous concerns.

**Summarising remarks**

Between them, UMME and PRAP encapsulate the development in archaeology in the last decades. Culture historical assumptions govern the conceptualization of the historical periods in UMME, while the processual model influences the conceptualizations of the prehistoric periods. This theoretical tension also follows the analytical tension in classics between history and archaeology. The past conceptualized through the ancient texts differs from the archaeological past, which with UMME shifts focus towards environmental and economic factors. In short, the great divide is evident in UMME, and the project stands with one leg in each theoretical camp. Theoretical tensions are also discernible in the publications of PRAP. PRAP, on the other hand, bridges the divide between the processual and post-processual perspectives. The preliminary reports from 1997 do not differ theoretically or methodologically from UMME’s publication, and can be characterised as processual. However, *Sandy Pylos* emphasises several fundamental tenets in the post-processual perspective. The choice of genre seems thus to influence the conceptualization of the past.

These theoretical variations also affect the issue of ethnicity. The ethnic categorizations mentioned in the ancient sources are taken for granted by Lazenby and Hope Simpson in their primordial elaboration of the history in Messenia. However, ethnicity is at best a second-order issue in the processual parts. The analytical focus has instead shifted to the relation between humans and physical environment. Culture is viewed as an adaptation to environmental factors. Instead of conceptualizing ethnicity as determined by environmental and socio-economic factors, as did the instrumentalists in the anthropology of the 1970s, ethnicity is excluded as an issue in the processually influenced regional studies. That is, ethnicity is still conceptualized in a primordial sense, and since this comes in conflict with other more fundamental theoretical factors, it is marginalised.

\textsuperscript{838} Spencer 1995, 289.
Identities resurface as a topic with the influence of post-processual archaeology. While the processual and post-processual perspectives share an active view on culture, they assign explanatory power to different factors. The post-processual perspective turns to symbolic and ideological notions. These positions are not mutually exclusive, but rather in many respects they should be viewed as complementary. Together with an active view on culture, the emphasis on symbolic aspects results in a view whereby the past (i.e., the perceived past in antiquity) is regarded as a constructed resource. The perceived past is perpetually negotiated, and conflicting traditions are not regarded as inconsistencies that need to be resolved, but rather as expressions of different interests. This accords with the view of multiple versions of the past, which is a profound notion in post-processual archaeology. In a sense, although ethnicity in antiquity is not an issue, the primordial assumptions are undermined. Ethnicity as a concept is strictly confined to the modern period in *Sandy Pylos*.

**Holistic Helots**

Classics was gradually influenced by scientific humanism. The regional archaeological projects, for instance, were influenced by processual archaeology (which in turn adopted scientific humanism). However, the wide range of subfields in classics complicates this, since the historical part of the discipline is not necessarily influenced by the development in archaeology. The historical leg of classics turned instead to the social sciences. The practice of archaeology and history was systematised, and explicit models and methods were used to a higher degree than before. Accordingly, the models should ideally be tested through objective criteria. These holistic approaches conceptualized society or culture as an integrated whole and focused on the material conditions of life. The scholars regarded social and economic aspects as determinative, while culture was a dependable feature open to manipulation. The various parts of the system were in turn primarily analysed by their function within the larger system. Other notions repeatedly stressed were change and continuity. Typically, an ideal type, often cast in terms of equilibrium, was constructed and the various parts (read institutions) of the whole were distinguished. This ideal type was then contrasted with the development within the system. That is, the

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839 Davis 1998c, xxxviii-xl. Ethnic identities have an effect on the conceptualization of the past. Davis uses the ethnic conditions in modern times to explain why specific periods of the past have received more attention than others.
equilibrium was disturbed, which led to a reaction (read development) that aimed to restore some kind of balance to it. These common basic features of the holistic approaches were, on other levels, influenced by different theoretical complexes such as functionalism and Marxism. Exactly which of the many theoretical models in social sciences that were used by specific classicists is occasionally hard to pinpoint.

Turning to ethnicity, there are two discernible threads among these scholars. First, ethnicity as an issue is ignored or explicitly dismissed. The dynamic nature of societies and the emphasis on contemporaneous aspects stands in contrast to the generic passive view in the primordial conceptualizations of ethnicity. The second strategy is to consider ethnicity as a factor. Paradoxically, however, these scholars regard ethnicity as a static concept. Continuity, in particular, is explained by essential characteristics, despite the seeming contradiction with the basic active view on culture. Put differently, the social turn in classics, which resulted in a distinct analytical shift, did not incorporate ethnicity. The contemporaneous redefinition of ethnicity by the instrumentalists in anthropology remained unnoticed. Instead, it was the legacy of the race discourse, or primordial assumptions, which continued to prevail in classics.

Spartan society has received considerable attention by scholars who adopt a holistic perspective. In addition to the studies focusing on Sparta we need to address a group of scholars with a Marxist perspective who analyse slavery in antiquity in a wider sense. The scholars with a wider focus will be treated under Helots as Marxist slaves. This is not to deny that Marxism has not influenced the conceptualization of ancient Sparta, but is rather due to the blurred theoretical influences. That is, occasionally it is hard to confine a tenet to a specific theoretical model. Scholars, furthermore, influence each other. Therefore, Marxists focusing on ancient Sparta will be separated from Marxists focusing on ancient slavery.

A suitable starting-point is Finley, who in many ways incarnates the adoption of holistic approaches among ancient historians. Finley begins by constructing an ideal type (i.e., a static system) of the Spartan society for the period from the early 6th century to the Battle of Leuktra in 371. He identifies a structural revolution in the 6th century that resulted in the Classical Spartan society with its specific institutions. This revolution should be regarded as a complex set of processes in Finley’s view — some older features were re-

840 E.g. Finley 1975, 162.
841 E.g. Cawkwell 1983; Ste Croix 1972. See below.
formulated while others were founded.\textsuperscript{842} Finley proposes, in other words, a fundamental analytical boundary in the early 6\textsuperscript{th} century. This is at least partly legitimised by the available evidence, since he argues that our knowledge of the Spartan society prior to the revolution is “almost wholly fictitious”.\textsuperscript{843} It accords well with the tendency among scholars with a holistic approach to draw more elaborate analytical boundaries. Accordingly, Finley dismisses culture historical explanations of the Spartan society, which tend to explain it through the essential characteristics of the Dorian identity.\textsuperscript{844} It should, however, be noted that Finley rejects ethnicity as an explanatory factor in the primordial sense. That is, it is the assumption that the Doric identity conveys static essential characteristics, manifested in the Spartan institutions, which is rejected. Contemporaneous factors are instead given a primary explanatory role, while continuity is downplayed. Function is another fundamental concept for Finley. The characteristic institutions that he discerns in the Spartan system are primarily conceptualized through their function: “the function of the ‘survivals’ is what chiefly matters, not the mere fact of survival.”\textsuperscript{845}

The constructed ideal type that Finley posits is thus complicated. The structural balance in the Spartan system encapsulated several notions through which there were differentiations. The homoioi, for instance, were internally stratified according to such criteria as property, family, age-class and ability. The system developed through various processes, for example the accumulation of property, and this led to tensions within it. Finley is thus careful to stress social differentiation and the existence of many partly overlapping social categories in addition to the more coarse conceptualizations of the Spartan society consisting of Spartans, helots and perioikoi. There was also a considerable amount of social mobility in the system, according to Finley.\textsuperscript{846} The emphasis on these aspects serves to question the essentialism that is so characteristic of the primordial conceptualization of the past. Another notion common to the holistic approaches is behaviour. This concept facilitates a conceptualization of the past that underlines human activities as the foundation of a society. The past is thus more dynamic and flexible. Finley views behaviour, learnt by the agoge, as the quintessence that facilitated the existence of the Spartan system.\textsuperscript{847}

\textsuperscript{842} Finley 1975, 163.
\textsuperscript{843} Finley 1975, 161-4. Quote on 161.
\textsuperscript{844} Finley 1975, 162.
\textsuperscript{845} Finley 1975, 164.
\textsuperscript{846} Finley 1975, 167-71. See also above pp. 111f.
\textsuperscript{847} Finley 1975, 175f.
Before I continue, a few words should be said about Finley's influence. He is one of the scholars in ancient history that has had a tremendous influence on later historians. He himself was influenced by the critical Marxist tradition of the Frankfurt school. Put differently, although basically Marxist, Finley's perspective can be characterised as a critical holistic approach. He was also influenced by sociology, most notably Weber.848 A wide characterisation of him as influenced by social sciences more generally can perhaps describe his scholarly production better. This can also perhaps explain why his work has been so influential. Scholars from a variety of positions have made claims to his legacy.849

In sum, then, several tenets of the holistic approaches are present in Finley's account of Classical Sparta. Society, to be equated with the past, is conceptualized as a complex system, which in turn consists of institutions that are mutually dependent on each other. A basic functionalism is evident since the parts of the system are explained by their function. Methodological issues are also explicit. The analytical abstraction, the ideal type, is constructed only to be contrasted with the facts of reality. The system serves to highlight the tensions and anomie present in it. There is thus an analytical shift, dynamism and flexibility are stressed, but this shift does not include a redefinition of ethnicity.

**Helots as Marxist slaves**

The interest in slavery in antiquity has not been confined to one particular theoretical model. Slavery, including helotism and other marginalised groups, has been a topic of interest for scholars influenced by Marxism, such as Vidal-Naquet and Ste Croix, from the 1960s onwards.850 These scholars are not interested in helotism as an isolated and specific phenomenon, but rather in slavery as a general phenomenon in antiquity. A fundamental and dominating aspect of these studies is whether slaves and helots fulfil the criteria of class according to Marxist theories.851 What unites these contributions, on a basic

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848 Shaw and Saller 1981, esp. ix-xix.
849 Illustrative is the debate concerning Finley. For instance, Cartledge 1975, esp. 67, argues that Finley has an anti-Marxist position. Garlan 1988, 12f., on the other hand situates Finley in the Marxist tradition.
850 See Garlan 1988, 1-14, for an overview. The Marxist interest in ancient slavery can be contrasted with the interest of the so-called Mainz school, with names such as Vogt and Welwei. The Mainz school had a clearer positivistic agenda. At times there was considerable animosity between the two groups. Garlan 1988, 13f., is, as one would expect, critical against the Mainz school.
851 Vidal-Naquet 1986; Ste Croix 1981; Garlan 1988;
level, is their empirical testing of various categories and/or social processes identified within Marxism. There are, however, internal differences, and these are perhaps more illustrative than the similarities.

Vidal-Naquet’s answer to the crucial Marxist question whether the Greek slaves can be considered as a class, is negative. Like Finley, Vidal-Naquet emphasises the multitude of social categories in the Spartan society, thus undermining the polar categorization of primordialism. Vidal-Naquet stresses that the helots were more integrated into the Spartan system than the chattel-slaves, in particular, in Athens. According to him, the higher degree of integration in turn meant that political demands by the helots also profoundly challenged the Spartan order. Ethnic divisions are in general played down, but nevertheless he accepts a distinction between Messenian and Lakonian helots. The demand for secession is ascribed to the Messenian helots, in contrast to the demand for integration, which is not connected to any of the ethnic subdivisions. In other words, it is the Messenian identity that explains the willingness to rebel and challenge the Spartan order.

Another scholar influenced by Marxism, Garlan, stresses the generic enmity between the helots and the Spartans. The helots are characterised by a latent animosity towards the Spartans, and they seized every opportunity to rebel. However, Garlan conceptualizes the revolts along ethnic lines. In his view, too, it was the Messenian helots that were the rebels. In other words, although the conflict is characterised as social the ethnic divisions nevertheless explain it.

Ste Croix is perhaps the most renowned Marxist to have elaborated on the helots. A major tenet for Ste Croix is to confirm various Marxist institutions and processes, and accordingly his analysis is overtly embedded in Marxist terminology. However, ethnicity is also prominent. According to Ste Croix, the Messenians never lost their national consciousness and were ready to revolt whenever they had an opportunity. Ste Croix stresses this polarisation even further since he argues that the scarce expressions of helot loyalty to the Spartans are pertinent to the Lakonian helots, and the “basic relationship between the Spartiates and at any rate the Messenian Helots, however, was one of fear and hatred on both sides.” This relationship between the Messenian helots and the Spartans is then clothed in explicit Marxist terminology, since it

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852 Vidal-Naquet 1986, 166. See also Garlan 1988, 206 n. 10.
853 Vidal-Naquet 1986, 161f.
854 Vidal-Naquet 1986, 164f.
856 Ste Croix 1972, 89; Ste Croix 1981, 149.
857 Ste Croix 1972, 92.
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is characterised as a “real and bitter class war”. Ethnic identity is thus static, primordial, in Ste Croix’s view. The analytical concepts class and ethnicity are thus, in the case of the helots, enforcing each other. Like the primordialists, Ste Croix ascribes the hostile relations between the helots and the Spartans to the Messenians. He regards culture as passive and takes Thucydides and Aristotle at face value.

Scholars with Marxist perspectives focus on other social categories than ethnicity. Although the relation between Spartans and helots typically is conceptualized as a class struggle, ethnic divisions are also present in these explanatory schemes. The basic holistic approach to the past, with the adherent dynamic perspective, does not include ethnicity, however. Ethnicity as a notion is furthermore occasionally used to explain the Spartan society. Although the helots en masse are conceptualized as an integrated class in the Spartan society, the Messenians nevertheless preserved their ethnic identity, and their relation to their masters was one of mutual fear and hatred also according to the Marxist explanations. The primordial conceptualization of ethnicity is thus in a sense regarded as a complementary factor, since the class struggle is enforced by the ethnic enmity between the Messenians and Spartans.

Integrated helots

Less explicit in their theoretical position is a group of primarily British historians who have analysed Classical Sparta from holistic approaches from the 1980s onwards. They have in common a methodological emphasis on systems. As might be expected, however, they also differ in some respects. Cawkwell’s aim, in an article from 1983, is to explain why Sparta’s power declined during the 5th to 4th centuries. The primary question is, “How far then was the failure of Sparta internal, the failure of her social system?” Already Aristotle (Pol. 1270a 33) argued that Sparta’s decline was an effect of the ‘oliganthropia’ of the homoioi, and in effect Cawkwell re-examines this hypothesis. After a review of the ancient sources, primarily the ones elaborating on various aspects of the Spartan army, he concludes that the ultimate reason for Sparta’s decline was the genius of Epaminondas, thus answering the posed question negatively. In other words, he comes close to the biographic approach in the sense that the actions of individual political leaders determine

858 Ste Croix 1972, 90.
860 Cawkwell 1983, 400.
Although Cawkwell’s conclusion resembles culture historical conceptualizations, the preceding argumentation differs. Cawkwell accepts the shortage of Spartan manpower, but he does not accept that this was the cause of Sparta’s decreasing political power. The decreasing number of homoioi was compensated by the creation of new classes — ‘neodamodeis’ and ‘brasideioi’ — which made it possible for the helots to advance socially. In other words, Cawkwell identifies an evolution in the Spartan society after 424, that is after the events in Pylos. Therefore, the political power of Sparta did not decrease gradually. In other words, an initial imbalance in the social system caused a development. In addition to upholding Sparta’s power, the new classes have another explanatory effect in Cawkwell’s analysis. The possibility of social advancement defused the tense relations between the helots and their masters. These categories explain why Sparta was spared of helot uprisings during the 70-year-period prior to the founding of Messene. The relations between the Spartans and the helots are characterised as generically tense by Cawkwell. The Spartans constantly feared the helots, and the helots were, despite their reluctance to revolt, not happy in their chains, but refrained from revolting because they feared reprisals. Although all helots were treated equally harshly, Cawkwell argues that there was a distinct difference between the Messenian and Lakonian helots in their attitude towards the Spartans. The Messenian helots “remained uncompromisingly intransigent, pining for their long-lost liberty.” A comment that ethnic identity is assumed to be static and fixed in a primordial way is perhaps redundant. The Lakonian helots, on the other hand, were ambivalent. Some were ready to follow Kinadon (Xen. Hell. 3.3.6) in his conspiracy against Sparta, while others defended Sparta in 369 (Xen. Hell. 6.5.28f.). To put it differently, the Lakonian helots were integrated into the Spartan system and wished “for freedom within the Spartan system, not for freedom from that system.” Thus, the social mobility of the helots is seen as restricted by ethnic categories. The new social categories were open only to the Lakonian helots. The Messenian helots refrained from revolts because they could not count on aid from their Lakonian brothers. In sum, then, despite Cawkwell’s basic systems approach, ethnic categorizations are conceptualized in a primordial way. The instrumentalist redefinition of

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861 See above *Political biographies*.
862 Cawkwell 1983, 385-95.
863 Cawkwell 1983, 390f.
865 Cawkwell 1983, 391f.
866 Cawkwell 1983, 393, 395.
ethnicity as a flexible strategy remains unnoticed by Cawkwell. However, ethnic categorizations still have paramount effects on his analysis. The Messenian helots are excluded from the evolution of the Spartan social system on account of their essential and preserved ethnic characteristics.

