CHAPTER TWO

(Re)Defining Ethnicity: Culture, Material Culture, and Identity

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Colonialism is a process by which things shape people, rather than the reverse. Colonialism exists where material culture moves people, both culturally and physically, leading them to expand geographically, to accept new material forms and to set up power structures around a desire for material culture.1

The category of ethnicity has become highly contested ground in all fields of archaeology, not just classical. Illustrating the point that "Classics is an active agent in the construction of modern ideologies, which is to say the constitutive illusions of modern cultural life,2 ethnicity’s emergence as a topic of the moment should not surprise us. The focus on ethnicity, a specific kind of identity, emerged in classical studies from (or through) a more general interest in diversity in the ancient world. In the vanguard of such an interest in the late twentieth century was the focus on ‘the other’ (or, The Other) - most notably, the Persians.3 Identities expressed by concepts such as gender, class, age, and the other now familiar usual suspects have also been introduced. But perhaps somewhat surprisingly in a field that focuses on the oldest dead white males in the world,4 the last ten years have produced rich discussions about diversity in Greek culture, and about Greek ethnicity, not just about how ‘The Greeks’ confronted ‘The Other.’ The emergence of ethnicity in studies of the Greek past has also been part of larger projects that question assumptions about the uniformity, coherence, continuity, and boundedness of Greek identity both in the past and in the present, and about the origins and production of Greek identity.
In taking on ethnicity, scholarship first had to repudiate the racialist approaches that produced and continue to produce the many catastrophes of recent history, and reject essentialist notions of ethnic identity, founded in Romanticism, as well. Some scholars champion definitions of ethnicity that are familiar to us moderns in our own experience, an ethnicity based on shared notions such as ideologies (religion, ideas, beliefs) and histories (myths, collective memories) – that is, as a subset of cultural identity. Cultural identity differs from ethnic identity in that it transcends characteristics such as gender, class, age, sex, and so forth. This kind of definition, however, has been strongly challenged in recent work on ethnic identity in classical antiquity, which has emphasized criteria for ethnicity that are based on narratives or discourses of descent and homelands. Ethnicity is an identity that uses criteria in the form of kinship or descent (real or contrived) and territorial homeland to articulate its specific boundaries. While it may be seen as a kind of cultural identity, it is not the same thing as cultural identity per se. Cultural attributes that may articulate ethnicity, on the other hand, constitute its indicia. But culture need have nothing to do with the distinctive identity that is ethnicity. Thus, in considering Greek antiquity, what matters in defining a specifically ethnic identity is descent from a common ancestor, such as Ion for the Ionians, Doris for the Doriens, Hellen for the Hellenes, and the identification of an original home territory. Traits that we might consider decisive criteria, such as using a particular kind of pottery, wearing one’s hair in a particular way, speaking a particular dialect, or any other cultural practice or material articulation of identity, do not constitute criteria for the specific kind of identity that is ethnicity.

All this work has also included a consideration of the status of the concept of ‘culture’ itself, and an inoffensive and usefully broad notion of ‘identity’ sometimes substitutes for the contentious ‘ethnicity’ or ‘culture.’ The effort to define what is distinctive about a specifically ethnic identity also meant confronting the old culture-history method, which essentially equates the pattern of artefacts in a bounded territory and time with a particular culture (and a population, a ‘people,’ or an ethnic group). Culture-history had come under justifiable criticism some time ago in the wider field of archaeology. Indeed, related work documented ethnographic cases that contradicted a corollary assumption to the culture-historical model, that is, that ethnicity is reliably expressed
through cultural indicia. Such indicia, which encompass familiar categories such as language, religion, physical attributes, foodways, modes of dress, and so on, would of course include material culture. And material culture is just what archaeology concerns itself with, in categories such as artefact style or type, burial customs, ritual, personal ornamentation, inscriptions, and so forth. Jonathan Hall concluded that archaeology could not get at ethnic identity without having an account of the criteria (descent and territory), and of the specific indicia that might articulate the ethnicity in question. Needless to say, archaeologists were reluctant to accept this conclusion, and not just because it relegated the field to the status of handmaiden to the written record, a traditional position that archaeologists have long been struggling to overcome (see, for example, Isayev's discussion in Chapter Eight). Accepting this conclusion likewise meant accepting that, in general, considering meaning and identity in the very long human past not documented by written sources was also futile. And it meant accepting the primacy of written or spoken discourse, a fragmentary discourse and often an elite discourse, as determining meaning for an entire culture, group, or population.

I have argued elsewhere that not only can ethnicity be predicated on criteria of descent and territory, but also that material culture (as well as other aspects of culture) more often than not has a role in expressing this particular kind of identity (although there are, as Hall has pointed out, instances where this is not the case). A recent treatment of ethnicity and archaeology has suggested that what distinguishes a specifically ethnic identity is that an agreed notion of origin is the point of reference.9 In addition possibly to expressing or reflecting ethnicity, however, material culture has an active role in shaping it, and in contesting it.10 While the boundaries delineated by criteria may not be mirrored in consistent patterns of material (or other forms of) culture, I have suggested that material culture forms an alternative discourse, as a discourse of things. A material discourse does not (merely) reflect or express a particular spoken discourse of ethnic identity - nor should it, necessarily. When the discourse of things contradicts, negates, contests, or merely crosses the boundaries expected from the criteria, it must not be discounted, but, rather, closely attended to.11 At the same time, chosen objects (or customs, words, modes of dress, and so on), while they do not always retain their original meaning when recontextualized (as part of an elite transcultural
idiom, for example), may still retain particular resonances for their users. Riva (Chapter Four) demonstrates this with regard to Etruria, while Alexandridis (Chapter Ten) makes the point with Roman statue types. I have also argued that examples of this kind of active constituency as a form of material ethnicity can be identified in colonial societies as well as other situations where contact and conflict tend to produce ethnic differentiation just as contact and assimilation do. I want to consider further here the possibilities for understanding these different discourses in the context of Archaic Greek history, and in particular in the colonial milieu.

The discourse on ethnicity in Greek antiquity has taken two paths: one considers the ethnogenesis of Greek ethnic identities 'at home,' in the core regions that, ironically enough, are considered Greek by virtue of the very cultural-historical model that is being rejected; the other considers ethnicity in the context in which one might expect it to be produced, in an oppositional and conflictive milieu in which Greek identity would be defined against an opposite, that is, in the colonial sphere. In recent years, classicists have looked especially to Sicily and southern Italy to explore Greek identity and ethnicity further. This turn may have to do in part with the exhaustion of the discourse on the relations of Greece and 'the East,' and the phenomena generally subsumed under the rubric of 'Orientalism.' But another reason is that this field of early colonialism might provide important insights into the formation of Greek identities in the period when so much of what we think of as distinctively Greek was emerging (political institutions, major sanctuaries and cults, forms and styles of material culture, and so on) and when, as shown by Hall, Greek ethnicities were also formed. It also allows the Greeks, and the phenomenon of Greek colonization, to be considered more fully within a Mediterranean, or even a global, historical context (and thus to be comfortably relevant in contemporary Western discourse). Finally, the dominant models of ancient colonization and imperialism – Hellenization and Romanization – were both proving unsatisfactory, despite their different trajectories and mechanisms. The move away from imperial models in Greek colonization has involved complex debates about the status of 'home(land)' (Greek colonies were called apoikiai, or [places] away from home) and whether early colonizing Greeks would have perceived themselves to be so very different from those they encountered 'abroad.' It has
been argued that, in the eighth century BCE, Greeks who were trading with and settling among non-Greeks may have seen their counterparts more as *xenoi* - a category of ritual guest-friends - than as *barbaroi*, an oppositional identity forged in the conflict with the Persians, perhaps not until the fifth century. Thus, interactions with non-Greeks may be parsed as exchanges among peers, elites who participated in a common discourse of luxury goods, high-status customs such as drinking and elaborate burials, and who created a common discourse about relations through genealogies and myth.

It is beyond the scope here to tackle the entire paradigm of colonialism, but recent work on ancient colonization has also been the context for putting forward competing claims about the relevance of ethnicity and the utility of concepts drawn from postcolonial studies such as hybridity or creolization in ancient colonial contexts. Hybridity is a space of mediation in which the interdependence of colonizer and colonized is acknowledged, and considers the cultural forms with which it manifests. Adopting hybridity as a model is very attractive, since it resolves the unproductive polarity inherent in Greek and barbarian/native in favour of a productive and mutual acculturation that produces new and vigorous forms. These strategies are of a piece with the idea that the mobility of early Greeks and of non-Greeks was structured as an encounter among peers - elites - rather than a cultural, economic, and military domination by a superior culture. The field of Greek colonization thus becomes a 'Middle Ground' of encounter, one in which accommodation, but also mutual incomprehension, is a crucible in which mixed or hybrid cultures and societies are formed.

Yet, one of the most important contemporary scholars of Mediterranean history, Nicholas Purcell, has recently pronounced ethnicity to be a veritable red herring in understanding ancient colonization: 'it is clear that the discourse of ethnicity is fundamentally unhelpful in analysing these data.' Instead, in order to understand what Purcell construes as 'the history of Mediterranean exploitation' and 'the study of the interactions between exploiter and exploited in “colonial” contexts,' we must 'get beyond an essentially ethnic mode of modelling the relationship. If that mode was sometimes used by people in antiquity, it was usually as a simplifying and legitimating strategy, and there is no reason for us to adopt it too.' Instead, the 'competition for control of the zone where
the maritime and the terrestrially-oriented ecological systems abut is recursive.¹⁷ Such an approach may be viewed as a new kind of processualism – 'the archaic expansion as a variation on a recurring theme,' in the words of Ian Morris,¹⁸ who, on the other hand, argues that these views actually 'flatten the flow of history in a static Mediterraneanism' and deny process. They also tend to deny individual agency or the specific textures of particular interactions.¹⁹