Hodkinson has also analysed Sparta from a systems perspective. Basic notions in systems analyses, needless to say, govern his conceptualization. The rationale of his article from 1983 is embedded in systems theoretical key-terms: for instance, the Spartan society is initially constructed as a static system, social change is a variable, and the social system is constantly evolving and adapting, in Hodkinson’s view. Two features stand out in Hodkinson’s analytical abstraction. Firstly, he makes a distinction between institutions and individuals, and secondly, he emphasises the inherent tensions within the system. The Spartan way of life during the Classical period was governed by the principles of uniformity, priority of collective interests over private, and conformity. These principles are associated with the new order established after the 6th-century revolution. The revolution, however, did not erase earlier aristocratic values. Thus within the Spartan system distinctions were made according to the notions of wealth, birth, personal merit and seniority. The surviving aristocratic values, which resulted in social differentiation between ideally equal individuals, were in conflict with the principles of the new order. Accordingly a delicate balance between the tensions generated by the different value-schemes governs the static system constructed by Hodkinson.

The ultimate basis of Hodkinson’s analysis is the analytical concept of behaviour. Through the institution of the agoge the Spartans learned a kind of behaviour. Hodkinson characterised this as governed by obedience, peer control, and inability to make own decisions in unfamiliar situations. The rigid control exercised among the peers resulted in an unusually strong reliance on external authorities, which explains the famous extreme superstitiousness or
religiosity of the Spartans. In addition to religious authorities, the Spartans also relied on foreigners.\textsuperscript{875} That is, Spartans were obedient and needed an authority for guidance in order to take actions. They were reluctant to take their own initiatives, but once they had made up their mind they pursued their course of action with firmness. Hodkinson’s proposed explanation of Spartan behaviour bears the hallmarks of functional role-theory. That is, the individual learns a kind of behaviour and then enters his/her social role. However, the role remains relatively static in this theory, and the individual tends to be defined by the function of the role within the system.

A governing tenet in the holistic approaches is to pay attention to the material conditions of life. Societies in antiquity were generally based on agriculture. The organisation of agricultural production in ancient Sparta is one of the more vexed issues, and Hodkinson has discussed it in several publications.\textsuperscript{876} Scholars have traditionally followed Plutarch’s accounts (\textit{Lyc.} 8.3-6, 16.1, \textit{Ages.} 5.2-3) and constructed an image that emphasises the public ownership of land in Sparta, the indivisibility and equal size of the estates, and male (father to son) inheritance. Although there are differences among scholars concerning details, this traditional image underlines some kind of strict public rules regulating inheritance and ownership of land.\textsuperscript{877} This view furthermore reduces the individual Spartan to a tenant without influence on the transmission of land. A major drawback of this image is that contemporaneous authors present an image that is irreconcilable with the above. Hodkinson argues therefore that the static image of equal distribution of land on which Spartan equality was founded is a later invented tradition.\textsuperscript{878} He proposes instead a revisionist model, which ultimately is based on Aristotle’s account (\textit{Pol.} 1270a 15-1270b 6). Accordingly, the Spartan land tenure system allowed for private rights, and the individual could partition his estate to different inheritors. The Spartans thus practised the common Greek system of partible inheritance.\textsuperscript{879}

The inheritance system of the Spartans was the focus of Hodkinson in the publication from 1989. Focusing on demography and models of inheritance patterns, he calculated the structural effects of these aspects on the Spartan

\textsuperscript{875} Hodkinson 1983, 273-8.
\textsuperscript{876} Hodkinson 1986; Hodkinson 1992; Hodkinson 1996, many of the arguments are repeated in these articles, despite the occasional differences in what is emphasised.
\textsuperscript{877} Hodkinson 1986, 379f., also for references. Polybios is used to enforce Plutarch’s account
\textsuperscript{878} Hodkinson 1986, 381, 383-6.
\textsuperscript{879} Hodkinson 1986, 386-94. Also Hodkinson 1989, 80-2.
system during the Classical period. Hodkinson makes an analytical distinction between long-term and short-term processes. From a short-term perspective land was continually moved around, due to the partible inheritance system. However, since there is no evidence of strict state-enforced rules that even out anomalies in the system, for instance unequal accumulation of wealth, these problems were solved through private practices according to Hodkinson. Marriages in Sparta, at least in the elite group, were arranged according to how property would be inherited. Since testaments were a private affair and women could inherit, marriages could be used to control the dispersal of property. Women had thus a major function in the Spartan inheritance system.

In addition to a short-term dynamism there was also a long-term structural development in the Spartan society. In the second half of the 5th century the differentiation among the Spartans increased. Some Spartans became increasingly rich, while the group of Spartans that was unable to fulfil the criteria for being regarded as equal also became larger. Hodkinson associates a change in behaviour with this development. Material wealth, in particular displayed through horse breeding, was increasingly equated with status, and wealth became a crucial factor for social differentiation. Hodkinson thus, explains development as a combination of structural long-term processes and short-term factors.

Hodkinson’s main focus is on the homoioi, but he has also briefly addressed the issue of how the helot labour was organised in Sparta. As in the earlier articles Hodkinson refutes Plutarch (Mor. 239D-E, Lyc. 8.4, 24.3), mentioning that the helot production was one of fixed rents, and he argues instead that the agricultural production was organised according to a sharecropping system. That is, the Spartan owner and the helot workers shared the yield from the land. The argumentation is distinctly holistic. It is the system of agricultural production that is analysed. The economic (material) conditions are furthermore the analytical focus, and ethnographic parallels are of paramount importance for Hodkinson’s analysis. The common ethnic categorization is on the level between Lakonians and Messenians. For once, the analytical focus is

880 Hodkinson 1989, 82-9.
882 Hodkinson 1989, 100.
883 Hodkinson 1989, 100-14, for the variety of interacting processes. Among the most interesting is perhaps the failure by the Spartan leaders to identify and take measures against the growing economic differentiation.
885 Hodkinson 1992, 133f.
886 Hodkinson 1992, 131-3, for sharecropping as a universal system.
wide enough to include both regions. Ethnicity is, however, not an issue for Hodkinson, and he stresses that the agricultural organisation was equal in both regions.\footnote{Hodkinson 1992, 128f.} In other words, Hodkinson downplays ethnic differences.

In sum, then, Hodkinson’s research is an illustrative example of a holistic approach. The past is turned into a system. Although an initial static system is constructed for analytical purposes, the past in general is conceptualized as dynamic. Change and development are complicated and regarded as a combination of structural processes and individual actions. The fundamental holistic notion of behaviour is paramount in Hodkinson’s analysis. Associated with this is the precedence given to institutions over individuals. That is, institutions shape individuals, which thus explains the past. Contemporaneous factors are also given precedence by Hodkinson, and this is perhaps the reason that ethnicity is absent in his elaborations. The analytical focus is mostly delimited to the Spartan elite. Although the past included in the analytical focus is dynamic, the possible influences on the Spartans by the other groups in the Spartan state remain unaddressed. The other social groups in the Spartan society are not taken into consideration, and this might be an additional reason for the absence of ethnicity in his analysis.

In addition, other scholars have elaborated on the organisation of the agricultural production in Classical Sparta from a holistic perspective. Figueira, 1984, argues that the messes, around which the life of the homoioi revolved, were the centres of a redistributive system. After exhaustive calculations of arable land, amounts of production, population sizes and consumption, Figueira arrives at the conclusion that there was a surplus of agricultural products in the messes.\footnote{Figueira 1984, 106-9. It should be noted that Figueira argues that the helots paid fixed rents to the Spartans. This stands in contrast to Hodkinson’s position.} According to him, some of the surplus was redistributed back to the helots. Not all helots tilled the land, and those who did not were dependent on the surplus. Figueira furthermore argues that the earthquake in 465 had severe demographic consequences. The agricultural surplus became even larger, and more food was redistributed to the helots. On the other hand, new classes were created, for example the neodamodeis that also needed to be fed from the helot production. This redistributive system had a basic function, in Figueira’s view. Through it, the Spartans and helots were socialised in their roles, and the helot dependency on their masters was further enforced.\footnote{Figueira 1984, 95. 89-106, for calculations.} The material conditions of life play a primary role in Figueira’s
conceptualization of the past. The hard facts of agricultural production are calculated and turned into a system. The function of the system is stressed, and the roles played by the helots and the Spartans in the delimited redistributive system enforce and mirror their respective roles in the wider social system. In short, the helots are an integrated and indispensable part of the Spartan social system.890

Singor 1993, who in many respects follows Hodkinson and Figueira, has also made a contribution on the organisation of the agricultural production in ancient Sparta. He, too, has a basic holistic approach but widens the analytical perspective and elaborates more on both the position and consequences for the helots and Messenia. The traditional image of equal and indivisible estates is, to begin with, refuted.891 Singor draws an analytical boundary in the mid-5th century. Spartan society in the earlier period, beginning with the conclusion of the conquest of Messenia at the end of the 7th century, was relatively stable and egalitarian; the traditional image of Sparta is accurate for this period, and the system was in balance. Singor discerns two principles that even out each other. Through testaments, land plots were fragmentized, but this was checked by marriage strategies and adoptions. Spartan society is characterised as an age class system (i.e., in addition to other institutions the Spartans were also grouped according to age), which means that inequalities based on wealth were evened out, and marriages and property were under strict community regulation.892 The organisation of the helots during this period was a system of sharecropping. The helots and their masters shared the products. Equality among the Spartans was ensured initially by an equal number of helots working for the individual Spartan. The helots were not bound to the land lots but primarily to a specific master. When properties were re-regulated the helots were passed on to new masters. The shifting of properties among the Spartans thus meant that the structural stability of the social system did not pertain to the individual helots. They, like all other property, were getting new owners on a more or less regular basis.893

890 Ethnicity as a notion is absent. The focus on the Messenian production in Figueira 1984, 100-4, is focusing on quantification of the Messenian production, which is argued to be larger than the Lakonian. Therefore, there were more Messenian than Lakonian helots, in Figueira’s view. However, he does not make any social, ethnic, distinction between the two groups. The Messenian helots are equally integrated in the Spartan social system.
From the 5th century, the Spartans changed the agricultural system and sharecropping was replaced with a fixed rent system. The amount that each Spartan had to contribute to the messes was fixed, according to Singor. The fixed rent system made it easier for wealthy Spartans to become richer — thus the emergence of the famous horse breeding — but life became harder for the others. The consequences for the helots were similar. Helots fortunate enough to belong to wealthy Spartans were better off, since they were not so hard pressed. They could even benefit materially since a larger part of their production stayed with them, or was redistributed back. For the helots belonging to poorer masters, the new system meant a harder life. Their masters needed to press them harder in order to be able to pay the mess contribution. This also meant that these helots had access to a smaller part of their production. The decline of Spartan families could occasionally be complete; that is, they lost their position of being homoioi, which in turn meant that their helots were uprooted. One effect of the fixed rent system was that a larger number of individuals, both Spartans and helots, lost their natural place in the system. It was from this group of individuals, surplus population in Singor’s vocabulary, that the new classes like the neodamodeis were created in the late 5th century.94

The analysis of the organisation of Sparta’s agricultural system presented by Singor can thus be characterised as systems theoretical. The material conditions of life are conceptualized as a system. The various parts of it interact, and changes in one part have repercussions for the other parts. Function is, furthermore, important and the different social classes are primarily conceptualized by their function in the system. The helots are integrated into a larger whole. Changes are conceptualized as reactions to processes that undermine the balance of the system. However, Singor has a wider analytical focus than both Hodkinson and Figueira, and ethnicity as a notion occasionally surfaces in his analysis. Singor argues that there is no evidence of social or economic differences between Lakonian and Messenian helots. They were treated in the same way; the social differentiations among the helots were due to individual factors and primarily depended on the fate of their masters.95 Ethnicity is thus downplayed and contemporaneous material conditions are emphasised by Singor.

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94 Singor 1993, 51-7, 36.
95 Singor 1993, 43, 58.
Nevertheless, primordial notions are also discernable in Singor’s analysis. The conquest of Messenia is explained by a demand in Sparta to redistribute land. This demand emerged since the original equal division of land among the Dorian warriors, who established the Spartan state in the 10th century, had failed due to long-term structural processes.\textsuperscript{896} There is an interesting mix of primordial and instrumentalist notions in Singor’s analysis. On the instrumentalist side is the emphasis on demographic and social processes, which have long-term causal effects. On the primordial side is the essentialistic connection that Singor makes between an age-class system and Dorian-Spartan societies. The Dorian invaders established an age-class system in the 10th century that later was disrupted. Therefore, they conquered Messenia in order to resurrect their way of life (i.e., the age-class system). Singor thus equates the Dorian-Spartan way of life with a specific institution. Despite the changing ephemeral conditions, the Spartans, as an ethnic group, perpetually organised their society according to a characteristic order. The only difference from hardcore primordial explanations is that the essential characteristics are conceptualized as social and not cultural. On the primordial side again is that, although Singor stresses the socio-economic equality of Messenian and Lakonian helots, he nevertheless assumes that the Messenians had preserved their identity and were therefore more prone to revolt.\textsuperscript{897} This remark is made \textit{en passant} in one of the concluding paragraphs of his article, and has no substantial bearing on the analysis of the agricultural production. It illustrates, however, that although the past is turned into a system, and social and economic aspects are conceptualized as changeable and dynamic, this does not include ethnicity. The active view on culture is restricted to the major issues. Other parts of the past, outside the analytical focus, are conceptualized as static. The instrumentalist redefinition of ethnicity, which is based on the same theoretical complex as the holistic approaches of the ancient historians, remains unnoticed. Ethnicity, among ancient historians, is not explained as dynamic and evolving, but assumed to be primordially static. It is not redefined but simply avoided.

Conflicts and tensions have been of minor importance for the above-mentioned scholars. The focus on the material conditions results in a neglect of one of the governing notions in culture historical conceptualizations, namely political disturbances within, as well as between, states. This does not, however,
mean that tensions are completely absent from holistic conceptualizations. Marxism was, on one level, a major theoretical current in the holistic perspective, and scholars influenced by it are more inclined to consider tensions and conflicts. The traditional image of Classical Sparta with the population strictly sub-divided into the classes of helots, perioikoi and homoioi, lends itself easily to Marxist explanatory schemes. One example is David’s examination, from 1979, of the conspiracy of Kinadon. The establishment of a socio-historical background to this episode is cast in systems theoretical terms. David characterises the Spartan society as a system in social equilibrium after the ‘Lykourgan revolution’. The various institutions — and David accepts the traditional static image of Spartan society — are described as organic parts of the same order. This balanced system was, however, undermined due to the influx of money, the Persian grants conclusive for Sparta’s victory in the Peloponnesian War in 404, which in turn augmented social inequalities due to the uneven distribution of the money. Put differently, change is caused by external factors that in turn disrupt the social equilibrium. Change, including the emergence of the class of the inferiors to which Kinadon belonged, is thus conceptualized as gradual. This stands in contrast to culture historical explanatory schemes focusing on single events. Oliva, for instance, emphasises the effect of Epitadeus’ reformation of Spartan society, in the late 5th century, on the rise of the inferiors as a class. This is an illustrative example of the differences between culture historical and holistic approaches. Change is no longer caused by single events, but perceived as slow processes.

Kinadon headed the conspiracy against Sparta, and his personal motivation was that he wanted to be one of the equals. The inferiors, a class which had been deprived of their citizen rights, on the whole felt a hatred toward the landowning Spartans, according to David. In addition, the other classes, including the helots, also supported the conspiracy, and they were all united by a class-hatred toward the landowning elite. The conspiracy indicates, of course, grave social tensions in Sparta at this time. However, there was also a development in the late 5th century which stands in contrast, namely the

898 David 1979, 239-41. I.e. the same institutions questioned by Hodkinson, Figueira and Singor.
899 David 1979, 239, 241f. Also David 1979, 247 n. 32, emphasises that 404, and not 370/69, was the major turning-point in Sparta’s history.
900 David 1979, 243.
901 Oliva 1971, 188-92.
902 This does not rule out that events can affect processes. Although processes are emphasized, events and processes are not mutually exclusive, but rather complementary.
903 David 1979, 245-7.
904 David 1979, 248f.
creation of the social classes like the neodamodeis, which is a sign of integration of helots in the Spartan state. This development is explained by the monetary influx. In addition to triggering the development of uneven distribution of property, the money was also used to employ soldiers. Thus, potential troublemakers were bought off and this concealed the damage of the unbalanced social system. David’s conceptualization thus combines different perspectives. Basically we have a systems theoretical approach, which then is supplemented with a Marxist perspective — class-hatred is a pivotal notion in David’s analysis.

Xenophon’s narration (Hell. 3.3.4-11), which is the principle source for the conspiracy, can be used to undermine primordial essentialism. It illustrates, at least, that other tensions than the basic helot-Spartan existed in ancient Sparta. Organisation is stressed in the instrumentalist approaches, and one aspect of this is to stress the importance of socio-political leadership. Typically, an educated elite is viewed as pivotal since they organise and initiate a cause, which the masses follow. This can be applied to Kinadon’s conspiracy. The movement against the Spartans is led by an individual belonging to the class just below the one in power. The helots, assuming that they had far worse conditions and thus stronger reasons to overthrow the political regime, do not lead but support the cause. However, David’s explanation shares the primordial preference of essentialism. That is, all classes are monolithically driven by one notion — class-hatred. The major difference is that the social categorization is made along classes, not ethnic identities.

A scholar who at least claims to have a Marxist perspective and use holistic approaches is Cartledge. In addition to an early programmatic Marxist proclamation, it is also evident in his later publications. This is emphasised, for instance, by sentences like: “The history of Sparta, ... is fundamentally the history of the class struggle between the Spartans and the Helots.” Cartledge’s Marxism is occasionally difficult to distinguish from more traditional culture historical scholarship. Nevertheless, there are also holistic tenets in his production. One of the governing tenets in holistic approaches in general is the focus on universal features. In contrast to the traditional culture historical focus on specific and unique traits of cultures, holistic approaches tried to formulate universal laws. An extension of this analytical shift is the comparative approaches, that is, publications that compare phenomena in

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905 David 1979, 253.
906 Cartledge 1987, 13; Cartledge 1975. See also above pp. 101f., 123 and 141f.
907 See also the comment in the bibliographic addendum Finley 1981, 254f.
different contexts and through them try to widen the understanding of a specific historical situation. The parallel in archaeology is, of course, the increasing use of ethnographic parallels and analogues in the processual archaeology. Arguments based on comparison were made also by the above-mentioned scholars, but in a limited way.\footnote{E.g. Hodkinson 1992, 131-3.} The primary example of a comparative study of the helots is Cartledge’s “evangelistical exercise in comparative method”.\footnote{Cartledge 2001, 127.} In this article, he examines the eight factors Genovese has distinguished as important for successful slave revolts, derived from studies of slavery in the US South. The factors are applied to the situation of chattel slaves in Classical Greece, and Cartledge concludes that the absence of chattel slave revolts was due to the successive class struggle from the Greek slave owners.\footnote{Cartledge 2001, 152. 134-46, for the analysis.} The helots were in a different situation and revolted, but the revolts cannot be explained solely as class revolts in Cartledge’s view. He adheres to the distinction between Lakonian and Messenian helots. Thus, the helots “were only able to revolt outright because their ethnic and political solidarity provided the Messenians with the appropriate ideological inspiration and organizational cohesion”.\footnote{Cartledge 2001, 146-52. Quote on 152. Emphasis in original. Repeats the differences between the Lakonian and Messenian helots on 148f.} In other words, the Messenians preserved an ethnic identity, and this was the ultimate reason for the helot revolts. Thus, Cartledge combines Marxism with primordialism. The general holistic approach, within which the Marxism perspective should be placed, does not include a re-formulation of ethnicity.

The variations of the holistic perspective can be illustrated by Talbert’s argumentation against Cartledge, that the fundamental class tensions were very limited. Talbert points to events where the helots did not take every opportunity to rebel, desert, or fight against the Spartan state, and emphasises instead that helots, on the contrary, reacted as any other group. “In brief we should expect helots to have been relatively ignorant, simple people … Like the lower orders in many societies throughout human history, helots knew their place within severely limited horizons, clung to it and seldom thought coherently about how to alter it, regardless of how humiliating or undesirable it might seem to others.”\footnote{Talbert 1989, 30. Also 32.} Furthermore, Talbert refutes the pivotal distinction that Cartledge makes between ethnically motivated Messenian and Lakonian helots. The Messenian helots in general were as ignorant, or loyal, to the
Spartan state as their Lakonian brothers. It was only a limited group of Messenians that nourished a vision of independence and affection for resistance. Talbert acknowledges that some Messenian cults were upheld, which indicates that some Messenians longed for independence. However, it was primarily the Messenians in exile that desired independence, and these ideas had a “limited impact inside Messenia”.913 Furthermore the helots, like many lower classes in other societies, assimilated values from the highest class in Talbert’s view. The helots copied the values of the Spartans, and therefore they were as loyal as any other low-ranked group.914 The fear of the helots was not the overriding concern for the Spartans; instead the tensions between the Spartans were most serious. The helots are fully integrated in Talbert’s vision, not only content in their chains but also assimilating Spartan values. The ethnic and/or class distinctions often made by other scholars are undermined.915 What is troubling in his explanatory scheme is the passivity of the helots, since they are reduced to passive receivers of influences. The main contribution is the undermining of the prevailing ethnic essentialism in the analysis of the Spartan-helot relations. The holistic method is not particularly explicit; Talbert’s refutation is rather based on a number of common sense arguments.

Another scholar that emphasises the integration of the helots is Ducat. Like Talbert, he questions the veracity of the helot danger,916 and argues that the helot danger was so successful that they accepted their status as helots. The ideological indoctrination was through which the ancient Greeks attempted to conceptualize Sparta and helotism.917 Thus, at least in theory, Ducat adheres to a distinction between facts and theories in the ancient testimonies. That is, the representation of the facts, or the perspective of the ancient authors, is not influencing reality. Following Ducat, through close reading of the sources we can see beyond the tendencies of the ancient texts. He has thus an extreme faith in naive positivism and holds a passive view on culture. This distinction is coupled with an emphasis on contemporality. His method is to present the ancient sources, divided

913 Talbert 1989, 31. Also 36f.
914 Talbert 1989, 39.
915 It should be noted that scholars in general think that Talbert goes too far when he plays down the tensions, e.g. Singor 1993, 59.
916 Ducat 1990, 145-53, esp. 147. Ducat has elaborated on aspects of helotism in earlier publications. These are drawn together in Ducat 1990, I will therefore content myself with an analysis of this publication.
chronologically, without comments, thus letting them speak for themselves with as little intervention as possible.\footnote{Ducat 1990, 5. 5-103, for the sources. Ducat’s tracing of a development in the discourse of helotism in antiquity does not stand in opposition to his positivism; on the contrary, Ducat can make this distinction exactly because he draws more analytical boundaries. See Cartledge 1992, 262.} However, Ducat’s comprehensive collection of ancient testimonies has consequences. Admittedly, there are some rewards with his approach. The passive view coupled with the emphasis on contemporality makes it possible for him to refute commonly held views on helots as Hellenistic, or later, inventions that do not correspond to reality. What is essential is thus the chronological boundaries Ducat draws, and a major issue is how far the veracity of the ancient testimonies can be stretched across these temporal limits.

However, there are also drawbacks to Ducat’s theoretical position. He argues, for instance, that the Messenians were not helotized until after the revolt in the 460s. This is founded on Herodotos’ distinction between Messenians and helots, which is taken at face value by Ducat.\footnote{Ducat 1990, 141-4. This is generally not accepted by the scholarly community, e.g. Whitby 1992, 359ff.; Whitby 1994, 94f.; Hunt 1998, 80ff.} Put differently, Herodotos’ testimony is seen as passively mirroring reality. As far as ethnicity is concerned, Ducat adheres to the distinction between Messenian and Lakonian helots. The revolt in the 460s is thus regarded as a Messenian affair. The meticulous collection of ancient testimonies makes it possible for Ducat to refute widespread culture historical assumptions. He concludes that there is no ancient testimony associating the submission of the helots either with the Dorian invasion or with an Achaean population. The ancient sources regard the emergence of helotism as a later phenomenon.\footnote{Ducat 1990, 69.}

Ethnic categorizations play a restricted role in Ducat’s analysis. The distinction between Messenians and Lakonians is primarily used for the period before the revolt in the 460s. However, once the system of helotism was expanded to include Messenia, ethnicity diminished as a factor. Ducat argues that, once the Messenians were helotized, they accepted their position and were treated in the same way as the Lakonian helots.\footnote{Ducat 1990, 144.} The ethnic distinction is thus associated with national independence. This explanatory scheme is governed by essentialistic assumptions. Over night the Messenians went from being an independent ethnic group to a compliant social group. Not only is change
conceptualized as abrupt, but the Messenians are also regarded as one monolithic entity.

**Summarising remarks**

By way of concluding, then, the holistic approaches conceptualize the past as an integrated system. The helots are not of interest in themselves, but because they are part of the Spartan social system. Social institutions emerge as a pivotal analytical notion. These are often distinguished within the constructed static system. The initial identification of the parts of the system is, however, often contrasted with facts. Holistic approaches, despite their analytical constructions of static systems, emphasise fluidity and undermine essentialism. A contrast to culture historical conceptualizations of ancient Sparta is that change is viewed as gradual. The emphasis is on the gradual slow evolvement of the system. The significance of single events is, on the whole, played down.

The spatio-temporal grid is of pivotal importance for the culture historical conceptualization of the past, and scholarly analysis often ends once a phenomenon is fixed to it. Space and time are crucial for holistic approaches, too, but in a different manner. To begin with, holistic scholars are keener to draw analytical boundaries. Evidence is confined to narrower horizons in holistic approaches than in culture historical. Accordingly, explanations are sought in contemporaneous features. However, it is seldom sufficient to fix phenomena to the spatio-temporal grid. Chronology is thus an initial methodological step in order to be able to discern the processes behind the events. Spatio-temporal distribution is not an end, but an initial methodological step. It is a means used to understand the interaction of institutions and processes. Meaning, often cast in terms of function, thus emerges as a crucial notion.

How the past is conceptualized is also influenced by what is analysed. The material conditions of life, in particular agricultural production and the social organisation of it, emerges as an important topic. These are not explained as the results of specific events, but rather as the result of long-term processes such demographic and inheritance patterns, partly in relation to short-term factors. Political events, pivotal in culture historical conceptualizations, on the whole do not receive as much attention in the holistic approaches. The holistic approaches can, thus, be characterised as having a basic active view on culture. Institutions, events and processes emerge for specific purposes, often as reactions to imbalance in the system. The social system is manipulated to some
degree. Furthermore, the ancient sources are not taken at face value. A crucial notion in the holistic approaches is to identify the social system ‘behind’ the superficial events.

Nevertheless, the analytical abstractions that I make are not always clear-cut. Some scholars are easier to categorize while others tend to stand somewhere in between, incorporating features of both models. Furthermore, some issues can also be characterized as more culture historical, primordial, than others. Although ethnicity is downplayed as an explanatory factor, when it is occasionally touched upon it is conceptualized as static and fixed. There was no social or functional difference between the Messenian and Lakonian helots, according to the holistic approaches. The Spartans treated them equally and on this level ethnic distinctions are downplayed; it is the social fluidity and helot integration within the social system that is emphasized. In addition, however, a distinction along ethnic lines is also made. Despite the equal treatment and function of the helots, the Messenians preserved their ethnic identity. The analytical distinction between Messenian and Lakonian helots is accepted by many of the holistic scholars. The integration of the helots, a key-theme, is thus differentiated according to ethnic categorizations. Although the holistic approaches ultimately share the same theoretical foundations as the instrumentalists in anthropology on one level, the instrumentalist re-definition of ethnicity remains unnoticed. The basic social dynamism of the past in holistic approaches does not incorporate the analytical concept of ethnicity. Ethnicity remains primordially defined.

Greek Discourses

It is time to address another expression of the active perspective on culture. The ancient texts have always been of major importance for the study of antiquity. Indeed, the emergence of modern studies of antiquity can be associated with the introduction and spread of the basic philological method of source criticism. Considerable attention has thus been given to various aspects of the ancient texts; for instance, establishing the origins or sources of various passages, the stemma of the manuscripts, identifying lacunas and elaborating on the linguistic development. A distinction can be made between an intra-textual level and a second level that focuses on the relation between text and reality, and it is the second level that is of interest to me. Although scholarly debate, within a passive perspective, can occasionally be animated, in particular when inconsistencies are identified, the past is on the whole not explained with
ideological or discursive constraints. The fundamental issue is whether a source is right or wrong. The ancient authors are not regarded as active agents.

The active and passive perspectives on culture can also be restricted to various parts of culture. Scholars adopting systems approaches can, for instance, argue that culture is actively manipulated in accordance with political or environmental needs, but still read the ancient texts in a passive way. Put differently, cultural features may be manipulated — thus there is a partial active view on culture, but the relation between text and reality is still perceived as straightforward. An active view on the ancient authors becomes discernable, from my perspective (i.e., publications dealing with aspects of helots, Classical Sparta, or Messenia) in the 1990s. That is, explanations of the past centred on narratological, ideological or discursive aspects, emerge. The representation of the past becomes the analytical focus, and reality in the ancient texts is in a systematic way perceived to be obscured to some extent. Although the veracity of the ancient texts has always been a major issue in ancient history, I argue that this is a new development. The ancient texts are not seen simply as describing reality correctly or incorrectly. This relation is instead complicated; it is explained by authorial attitudes, or wider influences of ideologies or discourses on the ancient authors. Put differently, it is an analytical shift towards an emic position. The explanation of the past is situated to a higher degree in the worldview of the ancient author.

The following will be sub-divided into two chapters. The first, *Helots — the other Greeks*, deals with the Classical authors, particularly Herodoto, Thucydides and Xenophon. The scholarly production focusing on various aspects of the ancient authors is vast. Keeping the focus on Messenia means that this chapter will primarily be an analysis of Hunt’s thought-provoking publication from 1998. The second, *The myopic gaze of Pausanias*, turns to the scholarly conceptualization of Pausanias. My focus on these authors is a reflection of the scholarly production, and it should not be read as an indication that other authors have not been conceptualized in similar ways; the omissions are due to my analytical focus.922

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922 See Rhodes 1994, 156ff., for further references. E.g. Rood 1998, for Thucydides, and Dillery 1995, for Xenophon. There are surely other recent publications on Polybios, Diodoros, etc., focusing on narrative aspects.
Helots — the other Greeks

Hunt makes two main arguments: first, that slaves were important in Classical Greek warfare; and second, that the Classical historians Herodotos, Thucydides and Xenophon tended to play down the roles of the slaves.\footnote{Hunt 1998, 2.} The negligence of the ancient authors to mention slaves, in particular their participation in warfare, was due to ideological factors in Classical Greece. Warfare was associated with freedom and citizenship and acknowledging slave participation threatened the ideological self-image and the sharp symbolic dichotomy between freedom and slavery in Classical Greece, according to Hunt.\footnote{Hunt 1998, 3-5.} Modern scholarship has in general accepted this suppression of slaves in the ancient sources, in Hunt’s view.\footnote{Hunt 1998, 5-7.}

Hunt’s fundamental theoretical approach resembles the holistic perspectives. In the same way, Hunt distinguishes one part, warfare, and situates it within a larger whole. He does not, however, focus on the material conditions of life. Instead, ideology is turned into a system. Influenced by Geertz, Hunt thus argues that ideology can be fruitfully analysed as a symbolic system.\footnote{Hunt 1998, 20-2.} Ideology is a framework, with its own internal dynamics, through which reality is ordered and given meaning. In particular three factors — internal structure, social reality and social interests — shape an ideology. In Hunt’s phrasing, “ideology is a function” of these factors.\footnote{Hunt 1998, 20.} Ideology is thus dependent on them, but it should not be equated with them. In brief, what matters for Hunt is what the ancient Greeks thought. With the obvious risk of making a circular argument, Hunt identifies one part of the symbolic system — the ideological constraints about slaves — which first explains peculiarities in the sources. There is a reality behind the ideological shortsightedness. However, by identifying narrative contradictions, he places the ancient authors in relation to the identified ideology. The methodological echo from the holistic approaches (constructing a static system which then is contrasted with reality) is all too obvious.

Herodotos is the first of the ancient authors that Hunt analyses. The playing down of slaves and helots in warfare is evident already in Herodotos’
description of the battles of the Persian Wars. Slavery is intimately associated with the Persian invading army in Herodotos’ narrative. This, coupled with a metaphorical conceptualization of the relation between free and slaves, results in an uneasiness about slave participation on the Greek side. However, the exception that proves the rule is Herodotos’ narrative about the Battle of Plataiai. He mentions (Hdt. 9.28) that 35 000 helots, a ratio of 7 helots to 1 Spartan, fought in the battle. This has puzzled modern scholarship, and the general attitude has been to dismiss the figure on various grounds. The ideological dichotomization between free and slaves in ancient Greek sources, has been enforced by modern scholars since their proposed explanations rest on the notion that the citizen hoplite units were organised into separate units, and slaves and others fought in their units. The explanations of Herodotos’ reference have rested on passive assumptions. However, Herodotos’ figure can be explained if these assumptions are regarded as ideological distortions of reality. Hunt argues that the Spartan phalanx was 8 rows deep. The Spartans stood in the front row, and the following second to eighth rows consisted of helots, which explains Herodotos’ narrative. The argument held by earlier military historians that the phalanx needed to practise complicated moves in order to be effective, is dismissed. Although complicated moves were needed, the whole idea was to blindly follow the man in front of you. As long as the first person in a line knew what to do when, it was sufficient for the hoplites behind to follow. In other words, Hunt argues that the helots were integrated into the Spartan phalanx.

However, Hunt’s argumentation has also wider consequences. The ideological constraint was not only restricted to actual warfare. Hunt accepts the possible helot revolt in 490 as real. In accordance with the identified ideology, it should only be expected that Herodotos is silent on the revolt. In addition, Hunt of course accepts other evidence indicating helot unrest in the early 5th century; the Spartan dedication to Zeus is dated to a period earlier than 464, and the renaming of Zankle is due to contemporaneous emigration from Messenia to Zankle. As Hunt realises, his arguments are not unique; they have been made earlier by scholars adhering to a culture historical perspective. He augments, thus, a basic primordial assumption of ethnic enmity on one level. There is, however, a fundamental difference in how the past is explained,
since he situates the explanation in the ideological constraints expressed in Herodotos’ narrative.

Thucydides is the second ancient historian on whom Hunt focuses. He suggests that the use of slaves in warfare increased considerably during the Peloponnesian War. Slaves played a crucial role in some decisive battles, and arguably they were important for the outcome of the war. Thucydides, too, generally represses slave participation in warfare and focuses on the free soldiers, according to Hunt. For instance, helots, together with Spartans, were trapped on the island of Sphakteria in 424, but Thucydides does not mention what happened to them when they were captured, though he does mention the Spartans (Thuc. 4.38.5). Another example of Thucydides’ attitude towards the helots is the episode he narrates (Thuc. 4.80) in connection with the Pylos episode when the Spartans executed 2000 helots. This episode raises many questions; the helots appear only to disappear, according to Hunt. Although the forces sent to the Thrace under Brasidas consisted of many helots, 700 of 1700 soldiers (Thuc. 4.80.5), Thucydides similarly downplays the role of the helots (e.g., Thuc. 4.126.2, 5.9.9). Hunt thus distinguishes a trait in Thucydides’ account. Helots/slaves are never important enough in themselves to be mentioned, and they appear in the narrative only if they directly affect the course of events.

The downplaying of slave participation has, in general, been accepted by modern scholarship. One of the more important assumptions for this view is that slave participation in warfare is regarded as ‘loyalty tests’. That is, the Greek states should only be expected to avoid using slaves in their military, since slaves always wait for an opportunity to escape. Slaves in the military are therefore bound to desert or cause trouble. Therefore slaves were not used regularly, and every exception needs to be explained. Hunt, drawing on ethnographic parallels, refutes this assumption. The use of slave soldiers has been a widespread phenomenon throughout history, and nothing in better-

933 Also Jordan 1990, stresses the narratological aspects. He explains this ruthlessness with a symbolic transgression. The helots were forced to make a symbolic transgression in order to furnish the Spartans with a religious pretext for the execution, Jordan 1990, 57-67. Whitby 1994, is also worth mentioning. He dismisses this episode as fictitious, 97-9. Whitby 1994, esp. 107-11, argues in general that Thucydides, and Aristotle, present a negative image of Sparta (stressing the helot danger), which is not representative of the Spartans’ view of their own society. Herodotos’ and Xenophon’s images (presenting the helot-Spartan relations as less tense) come closer to the Spartans’ perspective, according to Whitby.
935 Hunt 1998, 57f.
known parallels supports the notion that slaves are more disloyal. Universally
slaves fight as well, or as poorly, as any other category of soldiers.936

The revolt in the 460s was a crucial event in the history of Messenia and
Sparta. Thucydides’ narrative (Thuc. 1.101-103) is characterised by an
ambivalent attitude, according to Hunt. As long as the rebellion continues,
Thucydides displays a hostile attitude towards the helots. However, when he
describes the helots who had managed to escape to Naupaktos, they are
portrayed as loyal allies to Athens (e.g., Thuc. 2.80.6, 3.108.1, 4.36.1). The choice
of vocabulary is revealing. Thucydides use the designation ‘Messenians’ only
for the inhabitants in Naupaktos, that is, when these persons can be regarded as
free Greeks. Not once does he refer to the helots in Messenia as Messenians. He
accepts, in other words, the official Spartan version, denying the claims of
independence of the Messenian helots.937 Although the Athenians supported
the Messenians once their freedom was a fact, they did not support the
Messenian struggle for independence. The helots were slaves, and Greek states
supported each other against slave unrest. The ideological concern with the
slaves thus overrode the enmity between Athens and Sparta, in Hunt’s view.938
This concern is also evident in Thucydides’ account of the Pylos campaign,
since he downplays the possibilities of slave unrest in his narratives, according
to Hunt.939

Illustrative is the difference between Ducat and Hunt. Ducat, reading the
sources in a more passive way, argues that the period 520-460 was characterised
by open hostilities between the Messenians and the Spartans, while the
Messenians were complying with their position afterwards. Interestingly, the
principal source for the first period is Herodotos, while for the second it is
Thucydides. Hunt argues that the difference is not an effect of changed real
conditions but rather due to the narratological differences between Herodotos’
and Thucydides’ accounts.940

A consequence of Hunt’s argumentation is that he enforces a primordially
essentialistic view on Messenian ethnicity. In order to contrast the ideological
ambivalences towards slavery among the ancient authors with reality, he takes

937 Hunt 1998, 68-70. Thucydides’ (1.101.2) mention that all helots were called Messenians because
most of them were descendants of the earlier Messenians, only enforces the polarisation. They
were Messenians, in a land once called Messenia, but are helots. See also above p. 90, and below
Becoming Messenian.
938 Hunt 1998, 76.
939 Hunt 1998, 75.
940 Hunt 1998, 80f. See above pp. 245-7 for Ducat.
the existence of a Messenian ethnic identity for granted. However, Hunt complicates the relation between text and reality. Thucydides’ careful distinction between helots and Messenians is not a reflection of an ethnogenesis process (i.e., that Messenian identity emerged in the 460s), but due to ideological constraints. The representation of reality is governed by ideological concerns. However, this means that in reality there was a Messenian ethnic identity and the Messenian helots were fighting for independence, according to Hunt. Put differently, the active view on culture is delimited to the analytical focus. The Messenian identity, falling outside it, is conceptualized in a passive fashion. Thus, although Hunt has an active view on culture, he reinforces primordial essentialism.

The increasing use of neodamodeis, mercenaries and helots by the Spartans is often conceptualized as an indication of Sparta’s decline. Since slaves are, essentially, assumed to hate their masters, the increased use of slaves in the Spartan military is commonly viewed as an indication of the insecure foundation of the Spartan hegemony in the late 5th/early 4th centuries. There is no substantial Spartan manpower on which the empire can be solidly grounded, according to this view. This line of thought is based on false assumptions according to Hunt, since dependable groups in armies usually perform their duties. The neodamodeis, as well as other groups, were an integrated part of the Spartan war-machine. The decline cannot be explained with the military development. Hunt argues instead that Sparta’s fall was a result of military defeat and ephemeral political alliances.

The last author Hunt elaborates on is Xenophon. Xenophon’s narrative is constructed around a number of binary pairs, which in Hunt’s view were governing in ancient Greek thought. The basic pair free/slave can be associated with the binaries Greek/non-Greek, man/woman and adult/child. The soldier needs to be on the high side of these pairs, while slaves are frequently associated with the inferior category. Slavery is often associated with barbarians in Xenophon’s narratives, and the exclusion of slaves can be explained by the influence of the general ideological world-view. Slaves were stereotyped into negative images of free male Greeks. Acknowledging slave

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941 Hunt 1998, 77f. Also Hunt 1998, 119f., while rejecting Chambers 1977/78, see above pp. 93f., the sharp distinction between Lakonian and Messenian helots, concludes: “Nevertheless, I find it plausible that there were real differences in attitude between the Laconian Helots, … and the Messenians with their national myths;”


943 Hunt 1998, 158.
participation in warfare would be to make explicit a symbolic transgression of wide proportions.944

The ideological constraints are also illustrated by Xenophon’s notorious omission of the founding of Messene. Xenophon narrates a debate in Athens on the subject of whether Athens should aid Sparta, and here one would expect mention of Messene’s founding (Xen. Hell. 6.5.33). That is, instead of narrating the event when the helots gained their freedom — surely a dangerous precedence for Greek slave-owners — Xenophon articulates the contemplation of other slaveholders to aid Sparta in their struggle against the slaves. Xenophon’s choice illustrates how deep-seated the discourse was, which Hunt identified.945 Xenophon, like Thucydides, keeps the categories separated. There were helots (slaves) and then there were Messenians. The mobility between these categories is, however, unmentionable.946

In sum, then, Hunt has an active view on culture, but it is restricted to the analytical focus. The relation between text and reality is conceptualized from an active perspective. The ancient texts are seen not as reflecting, but obscuring reality. They reflect general ideologies, world-views, and the individual author’s relation to these. In reality helots and slaves were an integrated part of Classical warfare, in contrast to the images presented in the ancient texts. However, in order to highlight the ideological constraints, Hunt needs to posit a static reality against which the narratives can be contrasted. Part of the static reality includes the helots. A result of Hunt’s theoretical assumptions is that the Messenian ethnic (national) identity is regarded as static and fixed. In other words, ethnicity is still defined and conceptualized according to the primordial assumptions.

The myopic gaze of Pausanias

Pausanias’ text is an ancient source of seminal importance for the history of Messenia. The 4th book in his Periegesis is the most extensive ancient account of Messenia in antiquity. Every major aspect, excluding the Spartan period, in the primordial conceptualization of Messenia is grounded in Pausanias’ narrative. Notably the archaeological excavations in Messene have, metaphorically speaking, been conducted with Pausanias’ description in one hand and a trowel

945 Hunt 1998, 180. The omission occurs at Xen. Hell. 6.5.32-33. See also above n. 418.
in the other. From the passive perspective, a primary notion has been to verify Pausanias’ account of what actually happened, or his descriptions of sightings. Consequently the veracity of Pausanias has been in the forefront of scholarly debates. While classicists have used the Periegesis extensively, there is also a long tradition, originating with Wilamowitz, which has questioned Pausanias’ accuracy. Nevertheless, the diverging opinions within the passive perspective revolve around the notions of accepting or dismissing the whole of, or parts of the Periegesis. Pausanias’ account is not explained by his concerns or as articulations of contemporaneous discourses. Regardless of opinion, the relation between text and reality is conceptualized as simple and straightforward. Pausanias remains a more or less trustworthy Baedeker.

A renewed interest among classicists in Pausanias, as a topic, is visible from the late 1980s, and can be attributed to the influential publication of Habicht in 1985. Habicht’s general aim is to upgrade Pausanias’ reputation, and prove that he is more than an ancient Baedeker. A major part of Habicht’s argumentation is founded on Pausanias’ description of Messene. Here, Habicht expresses several culture historical notions; perhaps the strongest is the reduction of archaeology to a handmaiden to history. In other words, the relation between text and reality remains straightforward, and culture is viewed as passive. However, other studies with a more active perspective have also emerged. The active perspective includes several aspects, but perhaps most notable is the emphasis on the emic perspective. That is, Pausanias’ text is no longer interpreted as transmitting centuries-old facts, but is rather regarded as an articulation of his concerns. Pausanias, writing in the 2nd century AD, had an agenda and was influenced by contemporaneous discourses. The construction of Greek identity under Roman rule and Pausanias’ focus on religious aspects have for instance, emerged as prominent issues.

Elsner’s study from 1992 is illustrative of the active view of culture. He reads Pausanias’ narrative as an articulation of “how Greeks coped with the burden of a distinguished past weighing on their cultural identity”. Elsner’s main aim is thus not the accuracy of Pausanias’ description. The Periegesis is instead

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947 See above pp. 155-61.
948 Habicht 1985, 165-75.
949 Alcock, et al. 2001, vii, stresses the importance of Habicht’s “revolutionary” publication. To mention a couple of publications devoted to Pausanias recently, e.g. Arafat 1992; Arafat 1996; Bingen 1996; Knoepfler and Piérart 2001. The passive perspective still dominates overall. Thus, the bulk of these publications will remain uncommented on here.
950 Habicht 1985, 28-63. See also above p. 157.
regarded as a construction that articulates Pausanias' concerns; it does not passively transmit reality, but expresses views. The narrative structure and the topics the author chooses, emerge as important analytical notions. It is therefore relevant that Pausanias restricts his narrative to mainland Greece and devotes particular attention to religious matters in his text. There is a purpose to this, according to Elsner. Pausanias articulates a Greek unity in the mythic-religious sphere in the past, which stands in contrast to the contemporaneous political reality of conflict and division under the Roman rule. Elsner emphasises the narrative juxtaposition in Pausanias' narrative. The religious focus in the *Periegesis* distinguishes also Pausanias from a common antiquarian. Elsner argues instead that Pausanias' text should be regarded as a pilgrim's account. Pausanias is not merely describing what he saw, but what is worth seeing for a Greek. The *Periegesis* is a journey in the native land; "a journey into one's identity in its topographic, cultural and spiritual resonances." The core of Pausanias' pilgrimage is the articulation of Greek cultural identity in the 2nd century AD, according to Elsner. Through the regional myths, which are tied together with cross-references, Pausanias constructs a meaning for the places, and the various parts of Greece are interwoven into one unit. Thus, "identity, having already been located by place, is further defined by story." Although Elsner stresses that Pausanias was careful to record the correct local myths, he nevertheless regards the scholarly focus on Pausanias' historical accuracy as redundant. It is the wrong question to ask from Elsner's perspective since there was no difference between myth and history — both features express an ideological concern with a nostalgic Greek past and are therefore inseparable. Elsner's interpretation of Pausanias' text is thus firmly grounded in an active perspective. The text is not interpreted as passively transmitting reality, but is conceptualized as the result of active choices by the author. The content of the text is a major issue and regarded as an articulation of Pausanias', and contemporaneous Greeks', ideological concerns. Authorial meaning is a prominent notion, and the particularities of the text are explained, have a meaning, and are not merely dismissed or confirmed.

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954 Elsner 1992, 10.
955 Elsner 1992, 15; Konstan 2001, has a similar focus, see above p. 205.
956 Elsner 1992, 14f., esp. n. 45.
957 The active perspective is also evident in Elsner 2001, focusing on Pausanias' account of Olympia, and in Elsner 1994 where he elaborates on the discourse of travel writings in ancient Greek culture.
Book 4, the *Messeniaka*, of Pausanias’ text is also occasionally used in Elsner’s interpretation. The integration of topography and myths is perhaps best illustrated by Pausanias’ description of the Messenians (4.1-29). There is a sense of correct locality in Pausanias’ text, according to Elsner. For instance, as long as the Messenians are in exile they do not win in the Olympic Games. The return of the Messenians to their homeland is fundamental to the construction of cultural identity by Pausanias.958 The deep sense of religiosity is articulated by the centrality of the secret thing Aris tomenes hides (Paus. 4.20.4). Pausanias’ presentation of the secret thing is carefully constructed not to reveal the contents or the place in which it was hidden. It epitomizes the very identity of the Messenians (their existence depends on that its being kept secret).959 These brief examples are illustrative of the differences between a passive and active reading. For Elsner, the Messenian ethnic identity is not preserved, but viewed as a manipulated construction by Pausanias. Identity is neither static nor fixed, and the possible primordiality of the Messenian identity is interesting as far as Pausanias conceptualizes it as unchangeable. The primordial assumptions are thus abandoned and replaced with instrumentalist traits. Ethnicity, cultural identity, is conceptualized as dynamic, and the primary issue is how the past is used to construct meanings.

Alcock has elaborated on Pausanias in several publications. In her contribution from 1996 she regards Pausanias as an ethnographer, that is, as somebody writing about a people from the outside looking in. The post-modern critique that has been raised against the ethnographic genre has been relatively extensive, and it is these issues that Alcock raises. The main questions focus accordingly on Pausanias’ agenda: what he emphasises in his narrative; how his authority is established; and whether he suppresses other alternative versions.960 The notion of itinerary is a basic and explicit method for Pausanias. However, the ‘straightforward’ guidebook-method is also unmasking Pausanias’ concerns. His self-conscious remarks about the itinerary display the selective nature of his account. Thus, the ‘all Greek things’ he describes are in effect religious features and specific versions of local myths and histories. Another prominent notion in Pausanias’ account is the boundary. The *Periegesis* is not only structured according to regions (i.e., each chapter elaborates on one region), but Pausanias also explicitly remarks upon the crossing of

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In other words, the narrative structure is of pivotal importance for Alcock’s analysis. Her analysis complicates the text, since the particularities of it are highlighted. The impression of Pausanias as a simple Baedeker derived from the passive perspective, is shattered.

Pausanias’ profound concern with the Greek past is often remarked upon. This concern is analysed in an essentialistic fashion, which avoids the impact of the Roman rule on the Greeks and Pausanias’ narrative. In Alcock’s view the Greek past, as it emerges in the Periegesis, is a negotiated past. That is, it is not authentic and preserved, but something that Pausanias, influenced by contemporaneous discourses, actively constructs. Alcock introduces the analytical concept ‘landscapes of memory’ in order to illustrate the negotiation of Greek identity. In a sense, Pausanias constructed the very landscape he moved through — he chose what to incorporate in his narrative. Furthermore, ‘memory’ problematizes the relation between the past and the present, emphasising that remembrance is an active process. The past is not preserved, but actively kept alive. The writing of a book like the Periegesis is thus a way of creating, but also controlling, a past. Pausanias’ focus on religious features in the landscape resonates well with a wider ancient Mediterranean practice, according to Alcock. One way to preserve memories was to mark features in the landscapes, thus giving them meaning. The landscape was imbued with special places and constructed meanings, which Pausanias in particular recorded. There is, thus, a dual process here. Pausanias records memories, constructed locally according to their discourses, but since he actively chooses which memories to record he also constructs a specific version of the past. The Persian Wars, for instance, have a paradigmatic role in Pausanias’ narrative, according to Alcock. Associations to the Persian Wars are made frequently, and there is a distinct preference to mention things commemorating these wars in the Periegesis. The Greeks, on the individual as well as the state level, are judged according to their conduct in the Persian Wars, and the Romans and the Gallic invasion are compared with the Persians. The landscapes of memories thus evolve around the memories of opposition to external threats, according to Alcock.

In accordance with the post-modern critique, Alcock also challenges the conceptualization of Pausanias as a relatively neutral guide. A consequence of

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961 Alcock 1996, 244-6.
962 Alcock 1996, 249.
963 Alcock 1996, 249.
964 Alcock 1996, 250-60.
every text, including Pausanias’, is that other voices are suppressed. Alcock identifies different authorial strategies in the Periegesis, which ensure that the reader accepts Pausanias’ views. Although other voices are given some space in his narrative, as for instance in the local disputes he presents, the hegemonic position is still enforced by Pausanias’ tendency to judge and hold one specific version as the correct one.965

The theoretical abstractions I make are founded on categorizations of ideas and assumptions. Occasionally, therefore, assumptions associated with different theoretical models can be discerned in the production of a single scholar, sometimes even in a single publication. The explicit post-modern critique that Alcock articulates in the above-mentioned article is firmly grounded in the active view of culture, but some of her other publications come closer to the passive perspective. Her assessment of the possibility to use Pausanias as a source for the study of the Classical polis, for instance, focuses on the notion of veracity. In other words, despite the initial criticism of the passive readings of Pausanias, Alcock dwells on an issue firmly grounded in the passive perspective.966 Her conclusion that Pausanias is a trustworthy source in some respects but that every attempt to use him as a source for the Classical period should be made with caution and have Pausanias’ agenda in mind, is a middle position.967 It echoes the exhaustive debates about the trustworthiness in the passive models.

However, let me turn to Alcock’s interpretation of the Messeniaka more specifically. Another aspect of Pausanias’ authoritative role is the profound influence his narrative has had on modern conceptualizations of ancient Messenia. This influence is the topic of Alcock’s publication from 2001. The Messeniaka stands out in the Periegesis on account of its structural peculiarity; about 80% of it dwells on the history of the Messenians, particularly their struggles with the Spartans, and only 20% on the noteworthy sights.968 Within the passive model, two broad explanations have been proposed for the imbalance. First, there was simply not much for Pausanias to describe, and therefore he had to elaborate on the history of the Messenians. The second line of argumentation has been, in accordance with Quellenforschung, to regard this

967 Alcock 1995, 339f.
968 Alcock 2001, 142. Calculated by Habicht 1985, 37. See also Auberger 1992; Auberger 2001; Deshours 1993; Baladié 2001, who elaborate on various aspects of the Messeniaka. Their overall perspective is passive.
imbalance as a consequence of the sources. In other words, both lines of thought conceptualize Pausanias as passively transmitting reality. This can be contrasted with Alcock’s point of departure that, “Pausanias nonetheless actively devised his own version of the Messeniaka, creating … in his own right, armed with his own agenda”. Thus, Alcock credits Pausanias with an active authorial position. The differences between the passive and active perspective can hardly be illustrated more bluntly.

Pausanias’ account of the history of Messenia (4.1-29) has a couple of narrative particularities. The history begins with the earliest kings, and continues with the struggles with the Spartans. A distinct shift occurs when the Messenians were subjugated (4.24.5). Pausanias subsequently focuses on the exiled Messenians (4.24.7-26.3). The fate of the inhabitants that remained in Messenia under Spartan rule, with the exception of the helot revolt in the 460s (4.24.5-7), is untreated. There is also a chronological jump of some 40 years in his narrative (4.26.2-3). Alcock observes that this accords well with a general feature of Pausanias to omit periods when people are dependent. The account does not neutrally record everything, but has its focuses and omissions.

Another consequence of Pausanias’ hegemonic position is that his focus has been taken for granted by modern scholars, and little attention has been paid to the Classical period. That is, Pausanias’ silence on noteworthy sights in Messenia has had a profound effect on what modern scholarship has focused on. Thus, archaeological activities have for instance, until the advent of the regional archaeological projects, focused on Messene. In other words, Pausanias has had a profound effect on archaeology, which has studied the same periods that Pausanias focused on. Historical studies have likewise conceptualized the helots as a passive and subjugated group within the Spartan state. Pausanias’ silence on the helots is mirrored in the modern conceptualizations. Pausanias is thus not only presenting his version of the Messenian past, but due to the preference of scholars in the passive perspective to follow the ancient sources closely, his bias has also had strong effects on the

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969 Alcock 2001, 142f.
970 Alcock 2001, 143.
971 Alcock 2001, 143-5.
972 Alcock 2001, 146.
973 Alcock 2001, 146-9. Archaeological finds have also had an impact on the development of archaeology. The discovery of the Palace of Pylos, for instance, generated more intense studies on the Bronze Age of Messenia. Still, Pausanias omits the Classical period, which also archaeology has done.
974 Alcock 2001, 151.
seemingly objective scholarly conceptualizations. Alcock places the representation of the past in the forefront.

**Summarising remarks**

The conceptualizations in this chapter resemble each other since they situate the explanations of the past in the ancient authors. Although the veracity of the sources on one level still is an important notion, the conceptualizations do not end with a mere approval or dismissal of the sources. Peculiarities in the ancient texts (focuses, omissions, narrative structure, etc.) are regarded as articulations of discourses, ideologies, or authorial concerns. Put briefly, the texts are no longer regarded as neutral or objective — they are narratives. That is, it is the active construction of the texts, and the reality represented in them, that is emphasised. The active perspective is now widened and incorporates the ancient sources.

Critique of passive, culture historical, readings of the ancient sources is prominent in these studies, and the consequences of taking the ancient sources at face value are noticed. According to Hunt, the straightforward readings of the ancient sources have resulted in a cementation of the ideological constraints of the ancient Greeks. Likewise, Alcock points to the consequences of passive readings of Pausanias that have resulted in an enforcement of his biases, although cast in a positivistic scholarly vocabulary.

However, these positions also have consequences. Although Hunt has an active perspective on his analytical focus, some aspects beyond it remain conceptualized from a passive perspective. The representation of reality is dynamic. In order to analyse this as dynamic, Hunt posits a static reality. For instance, the Messenian ethnic identity is conceptualized according to primordial assumptions. In Hunt’s view, in reality the Messenians preserved their identity and were struggling for independence, but due to the ideological constraints the ancient authors omitted this from their narratives.

Ethnicity also features in the active conceptualizations of Pausanias. The passive readings of the *Periegesis* had an etic perspective and focused on the ethnic denominations mentioned in the text. From an active perspective, the ethnic denominations are viewed as Pausanias’ constructs. The mention of them reveals Pausanias’ identity, and how he perceived the Greek past. It is the emic perspective that is emphasised. The *Periegesis* is not read to verify the existence of the Dorian kings but as an articulation of the ethnic identity of Pausanias.
Becoming Messenian

The instrumentalist model *strictu sensu*, as an anthropological school analysing ethnicity, has remained relatively unnoticed in the conceptualizations of the ancient Messenians. Although the bulk of the scholarship treated so far in this chapter, on some level shares the theoretical assumptions of the instrumentalist model, ethnicity has nevertheless been conceptualized according to primordial assumptions. One explanation of this development is that ethnicity is a minor issue for many scholars and therefore marginalized, pushed outside the analytical focus. Accordingly, the anthropological redefinition of ethnicity has remained unnoticed. This has changed in the last years, and classicists increasingly adopt the instrumentalist perspective. Figueira and Luraghi have advocated interpretations of Messenian ethnic identity, governed by instrumentalist assumptions, from 1999 onwards. The primary difference is that scholars with primordial assumptions believe that the Messenians had an ethnic identity prior to the Spartan conquest, while the instrumentalists mean that the Messenian identity emerged during the Spartan occupation in the 5th century. In other words, it is not an innate notion preserved and articulated in culture, but dynamic. Ethnic identities and cultural features are manipulated in a political landscape.

The instrumentalist perspective is notable already in the rationale of Figueira’s analysis, when he explains that the emergence of the Messenian identity will be explored “through the dynamic interplay of mythological, historical, and religious tradition with the contemporary political and military situation.”975 Another feature of the instrumentalist model, the emic perspective, is also stressed. Thucydides (1.101.2) remarks that, “the earthquake, during which the Helots and the Thouriatai and the Aithaies of the Perioeci decamped in revolt to Ithome. The majority of the Helots were the descendants of the ancient Messenians enslaved earlier. Therefore they were all called Messenians”; and this is interpreted by Figueira as an observation that the rebels in the 460s were perceived as helots. This is not a fact, and Thucydides’ veracity is not at stake. What matters is that Thucydides and other Athenians perceived the helot rebels as Messenians.976 Thucydides normally employs ‘helots’ to denominate them in relation to the Spartans, and

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975 Figueira 1999, 211.
976 Figueira 1999, 212. Figueira’s translation. See also above p. 90 and n. 937, and below p. 267.
‘Messenians’ is reserved for the exiled community in Naupaktos (which was a result of the revolt in the 460s). The conflation of the terminology in the above quote is thus indicative of an ideological concern and contestation of the Messenian ethnic identity, according to Figueira. Thucydides’ phrasing indicates his political and ideological perspective. Figueira introduces one of his major themes, namely that contemporaneous political issues are determinative. A description is neutral only within a limited political horizon. The reference to the Messenians is part of larger ideological concerns that the Athenians showed in support of the Messenians. Thus, Figueira makes the political polarisation of the Greek world between Athens and Sparta the basis of his analysis. The ancient evidence is not regarded as neutrally transmitting reality, but as contextualised and associated with political discourses.

The group naturally denominated as Messenians were the exiles in Naupaktos. However, Figueira regards neither the revolt nor their identification as Messenians as expressions of a long-suppressed ethnic identity. The many dedications made by Messenians — ranging from the spear butts in Olympia and the Apollo Korythos sanctuary, via inscriptions in Delphi, to the joint Messenian and Naupaktian dedication at the base of the Nike statue in Olympia — are interpreted as evidence of the eagerness of this group to articulate its identity. In Figueira’s phrasing, this “attests a virtual blitzkrieg of self-assertion by the Messenians spanning a generation from c. 460.” The key word is self-assertion, which underlines Figueira’s emic perspective. In other words, the dedications do not prove that the Messenians preserved their ethnic identity during the Spartan occupation, but that a group was claiming the ethnic denomination ‘Messenians’.

The dynamic perspective of the past has also other effects. Essentialistic conceptualizations of Classical Sparta take the denominations ‘Lakonian’ and ‘Messenian’ for granted, and regard them as mutually exclusive entities. Accordingly, the composition of the Messenians in Naupaktos is not an issue, since this group presumably consisted of exiled Messenians/helots. Instrumentalists often undermine the essentialistic foundations since they emphasise social mobility, shifting ethnic identities, and regard identities as changeable. Figueira expresses this instrumentalist tenet since he questions the a priori assumption that there was a distinction along ethnic lines between

977 Figueira 1999, 217.
978 Figueira 1999, 213.
Messenian and Lakonian helots. Additionally, there were tensions in Sparta that cannot be explained along ethnic divisions, for instance Kinadon’s conspiracy. Furthermore, there are also indications that Lakonian helots were disloyal to the Spartans, and some even made an attack against Sparta itself in the wake of the earthquake (Diod. Sic. 11.63.4-64.1).

These helots found their way to the rebels entrenched on Mount Ithome, according to Figueira. The mixed origin of the rebellious helots mirrors the social conditions of the helots. Figueira underlines that there was mobility among helots; Messenian helots could serve as personal attendants in Sparta, while Lakonian helots could be moved to till the kleroi in Messenia.

Since the Messenian ethnic identity is conceptualized as flexible, the content of it emerges as an analytical notion. Ideologies, largely defined politically, play a prominent role in Figueira’s interpretation. In addition to the Messenian ideology, which was backed up and enforced by the Athenians, the Spartan perspective is also relevant. The Spartan position is characterised by its aim to repress the Messenian claims. The Spartans denied the existence of a separate political, ethnic, Messenian community. Figueira emphasises furthermore that the ideological rationalisations for helotism, and the symbolic ritualised oppression through which helots were socialised into submission, was not articulated along ethnic lines. Nevertheless, he situates part of the explanation for the emergence of the Messenian ethnic identity in the Spartan social system. Spartan society is characterised as a society with a rigid stratification. Figueira identifies and stresses cultural homogeneity among all helots, across the Lakonian-Messenian analytical boundary. These features resulted in two partly opposing developments. Firstly, some helots were effectively socialised and complied with their situation, for example. the helots used in the Spartan army. However, secondly, this also facilitated an opportunity for opposition. Their affiliation, as a social group in the Spartan system, could be channelled along ethnic lines as a means to express their distinction from the Spartans. The opposing developments are not associated with Messenian and/or Lakonian helots. Figueira is careful to stress that individuals, with the same social position, made conscious choices that in the

980 Figueira 1999, 223.
981 Figueira 1999, 225.
983 Figueira 1999, 224, 217. Figueira is of the opinion that the bulk of the Spartan kleroi were located in the Pamisos valley. This stands in contrast to Luraghi 2002c, 592, see below pp. 267f.
984 Figueira 1999, 221. The performance of the helots in the Spartan military is viewed as evidence of helot compliance, 222f.
end resulted in different ethnic identities. Accordingly, “instead of reflecting genealogy, feeling ‘Messenian’ or identifying oneself as ‘Messenian’ appears to be inversely correlated with the degree of psychological compliance with the Spartan government and with the Spartiates as a social class.” Put differently, the Messenian ethnic identity is defined by Figueira in opposition to a Spartan ‘other’. It is a process of differentiation that is expressed along ethnic lines.

Keeping in mind the enmity between Athens and Sparta at the time, one should perhaps expect the Athenian support of the Messenian claims. One expression of this support was the unique position held by the exiled community. According to Figueira, the Messenians were perceived as a community in shelter, and regarded by the Athenians as a legitimate polis whose territory was occupied by an aggressor. For instance, Figueira observes that the Messenians were never regarded as a colony. This facilitated the claims of the exiled community to the denomination ‘Messenians’, and their successful claims are reflected in the later development. The founding of Messene, for instance, is conceptualized in the ancient sources as a return of exiles with little local support. Although Figueira argues that the Messenians invented a past, emphasising the struggles against the Spartans that are portrayed in the Messeniaka, he also emphasises that it was not sufficiently effective in order to integrate the various mixed groups that settled in the newly founded Messenian state. The Messenian identity was cemented primarily through rituals and religious traditions. Figueira singles out the mystery cult in Andania as the central feature around which the Messenian identity revolved.

Andania, as a topos, has a prominent place in the Messeniaka; it was the first capital of Messenia (Paus. 4.1.2), it was the home of the hero Aristomenes (4.14.7), and Aristomenes’ urn contained a tin foil inscribed with the mysteries (4.26.8). There are also links between Andania and Athens, in particular through the Eleusinian mysteries; the cult was brought to Andania from Eleusis (4.1.5), and the priests of the Andania cult sought refuge in Eleusis after the 1st Messenian War (4.14.1). The Andania topos, according to Figueira, reflects several notions in the Athenian imperial ideology, which portrayed the Eleusinian mysteries as specially old and sacred. The link to Athens is, according to Figueira’s interpretation, a reflection of the prominent role which

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985 Figueira 1999, 224.
986 Figueira 1999, 220.
987 Figueira 1999, 219f.
988 Figueira 1999, 226-8, esp. 228.
989 Figueira 1999, 228; 228-31.
the identity of the exiled community had in Messenia after the founding. In other words, cultural features are manipulated according to political concerns. Ethnicity is forged around cultural features, and not vice versa.

In sum, Figueira’s analysis is embedded in the instrumentalist perspective. First and foremost, the Messenian ethnic identity is conceptualized as dynamic and changeable. It was not preserved, and neither did it survive the Spartan occupation — it emerged and changed during it. Another tenet in the instrumentalist model is the prominent position of the contemporaneous political conditions. In Figueira’s analysis, the political enmity between Sparta and Athens is the setting for the emergence of the Messenian identity. The sources are not neutral but embedded in political ideologies. The emergence of the Messenian identity is situated in the intersection of the different political ideologies, and therefore contested. The socio-political reality is also the ground on which cultural features are manipulated. The Messenians is a group of mixed origins, in Figueira’s view, and individuals choose to follow a social path that eventually results in an affiliation with others. Ethnicity is thus a strategy, ultimately determined by political conditions, that one can follow.

Luraghi, too, has elaborated on the Messenian ethnic identity from an instrumentalist perspective. Thucydides’ passage (1.101.2), quoted above, is important also for Luraghi’s explanation of the emergence of the Messenian ethnic identity. Thucydides’ note can mean either that all helots were called Messenians because the majority of them were descendants of the old (pre-Spartan-occupation) Messenians, or that the majority of the rebels were descendants of the old Messenians and therefore all the rebels were called Messenians. Historians, at least in recent times, have usually followed the first line of interpretation, while translators have been more careful. The second interpretation was more common among 19th-century scholars, but also Ducat has recently argued for it. Not surprisingly, Luraghi advocates the second interpretation. The argumentation for the second interpretation rests in part on grammar, but also on the fact that it is consistent with Thucydides’ and other ancient authors’ use of the terms. Thus, if the first interpretation is correct, this passage “would paradoxically be the only piece of evidence for such a usage.” The difference between Figueira and Luraghi is in this respect

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990 I was unable to incorporate Luraghi and Alcock 2003 in this publication since it appeared too late. Furthermore, Luraghi 2001, is repeated in the articles from 2002.
991 Luraghi 2002c, 588. See also above p. 90 and n. 937 and p. 263.
992 Luraghi 2002c, 589, for references. E.g. Cartledge 1979; Talbert 1989.
993 Luraghi 2002c, 590, for references. E.g. Forbes 1895; Ducat 1990.
994 Luraghi 2002c, 591.
noteworthy. Figueira, emphasising the emic perspective, explains the exceptional vocabulary as an articulation of the ideological contestation of the Messenian identity. Luraghi’s explanation, on the other hand, rests on the fundamental notion of consistency. A consequence of Luraghi’s explanation is that it facilitates a reconstruction of Classical Messenia where the role of the perioikoi is emphasised. According to the first interpretation, most of the kleroi of the homoioi were located in Messenia. This in turn means that the number and role of the perioikoi are considered to be insignificant. Following Luraghi’s reading, however, a void emerges that can be filled with a larger number of perioikoi.

Luraghi has also elaborated on the emergence of helotism in ancient Sparta. The prevailing conceptualization is that the Spartans helotized pre-existing, pre-Dorian or Dorian (the latter only for the Messenian part), free populations when they conquered Lakonia and Messenia. Although there are variations in the details of these conceptualizations, they concur in that they regard the helots as homogeneous ethnic groups subjugated in their own territory. It is this basic image Luraghi aims to problematize, since it rests on loose foundations. Methodologically Luraghi touches the holistic chord and underlines the importance of constructing “models, by making explicit use of comparative evidence”. The essential difference between helots and chattel slaves, according to Luraghi, is the fact that the Spartans were a homogeneous group of absent masters. Other characteristics, often pointed out by modern scholars, such as the notion that helots were bound to the land they tilled or the collective nature of their slavery, do not stand the test. Luraghi emphasises that helotism is essentially a form of slavery. Recent scholarship has conceptualized the development of the Classical Spartan state as gradual. In other words, the origins of the Spartan system have been lowered chronologically, but as Luraghi observes, this has not incorporated helotism. Instead of viewing the emergence of helotism as primary, which initiated the development towards the Classical Spartan social system, Luraghi argues that helotism should be viewed as an instrument through which the Spartans regulated their ownership.

995 Luraghi 2002c, 592. See also above n. 983.
996 Luraghi 2002b, 227.
997 Luraghi 2002b, 228-33. Helots could be sold inside the boundaries of the Spartan state (Ephoros FGrH 70 F 117 (= Strabo 8.5.4)). This should be viewed against the background of the debate trying to pinpoint the unique features of helotism in contrast to chattel slavery. Luraghi emphasises similarities between chattel slavery and helotism, while other scholars have emphasised the differences.
998 Luraghi 2002b, 234.
of slaves. He dates this development to the period between the 1st and 2nd Messenian Wars. Thus, when Tyrtaios (West, GLP, fr. 6 (= Paus. 4.14.5)) mentions that the Messenians were forced to leave half of their products to their masters, he is not describing the conditions of the helots, as most interpretations would have it, but the conditions for the Messenians prior to the introduction of helotism. One could say that Luraghi distinguishes a phase of proto-helotism in Messenia.

Another fundamental tenet in the traditional image is the mass enslavement of the helots, in their own land. This stands in sharp contrast not only to how ancient Greeks dealt with conquered peoples in general, but also to other comparative cases. There is no single case in ancient Greek history where a conquered people were kept as slaves in the same place. Furthermore, every such attempt in later history has resulted in failure, since the social structures of the conquered peoples persist and revolts can be easily organised. In fact, Patterson’s seminal comparative study of slavery records only one exception to this rule — the helots. The mass enslavement of the helots is a mirage in Luraghi’s view, with little evidence to support it. Luraghi next questions the argument that the homogeneity of the Messenians in the 5th and 4th centuries proves the mass enslavement of the helots. If the Messenians were a homogeneous ethnic group prior to the conquering, there would have been a series of revolts, decreasing in frequency with time, during the Spartan occupation. This pattern is, however, not present in the history of the Messenians. Accordingly, Luraghi argues that the Messenian ethnic identity emerged as a result of the Spartan system.

The questioning of the prevailing image facilitates Luraghi’s reconstruction of the emergence of the Messenian ethnic identity. To begin with, Luraghi distinguishes a ‘continuist’ and ‘discontinuist’ camp among scholars. The former argue that the Messenians preserved their ethnic identity throughout the Spartan occupation, while the discontinuists mean that the Spartan occupation resulted in an absolute interruption in the Messenian culture, and therefore the Messenians invented a tradition when Messene was founded. This polarisation is anchored in the issue of the reliability of the Messeniaka. Jacoby’s thorough Quellenkritik of the Messeniaka from 1943, which argues that it is based on 4th-

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999 Luraghi 2002b, 235. Birgalias 2002, too, associates the emergence of helotism with the social concerns of the Spartans. Birgalias’ article is deeply embedded in the holistic perspective.

1000 Luraghi 2002b, 235f. Luraghi even claims that no person living in antiquity would regard Tyrtaios’ description as pertaining to helotism.

1001 Luraghi 2002b, 237. Patterson 1982 in turn follows Finley.

1002 Luraghi 2002b, 238f.
century sources and therefore not trustworthy for the pre-Spartan periods, provides the discontinuists with a firm and stable base. The continuists have since then used arguments based on such notions as oral tradition, religious continuity, and preservation of tradition among the exiles. However, both these traditions share common assumptions. According to Luraghi, they assume, for instance, that the Messenians were unified and independent prior to the Spartan conquest, and likewise that the rebellion in the 460s was primarily an affair of the helotized Messenians. In effect, Luraghi points to the prevailing assumptions of the passive, primordial, and culture historical perspectives that I have elaborated on in *Primordialism*.

The assumption that Messenia in some sense was a unified and distinct unit prior to the Spartan conquest does not stand the test, in Luraghi’s view. The geographic unity of Messenia is questioned first. The archaeological evidence from the 10th–8th centuries in Messenia exhibits considerable variations. The material record can on one level be considered as part of a wider cultural area incorporating the western Peloponnese, Lakonia, Ithaka, Aetolia and Akarnania. The general development of regional pottery styles during the Late Geometric period is furthermore absent from Messenia. The distributive variation indicates instead that Messenia was loosely organised in different clusters of settlements. Additionally, ‘Messenia’, as a denomination of the whole region, is attested only from the 5th century in the ancient literary sources. Other evidence from sanctuaries in Messenia from the Archaic period to the 5th century enforces the image of a lack of Messenian identity during this period. Luraghi reviews the finds in the sanctuaries of Apollo Korythos at Longa, of Pamisos at Aghios Floros, of Artemis Limnatis at Volimos, of Poseidon at Akovitika, and the Archaic sanctuary in the building Omega-Omega at Messene. He emphasises the distinct Lakonian flavour of the sanctuaries, which is identified on two levels. First, the worshipped deities at these sanctuaries are associated with cults in Lakonia; for example, Apollo Korythos resembles the warlike Spartan Apollo at Amyklai, and Artemis

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1003 Luraghi 2002a, 47. Zunino 1997, see above pp. 63-5, is an example of the continuist camp, while Pearson 1962, see above pp. 81f., of the discontinuist.

1004 Luraghi 2002a, 48.

1005 Luraghi 2002a, 48f. Tyrtaios (West, GLP, fr. 5) associates Messenia with Mount Ithome; Messenia is placed in Lakedaimon by Homer (*Od*. 21.13-16), and absent from the Catalogue of Ships in the *Iliad*. Pindar (*Pyth*. 6.32-6) and Thucydides (4.3.2, 4.41.2) are the first to call the whole region Messenia. Although Luraghi evokes other ancient sources, he argues for the same development as presented above on pp. 84f.

1006 Luraghi 2002a, 52.
Limnatis resembles Artemis Orthia at Sparta.\textsuperscript{1007} Second, the archaeological finds are of Lakonian styles, for example the pottery at the Apollo Korythos and at Aghios Floros,\textsuperscript{1008} the bronze dedications at Apollo Korythos and Artemis Limnatis,\textsuperscript{1009} and perhaps most conclusively the abundant finds of terracotta plaques at the sanctuary Omega-Omega; “this sort of votive offerings should be considered typically Spartan.”\textsuperscript{1010} The Lakonian flavour of these sanctuaries in Messenia resonates with Parker’s observation that the perioikoi worshipped the same deities as the Spartans. Luraghi concludes: the “shrines in Messenia in the Archaic and Early Classical period perfectly mirror the pantheon of the Spartiates, as did also the shrines of Lakonian perioikoi.”\textsuperscript{1011}

The perioikoi in Messenia have in general been neglected by modern scholarship.\textsuperscript{1012} Luraghi argues that in addition to the perioikic settlements along the borders, encircling as it were Messenia, there were also perioikic settlements in the central parts of Messenia. The settlement excavated in Messene was probably perioikic. The topography of Messenia is obscure, but Luraghi raises the possibility that Aithaia should be identified with Messene. There seems to have existed Lakonian as well as Messenian names for settlements, for instance, the Spartans called Pylos ‘Koryphasion’. Aithaia could therefore be the Lakonian name for Messene. Put differently, the perioikoi occupied large parts of Messenia and had an important role in the development of the Messenian identity, according to Luraghi.\textsuperscript{1013}

The Messenian identity was articulated for the first time in the rebellion of the 460s. Having a basic instrumentalist position, Luraghi’s interpretation echoes that of Figueira’s. Thus the rebels “only by linking themselves to those Messenians [i.e., assumed and constructed pre-Spartan identity] – by becoming Messenians, as it were – could they justify their uprising… Messenian identity and revolt from Sparta can be seen as two sides of the same coin.”\textsuperscript{1014} The Messenian ethnic identity is in other words emerging with the very act of revolt. A prior ethnic identity is not dictating who is revolting. The

\textsuperscript{1007} Luraghi 2002a, 54.
\textsuperscript{1008} Luraghi 2002a, 52, 53. See also above pp. 163f.
\textsuperscript{1009} Luraghi 2002a, 52, 54.
\textsuperscript{1010} Luraghi 2002a, 55f. Quote on 56. See also above p. 69 and pp. 106f.
\textsuperscript{1011} Luraghi 2002a, 56f. The cult of Pamisos at Aghios Floros is noted as an exception.
\textsuperscript{1012} See, Shipley 1997, for a collection of ancient sources about the perioikoi. Hall 2000, response might be of interest to.
\textsuperscript{1013} Luraghi 2002a, 57-9. The perioikoi can be upgraded due to the void Luraghi has created, see above pp. 267f.
\textsuperscript{1014} Luraghi 2002a, 60.
identity is rather a result of actions, determined by socio-political conditions. Thucydides’ (1.101.2) mention that perioukoi from Aithaia and Thouria participated has puzzled modern scholarship. However, this conforms well to Luraghi’s explanatory scheme. The spear butts at the Apollo Korythos, associated with the revolt by Luraghi, were dedicated at a perioukic sanctuary. Even more important, the rebels were entrenched at a perioukic settlement. This indicates that the perioukoi did not simply tag along with the helots, but played a significant role not only in the revolt but also in the emergence of the Messenian identity.

The liberation of Messenia and the founding of Messene is the next topic. At this crucial moment, neither the helots nor the perioukoi acted as coherent groups. Segments of both groups, regardless of region, sympathised with Sparta and the invading army, according to Luraghi. The narratives about the founding present an image of mass re-migration of Messenians. Put differently, the return of the exiles prevails, while the inhabitants of Messenia are suppressed in the narrative. The suppression of the ‘native’ Messenians in the Theban-Messenian versions of the past is incidentally also backed up by the Spartan versions. The Spartans could not do otherwise, since this would justify the Messenian claims. Modern scholars have accepted these invented traditions despite their obvious drawbacks. Luraghi points out, for instance, that the great re-migration of Messenians is not mentioned by the ancient sources when they elaborate on the history of those settlements where the Messenians were in exile, for instance Kyrene and Tyndaris (Diod. Sic. 14.34.3-6, 14.78.5). Furthermore, the archaeological evidence suggests an increase in population at the time of Epaminondas’ campaign, and thus there would be a considerable population whose whereabouts after the founding remains unaccounted for. The denomination ‘Messenians’, present in both the narrative about the revolt and the founding of Messene, is characterised by its inclusion of several groups with different origins, according to Luraghi. In fact, the Messenian identity is initially a Lakonian sub-strate. It is impossible to distinguish any defining traits of a Messenian culture, in Luraghi’s view.

1015 Also Luraghi 2002b, 239.
1016 Luraghi 2002a, 61.
1017 Luraghi 2002a, 63. Also 59, the perioukoi were, in the posterior Messenian tradition, perceived as collaborators and therefore suppressed in the collective memory.
1018 Luraghi 2002a, 64.
1019 Luraghi 2002a, 65.
In the face of the evidence, coupled with the instrumentalist perspective, Luraghi argues that the Messenian ethnic identity did not exist prior to the 5th century. Accordingly, the emergence of the Messenian ethnic identity should be conceptualized as an ethnogenesis process. The ethnogenesis process is an instrumentalist analytical concept that explains the emergence and spread of an identity. Typically, the conception of an identity begins in a small group, a counter-elite that envisages socio-political benefits, and this idea is spread and accepted by larger groups. Fundamental is the political leadership, and although Luraghi credits the helots with a perception of a common identity, he nevertheless doubts that the organisational leadership of the Messenians is to be found among them. Far better candidates are the perioikoi: “Messenian identity emerged out of the aspiration to autonomy and independence of some perioikoi who live quite far from the centre of the Spartan state, across the mountains, in a fertile region with well-marked natural borders.” The genealogical distinction between the Spartans and the perioikoi produced an ethnic consciousness. The helots thus jumped on the train later in Luraghi’s scheme. Crucially then, the Messenian ethnicity was defined by the distinction towards the Spartans. The Messenian identity, accordingly, emerged inside the Spartan state in a process that lasted for centuries. Since it was a distinction inside the Spartan state, the beginning of the new Messenian state is also characterised by their claims to Spartan myths and deities.

In sum, then, several characteristic features of the instrumentalist model are discernable in Luraghi’s analysis. To begin with, ethnicity is a strategy. That is, ethnic identity is not regarded as determinative for the development of the past. Neither the revolt nor the founding of Messene is a straightforward consequence of a preserved and essentialistic Messenian ethnic identity. It is rather the socio-political conditions that are determinative, in Luraghi’s analysis. The Messenian identity emerges, and is conditioned by the interaction of the individuals, within a social system. It is a by-product of the Spartan society. Put differently, cultural features, including ethnic identity, are manipulated in accordance with socio-political conditions. The narratives about the founding of Messene, for instance, are a result of a manipulation and not a

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1021 Luraghi 2002a, 67. Luraghi argues also that the group affiliation is articulated through notional kinship, which he holds as the defining criterion of an ethnic identity. Which is similar to Hall’s definition of ethnic identity, see above pp. 20ff.
1022 Luraghi 2002a, 68. Emphasis in original.
1023 Luraghi 2002a, 69.
passive transmitting of reality. It should also be noted that both Figueira and Luraghi basically have a similar view as the scholars that have a holistic perspective. The difference is that ethnicity is included in the analytical focus.

The analytical topic as such is indicative of the instrumentalist perspective. It is the emerging Messenian ethnic identity, conceptualized as a process, which is explained. Furthermore, Messenian identity is perceived as an articulation of distinction against the Spartans. The notion of the ‘other’, one of the pivotal notions among instrumentalists, is thus present in Luraghi’s and Figueira’s conceptualizations. The feeling of distinction, however, is not associated with the descendants of the ‘old’ Messenians. Both emphasise the mixed origins of the Messenians. The Spartan society is conceptualized as a society with mobility, and both Messenian and Lakonian helots could be loyal or disloyal to their masters. The assumed preserved identities do not govern the actions, and the reasons that persons wanted to articulate a distinction against the Spartans varied. Ultimately, ethnic affiliation is defined by behaviour; since, according to Luraghi, it is impossible to identify characteristic Messenian cultural traits in the initial periods of the Messenian state. The content of ethnic identities becomes an issue, since the assumption that ethnicity is determining for human interaction is abandoned. Luraghi also explicitly elaborates on the organisational aspects of the emerging identity, yet another important instrumentalist tenet. He emphasises that the initiative for the emerging Messenian identity should be situated among the perioikoi. It was a counter-elite that initiated the process, which then spread to other groups. The driving-force was socio-political benefits, which accords well with the instrumentalist tenet of regarding ethnicity as a strategy through which individuals or groups improve their socio-economic situation.

The thorough re-examination of the evidence is a governing methodological tenet in Luraghi’s analysis. Through this, he exposes the primary relevance of theoretical assumptions for the conceptualization of the past. The scanty evidence that is used from a primordial perspective to argue for the preservation of a Messenian identity, is now used to question Messenian unity prior to the Spartan occupation. This is possible since the primordial assumptions are superseded by a dynamic view of the past. A governing methodological notion in Luraghi’s analysis is the restricted spatio-temporal delimitation of the relevance of evidence. For instance, primordialists use evidence from post-liberation Messenia to prove the Messenian homogeneity prior to the Spartan conquest. This is founded on the passive view on culture, which a priori assumes that ethnic identities are static. Luraghi, however, has a
basic active view and questions the possibility to use evidence in this way. In short, the essential difference between the primordial and instrumentalist (i.e., Luraghi’s and Figueira’s) conceptualizations of the Messenian ethnic identity lies in the a priori assumptions. Although they both present revisionist explanatory schemes, they adhere to a rhetoric which alludes to correct interpretations of the ancient evidence. The notion of close readings of the ancient sources transcends the analytical dichotomy between passive and active perspectives on culture.

**Being Messenian**

The step from ‘becoming’ to ‘being’ is perhaps at a cursory glance not particularly large. Both analytical notions indicate an active view on culture. The past is conceptualized as an endless web of actions, perpetually re-enacted. Put bluntly, the Messenians did not simply exist, but became or were being. Scholarship is no longer a matter of recording ‘objectively’ but of interpreting the elusiveness and carefully considering the silences in the evidence. Evidence articulates specific views, which are considered to have been manipulated by somebody. Changes and mobility are now notions in the forefront. However, there are also differences between Luraghi and Figueira on the one hand, and Alcock on the other. The two former have an explicit instrumentalist perspective and focus on the fundamental instrumentalist concept of ethnogenesis. Alcock, on the other hand, does not explicitly adhere to anthropological models of ethnicity. It is indicative that, although she adheres to the distinction between Lakonian and Messenian helots, she is not particularly eager to make strict definitions of the groups.\(^{1024}\) Alcock’s concerns, at least in her recent synthesis, *Being Messenian*, can be characterised as post-processual.\(^{1025}\) It should be mentioned that Messenia is one of three case-studies, and the analytical focus of this publication is to study social memories. Alcock introduces an ‘archaeology of memories’.

Focuses and omissions in the ancient sources, as well as in modern scholarship, are important for Alcock. The ancient silences — as Alcock observes there are no ‘indigenous narratives’ of the Spartan period in Messenia

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\(^{1024}\) Alcock 2002a, 134.

\(^{1025}\) Alcock has published extensively on various aspects of ancient Messenia. Other publications have been dealt with above, see pp. 214-6 and 258-62. She is also one of the leading members of PRAP, see above pp. 224-7. In the following, I will focus on the chapter *Being Messenian* in Alcock 2002a. Many of the arguments are preceded in Alcock 1999.
— on the helots have been mirrored in modern scholarship. For instance, the conceptualization of the helots, in particular the Messenian part, as an enemy within, is in fact an adherence to a Lakonocentric point of view present already in Aristotle (Pol. 1269a 37-1269a 39) and Thucydides (4.80.2). In other words, the prevailing monolithic images of the helots in modern scholarship are based on sources articulating specific concerns.

There is an analytical tension between literary and archaeological evidence in Alcock’s conceptualization. The traditional and prevailing essentialistic conceptualization of the past is questioned mainly through archaeology. Put differently, archaeology is used to undermine scholarly assumptions which are primarily anchored in the ancient literary evidence. Thus, the social landscape of Messenia that Alcock constructs is based on archaeological results. The assumption that helots were forced to live isolated on the kleroi they tilled, which in effect means that it was more difficult for them to interact, is dismissed to begin with. The settlement pattern identified by UMME and PRAP points to an organisation of extensive settlements, hamlets or villages, while the assumed isolated dwellings have not been found. In other words, the basic social organisation facilitated an everyday interaction among Messenians. The interaction in turn facilitated affiliation among the helots, but also opened a possibility to plan rebellions or articulate resistance against their masters. Alcock, in fact, argues that the Lakonian helots were subject to closer observation and more humiliation by the Spartans than the Messenian helots, due to the spatial proximity. This is one consequence of the questioning of the primordial assumption that the Messenian helots were treated harsher by the Spartans on the basis of their ethnic identity. In effect, Alcock inverts one of the fundamental tenets of the culture historical conceptualizations of helotism.

A fundamental tenet in classics is the preference to conceptualize identities, or social groups, through religious structures. This is also present in Alcock’s elaboration since, in addition to the everyday interaction of the helots, she emphasises cults as a structure through which helots interacted. The practice of tomb cult in the Bronze Age tombs is regarded as continuous, albeit on a low and fragmentary level, in Alcock’s view and is a “vital context both for the ongoing organization of Messenian society, and for the stimulation of its

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1027 Alcock 2002a, 137.
1028 E.g. Alcock 2002a, 141.
1029 Alcock 2002a, 141-3.
1030 Alcock 2002a, 135.
memories.” Several cults were practised continuously throughout the Spartan period, and Alcock argues that the cults of Zeus Ithomatas and Apollo Korythos in particular were pan-Messenian. Thus, the Messenians constructed memories and a sense of affiliation through the practice of cults. However, Alcock is careful to stress that other groups as well may have constructed their memories at the very same sanctuaries. There is a Spartan flavour to the archaeological finds, and she raises the possibility that perioikoi, or even Spartans, worshipped at these sanctuaries. Alcock is, thus, careful to emphasise multiple meanings of cultural features. Nevertheless, she also stresses that practices and interactions facilitated communication and “transmission of traditions.” That is, despite the active view on culture, there is also an emphasis on continuity. In addition to the dynamic everyday level, there is also an abstract structural level that remains static.

Alcock is also anxious not to replace one essentialistic image of the Messenians with another monolithic construct. Accordingly, she stresses the existence of multiple communities among and within the Messenians. Most notably there were perioikic communities, but the Spartans also had their memories in Messenia. Furthermore, there was also social stratification among the helots. Some could, for instance, have functioned as bailiffs. She distinguishes a group of better-off helots, which she explicitly associates with the administration of sanctuaries and tomb cults. This group of helots acted differently according to context; in some cases they cooperated with the Spartans, while in other contexts they were instrumental for the transmission of Messenian memories since they were the leaders of the communities. The diversity of the helots is indicated in Thucydides’ account (e.g. 4.26.5-9, 4.41.2-3) of the fighting in Pylos in the 420s. The exiled Messenians were, of course, another community. However, in contrast to primordial conceptualizations, which regard this group as evidence that the Messenians managed to preserve their identity, Alcock stresses that this was one of several memory communities. Their identity represents one version of the Messenian identity,
which was very likely in conflict with the claims of the Messenian identity made by those who had remained in Messenia.\textsuperscript{1038}

The fundamental active perspective of the past is articulated repeatedly in Alcock’s interpretation. The debate about the veracity of the Messeniaka, and whether the Messenians managed to preserve an identity and culture, which is fundamental for the passive perspective, rests ultimately on the notions that authentic history is better than invented, and that people without independence can not have a history. From an active perspective, focusing on the perpetual re-enactment of culture, the invented history is as good or bad as the authentic. The analytical focus has shifted to the notions of uses and meanings of the past. Accordingly, the scholarly debate about the ‘pseudo-history’ of the Messenians can be dismissed as redundant.\textsuperscript{1039}

The conceptualization of the Spartan period as structurally static is enforced by Alcock’s emphasis on the radical changes in Messenia after the liberation. She points to the archaeological evidence that shows a more diversified settlement pattern in Messenia. The ritual landscape was equally transformed in a radical way. The independent settlements were anxious to construct mythological pasts, but also sanctuaries. Rural shrines began to be constructed after the liberation. The worship at the Bronze Age tombs was also intensified.\textsuperscript{1040} In other words, although the profound changes are associated with the political development, it is the process of liberating the landscape through commemorative activities, verified archaeologically, that is emphasised. In other words, archaeology is no longer reduced to a handmaiden of history.

The differences between the active and passive views on culture can be illustrated by a comparison of Alcock’s and Themelis’ interpretations of the archaeological finds in Messene. The Asklepieion is not interpreted to verify an authentic Messenian reality, but is conceptualized as an expression of one memorial choice. That is, the Messenians chose to commemorate their past according to the archaeological finds and Pausanias’ description (4.27.5-7). In short, the Messenians displayed their public memory through these narratives.\textsuperscript{1041} The paintings of the pre-Dorian and Dorian kings are not proving the historical veracity of these figures, but rather, that the Messenians after the

\textsuperscript{1038} Alcock 2002a, 158-63, esp. 163. It is, needless to say, the by now familiar inscriptions that exhibit the Messenian identity of the exiles. See above pp. 109-11 and p. 264.
\textsuperscript{1039} Alcock 2002a, 164f. See also above p. 82.
\textsuperscript{1040} Alcock 2002a, 165-7.
\textsuperscript{1041} Alcock 2002a, 170. 168-71, for Messene in general. See also above pp. 157-61, esp. 159.
liberation conceptualized their memories through them. Furthermore, the public memories are only one of many versions of the past. The Messenian pasts are, of course, associated with Messenian identities. The Messenians were of mixed origins, which in Alcock’s vocabulary means that there were different Messenian ‘memory communities’. The commemorated past, articulated in the Asklepieion, emphasised persons, heroes and deities, such as Epaminondas and Thebes, that had a unifying function for the diverging groups. It expresses a collective memory through which the mixed population of Messenia could affiliate. The omitted past is also indicative of Alcock’s interpretation. Pausanias, here interpreted to articulate the Messenian perspective, neglects for instance the Spartan period in the Messeniaka. Another indication is that the rebellion in the 460s – surely an event of supreme importance in the history of the Messenians – was not commemorated after the liberation, “nowhere were memories provoked of the epoch of helotage and rebellion.”

Another aspect of the diversity in liberated Messenia was the local memory communities. The people in Pylos articulated a local memory (read identity) through a memorial association with Nestor and the palace of Pylos. The Bronze Age tomb at Voidokoilia was identified as the tomb of Thrasymedes (Nestor’s son), and a cave in the vicinity as Nestor’s cave (Paus. 4.36.1-3). Once again, it is the multitude in the past that is emphasised by Alcock. It is noteworthy that this interpretation is made possible only by abandoning the axiomatic assumption that persons of different identities have hostile relations. The multiple identities are in fact complementing each other in Alcock’s interpretation – they are not mutually exclusive.

By way of concluding, Alcock’s analysis is embedded in an active view on culture, and it raises issues fundamental to the post-processual perspective. The conceptualization of the past is anchored in human interactions. Due to the primacy of this level, it is also of paramount importance for Alcock to establish venues of interactions. Multiple meanings, as well as multiple communities, are also pivotal analytical notions in her explanatory scheme. The evidence is thus regarded as articulations of perspectives, manipulated to some extent. In association, it is also worth mentioning that Alcock stresses the emic view. Nevertheless, disciplinary discursive constraints are also evident. For instance, the fundamental tenet in classics to focus on religious structures as articulations

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1042 Alcock 2002a, 164.
1043 Alcock 2002a, 171.
1044 Alcock 2002a, 174. 159, for Pausanias. See also above The myopic gaze of Pausanias.
1045 Alcock 2002a, 172.
of social groups is present in Alcock’s analysis. The deconstruction (used in a loose sense) of the essentialistic image of the Messenians, is based on a higher evaluation of archaeology. Archaeological evidence is, in some sense, regarded as less biased by Alcock. Thus, finally, archaeology is no longer reduced to a handmaiden of history.
Instrumentalism — a reiteration

The instrumentalists conceptualize ethnicity as a strategy that individuals or collectives use in order to improve their socio-political conditions. Ethnic identity is thus dynamic and flexible. Flexibility is, in fact, one of the key-notions in the instrumentalist model. The relevance of ethnicity as such, as a phenomenon, varies with different situations. Ethnic affiliations are not universally determining, but restricted in time and space. Ethnicity is also analytically separated from culture. This, coupled with the fundamental active view on culture, means that the straightforward correlation between culture and ethnic groups is invalidated. From the instrumentalist perspective the articulation of ethnicity is analysed through specific parts of a general cultural repertoire that are regarded as symbols of an identity. The association between symbols, cultural expressions, and an identity is an issue for the instrumentalists. Different parts of the cultural repertoire are conceptualized to articulate the identity in different contexts. The fluctuation between identity and the cultural expressions of it is also taken one step further by the instrumentalists, since they argue that what is perceived as symbols is due to active choices. That is, somebody manipulates and uses culture for specific purposes. Symbols are used to enforce and express strategies; they do not merely confirm ethnic identities. The instrumentalist perspective, in a sense, negates essentialistic characterisations of ethnic groups since the relation between culture and ethnicity is complicated, and ethnic identities are conceptualized as changeable. The essence of an ethnic identity is instead situated in behaviour by the instrumentalists. To have a specific ethnic identity is to do things in a specific way. Since flexibility is emphasised by the instrumentalists, it is also impossible to define an ethnic identity in an objective sense. The etic perspective is therefore replaced with the emic by instrumentalists. That is, what is analytically relevant for the instrumentalists is what members of ethnic groups believe to be true.

Two facets of ethnicity are often distinguished: inclusion, and exclusion. That is, ethnicity as a notion strengthens bonds between its members, but it also demarcates the group against ‘others’. The primordial focus on the inclusive aspects is facilitated by the static view on culture. Instrumentalists, on the other hand, pay more attention to exclusion. A crucial notion for instrumentalists is social processes. Ethnic identities and groups are conceptualized as results of
various processes. Differentiation, in particular, is pivotal. That is, social groups — even those along ethnic lines — are formed in order to facilitate differentiations within a context. In order to capture the fluctuations, the instrumentalists use the analytical concept of boundary. In other words, a consequence of the dynamic perspective is that it is of secondary importance to pinpoint the exact content of the identity; it fluctuates anyway. Since ethnicity is a strategy within a larger socio-political context, the boundary between the groups becomes a way to demarcate the different groups. The instrumentalist boundary is, however, not absolute and static. What it is constituted of differs from time to time; likewise individuals can shift identities (read cross the boundary). The context or situation is furthermore given a determining role, since ethnicity is regarded as a process that emerges from interaction. Put bluntly, ethnicity is only relevant in the interaction between different groups. There is no ethnic identity or group that exists in isolation, since there is no need to differentiate along ethnic lines in these situations. Furthermore, the processes that instrumentalists focus on are situated in a wider socio-political context, within which ethnicity is a factor. In other words, whereas primordialists focus on timeless innate characteristics, instrumentalists view the contemporaneous socio-political context as primary.

It is possible to regard the conceptual shift from race to ethnicity, which gradually took place in the 1950s and 1960s, as a way to undermine prevailing essentialistic assumptions. This aspect is more evident in the instrumentalist model than in the primordial. However, there are also internal differences between instrumentalists. The above presentation focuses on instrumentalist features that have influenced archaeology and classics. It is perhaps worth mentioning that other significant parts of the instrumentalist model have had a minor influence on classics. The situationalist school, for instance, which focuses on political, organisational aspects of ethnic mobilisation in the modern Third World, has on the whole remained unnoticed by classics.

Processual archaeology can in many respects be regarded as equivalent to the instrumentalist model. Scholars within both models show a similar preference for functionalism and systems theoretical approaches. Human actions are in both models conceptualized as motivated by the urge to maximize interests. Another similarity is that the mode of subsistence is often emphasised as fundamental for the differentiation between groups, and culture is conceptualized as an adaptation to ecological factors. However, disciplinary boundaries, and discursive constraints affect the development of scholarship. Although both models are based on a number of similar theoretical
assumptions, ethnicity as an analytical concept was avoided by processual archaeology at least until the late 1970s, when ethnoarchaeological studies, emphasising the notions of stress and boundary maintenance, appeared.

The discursive constraints can perhaps also shed some light on the development in classics. In the instrumentalist definition, ethnicity in ancient Greece was not introduced until Hall’s seminal publication appeared in 1997. In sum, Hall proposes a model for the development of ethnicity in ancient Greece, characterising it as aggregative prior to the Persian Wars and oppositional afterwards. This model holds fictive kinship ties, articulated through mythological genealogies, as the defining criterion of ethnic affiliations in ancient Greek culture. The emic perspective is crucial for instrumentalist conceptualizations of ethnicity in ancient Greece. In classics, this is equated with the ancient literary evidence, and accordingly the long tradition of valuing the literary evidence higher than the archaeological is enforced. Archaeology is not only restricted to being a handmaiden of history, but the focus on ethnicity in the past, as a phenomenon worth studying, is restricted to the periods with a sufficient textual record through which the emic perspective can be established.

However, although dynamic definitions of ethnicity remained unnoticed until the late 1990s, other governing tenets of functionalism and systems approaches are discernable in classical archaeology from the early 1970s. UMME was in general clearly influenced by processual archaeology. Their explicit methodology, and distinct inspiration from the natural sciences, led to a systematisation of the practice of archaeology, which can be regarded as characteristic of the wider scientific humanism paradigm of the post-Second World War period. The essentialistic connotations of race, and primordially defined ethnicity, did not fit with the agenda of scientific humanism, and these analytical concepts were avoided. Nevertheless, UMME had a diachronic focus, which means that also the Classical periods were studied. The contribution made by historians, which is based on the literary evidence, differs. This elaboration is embedded with primordial assumptions. The tension between the archaeological and historical parts of classics is bluntly illustrated in UMME, and the ‘great divide’ cuts right through it.\textsuperscript{1046} The regional focus is indicative of a processual perspective, and is also present in UMME’s successor PRAP. In particular the preliminary reports of PRAP are governed by processual notions. PRAP, however, bridges another divide since \textit{Sandy Pylos}, a publication

\textsuperscript{1046} It can be noted that holistic approaches had appeared in classics at this time. These resemble processual archaeology, and UMME could have adopted holistic approaches instead of the culture historical approach.
directed to the interested laymen, contains several post-processual concerns. In other words, the choice of genre is influencing the conceptualization of the past. The post-processual concern with how ethnic groups in modern times use specific parts of the past for their contemporaneous concerns is, for instance, addressed in Sandy Pylos. Identities are furthermore conceptualized as dynamic and negotiated, and thus although ethnicity in antiquity is not an issue, essentialistic assumptions are questioned.

The influence of the processual model is also discernable in the conceptualizations of the reuse of the Bronze Age tombs. Earlier explanations emphasised the association with the Homeric epics. These can be characterised as culture historical since literary evidence is determinative, and pan-Hellenic causes are sought. This explanatory scheme was replaced by schemes emphasising regional concerns. In these schemes, parts of the cultural repertoire are used for specific contemporaneous socio-political reasons in a blunt processual way.

The tension between the historical and archaeological parts of classics has in some respect profound effects. There is also another possible genealogy for the introduction of scientific methods in classics. The historians did not turn to archaeology, but to social sciences. Finley’s seminal position in classics makes it possible to argue that his version of Marxism, in the critical Frankfurt tradition, can be regarded as the introduction of holistic approaches in classics. Holistic approaches conceptualize society as a system, and analytically an ideal type is constructed which then is contrasted with the development within the system. Furthermore, the various parts are primarily conceptualized through their function within the system, and material aspects of life receive much attention. In the holistic models, there are no functional differences between Messenian and Lakonian helots, and ethnicity as an explanatory factor is downplayed while helot integration in the social system is emphasised. Nevertheless, these scholars can be divided into two camps as far as ethnicity is concerned: a first group, which dismisses or ignores ethnicity; and a second group, which considers ethnicity as a factor. It is noteworthy that ethnicity remains primordially defined by both groups. The second group makes, in addition to the functional integration, a distinction between Messenian and Lakonian helots. Despite their equal function on one level, the Messenians nevertheless preserved their ethnic identity.

The delimitation of the analytical focus has, likewise, crucial effects for the conceptualization of the past. It seems that, unless something is made into a central issue and thus scrutinised and re-defined, scholarship tends to
conceptualize it along established traditions. The neglect to address ethnicity in classics has resulted in a continuous use of primordial assumptions, despite the obvious contradiction to other governing assumptions in, for instance, the holistic approaches. The representation of reality, or the relation between reality and text, emerged as a new analytical topic in the 1990s. These explanatory schemes situate their explanations in the ideological or discursive concerns of the ancient authors. However, again, when Hunt argues for the widespread discourse of a disdain for the slaves among the Classical Greek authors, ethnicity is conceptualized as a static phenomenon. On the other hand, the elaborations complicating Pausanias’ representation of the past differ. The ethnic denominations in the *Periegesis* are now not interesting as actual objective facts, but as revealing Pausanias’ conceptualization of ethnic identities. The possible primordiality of the Messenian identity is interesting in so far as Pausanias conceptualizes it as unchangeable. Ethnic identity is dynamic, and the primary issue is how the past is used to construct meanings. It is the emic perspective that is emphasised.

The Messenian ethnic identity has been conceptualized from an instrumentalist perspective by Figueira and Luraghi. The analytical topic as such is indicative of the instrumentalist perspective; they focus on the emergence of the Messenian ethnic identity during the 5th century, conceptualized as a process. Furthermore, Messenian identity is typically viewed as an articulation of distinction against the Spartans, and the instrumentalist concept of the ‘other’ is thus important in Figueira’s and Luraghi’s publications. Accordingly, the revolt in the 460s is not an articulation of a preserved Messenian ethnic identity, but of a process that ultimately results in the Messenian ethnic identity. They emphasise the mixed origins of the Messenians; ethnic identities are thus not preserved and neither do they determine actions. Individuals from many segments within the Spartan state could choose, on a variety of grounds, to distinguish themselves from the Spartans, according to both Figueira and Luraghi. Ultimately ethnic affiliation is defined by behaviour — initially there are no distinct Messenian cultural traits. Curiously, language, a fundamental analytical tenet in classics but also in the instrumentalist model (although in different ways), is not included in these conceptualizations. Organisational aspects are also addressed in the instrumentalist perspective. The initiative for the emerging Messenian identity

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1047 Hall 1997, 180, is an exception when he makes a cursory remark that the Dorian dialect of the Messenians was a strategy.
should be situated among the perioikoi, according to Luraghi. They are viewed as a counter-elite that initiated the process. The driving-force was socio-political benefits, which accords well with the instrumentalist tenet of regarding ethnicity as a strategy in order to maximize interests. Messenian ethnic identity is a by-product of the Spartan society. On a basic level these analyses resemble the holistic, systems theoretical approaches. The fundamental difference is that ethnicity is included in the analytical focus, and therefore the instrumentalist dynamic redefinition of the concept is noted.

Lastly, the Messenians have also been conceptualized according to post-processual concerns. Ethnic identity is not the analytical focus, but memory communities. The Messenian constructions and articulations of their identity are conceptualized as one of many possible versions. Multiple meanings as well as multiple communities are primary concerns for Alcock. The analytical tension in classics between text and artefact is also crucial for Alcock. The independent use of archaeology is underlined as a way to conceptualize subjugated groups in the past. Thus, the traditional relation between literary evidence and archaeological evidence in classics is inverted, since archaeology is, at least partially, valued higher.
Heterological Ethnicity

Apparently, in the discourse of Classical Archaeology, it is taboo to be critical without offering an alternative …

Hitchcock and Koudounaris 2002, 44.

In the preceding parts, I have scrutinised conceptualizations of ethnic identities in ancient Greece, and in particular of the Messenian ethnic identity. The analysis has persistently focused on the theoretical assumptions that govern scholarly conceptualizations. This emphasis reflects my conviction that theoretical assumptions are the most determining aspect for conceptualizations of the past. My view can be characterised as standing in opposition to the prevailing tradition in classics that emphasises connoisseurship and delimits its focus to the evidence from antiquity. One effect of the largely descriptive, indeed positivistic, focus in classics is the opposition between practice, or empiricism, and theory. These dimensions of scholarship are often regarded as mutually exclusive features, which has led to a governing misconception that theoretical issues can be ignored, since they have little bearing on our image of the past. The long European tradition of casting antiquity as the origin for western civilisation resulted in a focus on exemplary aspects of antiquity. This emphasis was cemented when classics was established as an academic discipline, and is indeed still discernable today. This tradition can serve as one explanation to why the descriptive tradition prevails in classics. However, my concern is with the development of conceptualizations of the past within the delimited boundaries of classics.

By way of summarising the analysis, then, we can initially note the continuity of theoretical assumptions in classics. One tradition of conceptualizations of ethnicity in classics, traceable from the early 19th century until the present, is captured by the notion of mosaic of cultures, which in its paradigmatic form was articulated in the works of Childe. There are several facets of these kinds of conceptualizations. First of all, ethnic groups are conceptualized as clear-cut bounded entities. Each ethnic group, and identity, has intrinsic characteristics which are regarded as unchangeable. Culture is not only a straightforward articulation of these traits, but also explained by
reference to them. Secondly, this simple correlation can also be described as a passive view on culture. Another side of the passive view is that evidence is taken at face value. Put differently, evidence is regarded to transmit reality. With regard to textual evidence, this can be illustrated by the readings of Pausanias’ account of the Messenian Wars; despite the scholarly debates about minute details, in culture historical conceptualizations Pausanias’ account is read as an authentic, preserved, tradition that he recorded. The interpretations of archaeological evidence focus on the spatial and temporal distributions of artefacts. The passive perspective facilitates this since the content, or meaning, of a culture or its parts is generally not an issue. Analytical boundaries, thirdly, is another crucial notion. Although exactly which boundary is regarded as determining often is a matter of dispute, how the entities within them are conceptualized is similar. Each unit is static, and the different entities exist side by side.

Cultural complexity has also effects on the scholarly conceptualizations of the past. The explanatory value of ethnicity is primarily evident in culture historical conceptualizations of the Iron Age to Classical periods for Messenia. For the Late Classical-Hellenistic times when Messenia was an independent political entity, ethnic identity, in a strict sense, is not used to the same extent to explain the past. The ethnic labels of pre-Dorians and Dorians are instead replaced by the Messenians. The analytical focus shifts from ethnic to political groups, which indicates that the scholarly analytical focus has effects on our image of the past. However, the terminological shift does not result in any profound difference in how social groups are conceptualized within the culture historical model. The analytical focus has also profound effects on the conceptualizations presented by scholars influenced by scientific humanism. Ethnicity as an issue was associated with the culture historical perspective, and conceptualizations which viewed the past as social systems and which focused on social institutions, avoided addressing ethnicity. Since ethnicity was regarded as a static dimension, it did not suit the explanatory schemes that emphasised contemporaneous socio-political factors. Nevertheless, the occasional remarks about ethnicity made by scholars with an overall systems theoretical perspective indicate that ethnicity remained conceptualized along primordial lines. The contemporary instrumentalist re-definition of ethnicity remained unnoticed because ethnicity was not included in the analytical focus.

Ethnicity, defined instrumentally, has only very recently been noticed in classics. The fundamental difference is that, whereas the primordialists consider the Messenian ethnic identity to have been preserved during the Spartan
period, the instrumentalists argue that the Messenian ethnic identity emerged as an articulation of distinction within the Spartan social system. Ethnicity is, thus, conceptualized as the result of processes within a social system. This is facilitated by an active view according to which culture is used, or manipulated, for different, primarily socio-political, purposes. The active view on culture is thus delimitied by the analytical focus. Once ethnicity is included in the analytical focus, it is also redefined as a changeable phenomenon.

One way to grasp an issue is to introduce it into a new context, to try to capture it with novel analytical concepts. In this attempt to articulate my concern I have found de Certeau’s critique of history helpful. To begin with, de Certeau’s critique of history is in many respects pertinent also for classics. The dogmatic tradition he identified is governed by the notion of coherence; it aims to present one true version of the past. In order to achieve this, scholarship excludes its discursive constraints from its narratives, because too much elaboration on contemporary scholarly factors shatters the narrative reality effect. That is, in order for a historical account to be persuasive to a reader, the narrative has to be confined to what actually happened in the past. An overt illustration of this in classics is the scholarly debates, which incidentally attract the most attention, and which are fuelled by inconsistencies in the ancient sources; each contributing scholar favours one coherent, dogmatic, version of the past. Another illustration is the consequence of the avoidance of theory. This has resulted in a practice that in many respects still revolves around issues identified in the early days of classics. The exclusion of reflexivity has resulted in a cementation of concerns in classics. A third, and last, illustration is the fundamentality of the spatio-temporal grid. In order to present a dogmatic past it is of crucial importance to position finds, events and structures, in one correct time and place. I can appreciate the importance of temporality and spatiality on one level. However, in dogmatic classics, particularly in the archaeological part, interpretation often ends once finds are fixed on the spatio-temporal grid. This brings us to one of the fundamental discursive constraints in classics, namely the neutralisation of archaeology to a handmaiden of history. This neutralisation is perhaps more bluntly articulated in the culture historical model, but despite differences on other levels, it is also detectable in the active perspectives. In short, de Certeau’s characterisation captures deep-rooted features of classics.

1048 See Ethnicity Oscillating between Practice and Discourse.
1049 For instance the debate about the ‘Rhianos hypothesis’ in Messenian Wars and Aristomenes.
1050 This is occasionally evident also in historical elaborations see e.g. pp. 95f. and n. 493.
So, what is the problem? Different kinds of evidence have different qualities, and are we not, in our attempt to study ancient Greece, obliged to make sense of all the available evidence? Well, yes. However, how the past is conceptualized has effects. Dogmatic versions of the past exclude other possible meanings. There is always some ‘Other’, muted by scholarship. An endeavour that aims to capture the past, idealistically in its entity, thus perpetually fails. Let me return to the relation between history and archaeology in classics. Social hegemonies in antiquity are enforced in classics by the close straightforward readings of the sources. That is, the Others in antiquity remain also the Others in classics. Accordingly, the focus of the ancient literary sources on political events, and politically powerful groups or leaders, has also been mirrored in classics. The ancient silences, for instance on the helots, are transmitted in the dogmatic versions of history. The inability to capture and include subjugated groups is a major limitation of dogmatic conceptualizations of the past.

Put differently, there are dimensions of power in the practice of classics. In order to capture power relations in general, de Certeau proposed a distinction between strategic and tactical practices. Strategic practices are characterised by their own proper place. They do not only have a demarcated place from where they are practised, but also a clearly defined object on which their practice works. Academic disciplines, departments, and theoretical models or discourses are examples of strategic places or practices. A tactical practice, on the other hand, is characterised by its lack of a demarcated own proper place. Whereas a strategic practice produces, a tactic insinuates itself on other’s products. Tactics is a matter of appropriation, re-interpretation, of other’s (read strategic) things. In the end, it is a matter of having another perspective. But it is also a matter of crediting agents with the ability to make sense and use culture in their own way. The post-processual metaphor of reading the past, or material culture, comes to mind. Tactical practices use things in another way, not intended by strategic producers. Tactics is an attempt to capture evasive actions of the Others, neglected in dogmatic scholarship. In addition, tactics can also be regarded as a result of de Certeau’s concern with the limitations of historical representation. If tactics is placed as a universal phenomenon, then the limitations of dogmatic scholarship, which focuses on strategic practices, become explicit.

However, these concepts also have dimensions of idealistic analytical abstractions, with which few things can be equated. Crucial for de Certeau’s thoughts is the trope of oscillation. In a sense, every practice has a tactical as well as a strategic side to it, depending on the perspective. Practices, or
whichever feature one aims to capture, oscillate somewhere in between these extremes. Scholarship is a practice in the present. The concepts of strategy and tactics can therefore also shed some light on classics. It is not too far-fetched to associate the dogmatic tradition with strategic practices. An endeavour that focuses on the limitations of scholarship, and that aims to illuminate evasive practices, can thus be regarded as a tactic or a heterology. Thus, whereas dogmatism/strategy presents how it actually was, with all its intrinsic limitations, a heterology/tactic focuses on the limitations of scholarship. Inevitably, there is a strategic dimension to every textual representation. In other words, it is a misguided endeavour to write a tactical history. Rather, the way to undermine the dogmatic versions of the past is to illuminate the limitations of strategic practices.\footnote{Accordingly attempts such as Alcock 2002a; Jones 1997, emphasising elusiveness on some level nevertheless remain dogmatic because of the aim to present how it was. On the other hand, they come closer than many other scholars to the heterological position since they include, to some degree, the practice of scholarship and the limitations of representation.}

However, it would be too blunt to end with a crude characterisation of classics as dogmatic. There are also tactical aspects of the conceptualizations of Messenian ethnic identity. The instrumentalist conceptualizations of the emergence of the Messenian ethnic identity emphasise that to be Messenian was not to comply with the socio-political situation within the Spartan social system.\footnote{See above Becoming Messenian.} This can be phrased differently: To be Messenian was to tactically appropriate, or re-interpret, the strategic culture within the Spartan state. The persons that eventually became Messenians did, for various purposes, re-interpret their situation. These tactical practices were then articulated along ethnic lines and formalised into an ethnic identity. However, since I have a heterological agenda, I also need to point to the limitations. These conceptualizations have also a dogmatic facet, since other possible meanings remain unaddressed. Also, Messenian ethnic identity has strategic effects, and delimiting the focus to it results in the creation of new Others.

Heterology can, of course, be regarded as a variant of post-processualism. Accordingly, elaborations on the Messenian past that are inspired by post-processualism, such as the ‘archaeologies of memories’ which is sensitive to multiple meanings of culture, come closer to my concerns.\footnote{See above Being Messenian.} The dogmatic versions of the past are thus questioned by the allowance of different appropriations of culture. It is also indicative that the role of archaeology is emphasised, in the ‘archaeologies of memories’, as a means to conceptualize the
subjugated groups in their own right. Thus, attempts to study the Others in the strategic place of classics need to turn to the tactical practice of archaeology.

By way of concluding, then, the opposition between practice and theory in classics can also be conceptualized as corresponding to strategic and tactical practices. The dogmatic practice of classics can be characterised as one that focuses on the ancient evidence. The development in classics, whereby newer introduced perspectives — often influenced by theoretical developments in other disciplines — have a minor effect on the dogmatic tradition, can perhaps be understood if these perspectives are regarded as tactical practices. Therefore, the limitations of strategic practices have been emphasised in a futile attempt to shatter the dogmatic coherence of antiquity and in order to create space for the Other. Heterology is a tactical endeavour, insinuating reflexivity in strategic places.
I use the recommended abbreviations in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3rd edition, for ancient authors and works, as well as collections of ancient literary fragments. Abbreviations of journals and book series are listed in the *American Journal of Archaeology* 104, 2000, 10-24 (also on the World Wide Web at www.ajaonline.org).


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