Of course, we have ancient textual sources to draw on to provide detail and texture, but texts alone do not fully encompass the totality of ancient lived experience, and material culture provides a critically important perspective on experience, at all levels of society, not just elite.²⁰ The problem of understanding just what is expressed with or by material culture is, of course, extraordinarily complex, and it remains central to the entire enterprise of archaeology. Most classical archaeologists would not be satisfied with the classic aphorism of Lewis Binford, which defines culture as humankind's extrasomatic means of adaptation.²¹ Yet, as noted earlier in discussing how casually we all use the term 'Greek' or even 'non-Greek,' consciously or not, we all participate in a variation on the culture-history to which processual archaeology, with Binford as a leading proponent, was responding in radical ways.²²

For their part, archaeologists have often not distinguished clearly enough what constitutes ethnic, as opposed to cultural or class-based, identities. Some have argued that linking material culture to any group that shared any kind of identity cannot be secure without already knowing the identities through texts.²³ For Hall, the bottom line would be ethnicity as defined by the spoken and written criteria of homeland, shared history, and descent. As noted already, for archaeologists, this insistence on spoken or written discourse makes inaccessible much of the past, whether the preliterate (or aliterate) past or the past experience for non-elite persons. It also denies the relevance of a discourse of material culture to ethnicity, substituting a different kind of essentialism – not a biological one, but one grounded in particular criteria, even if false descent is one of them – for the old Romantic essentialist notions. Meanwhile, anti-essentialists have stressed the performativity of identities, or their strategic uses, as Hales and Alexandridis both demonstrate in their chapters.²⁴ At the same time, the notion that 'individuals' freely constructed themselves from whatever material was in existence in the same
time, space, and place is not tenable, but it does appeal to liberal notions of self-determination and freedom. Cultures may not always have firm rules, but in order to be coherent there is patterning that, while malleable to some degree, is not infinitely flexible. But broadening our field of reference from the idea of discourse to the discourse of things, to encompass a more complete lived experience in the past, is an attractive alternative. Reference to lived experience does not imply that there is some autonomous agent who, paradoxically, merely experiences something, but that experience constitutes identity in important ways. Experience, even if not the same experience, is also universal to all members of a group; written and spoken discourses are not. Experience encompasses the built environment in a recursive relationship; material culture makes us as much as we make things. Moreover, material culture includes knowing how something functions, how it is used, and what to use it with. This can be tested by observing the recurring patterns of material culture associated with the contexts in which objects are found – and also by observing when there are divergences from a pattern.

Nearly everyone involved in these discussions insists on the importance not only of context, a central concern of archaeology (of course), but also on connection. The connectedness or connectivity or networks that structure relations may be primarily economic, or they may be broadly cultural and include such things as shared myths or the taste for certain luxuries. These are social relations that, it is claimed, produce and entail material culture. Indeed, artefacts may mediate relations between individuals, human beings interact with artefacts through their production and consumption, and artefacts also interact with each other, in relation with each other. In insisting on material culture’s centrality, we may have to refine its pertinence to an expressed or external identity, and recognise that it may not be necessary to interior identities. Agency, but not necessarily intentionality, is the operative category. That is also to say that we in the present should not be bound by the past actors’ intentions or experiences, since we cannot retrieve them with completeness or certainty. Rather, we can have a kind of overview that transcends these, focusing on identity that depends on interactions between artefacts and actors. (While skirting the status of ethnicity, this does not dismiss it entirely, as does Purcell; ethnicity might be viewed as one of the categories of past actors’ experience here alluded to.)
Gosden has also treated identity in his recent extended consideration of archaeology and colonialism. Writing about the relationship of individuals to groups, and their identities as individuals or members of a group, he states that 'a relational view helps to sensitize us to the creation of people of different kinds through changing networks of relationships. Importantly for archaeologists, these relationships include objects as well as people.... People and objects are mutually entangled and bring each other into being in a social sense, so that the efficacy of the physical world and that of social relations are mutually dependent.'

One of the very important points he makes is the difficulty of refusing the modern notion of individuals as consumers who are able to own property and thereby make themselves through things. Using Melanesian society as an example, he points to a model in which individuals are created through their social encounters. Gosden draws upon the work of Alfred Gell, which usefully (for archaeologists) focuses on the agency of objects. Once again, however, this seems to be applicable only to elites.

Early colonialism begins at the point at which objects are starting to break out of purely local value systems, but where a mixture of values of quantity and quality still remains. A quantitative evaluation of objects offers possibilities that detach people from their local group and move them in search of new opportunities for personal advancement.

Elsewhere, he points out that any individual object would exist within an assemblage of other objects, and would also participate in a web of links in time and space - as would people: 'individuality either of objects or of people was tightly constrained by a mass of links.'

In contrast to my 'ethnic resonance,' Hall has proposed that foreign luxuries that were sought after by Greek or by non-Greek elites were prized not because of their ethnic associations, but because of the elite relationships of xenia or guest-friendship that were necessary to obtain them. Foreign objects associated, for example, with the drinking of wine (a commodity that is also introduced, together with its associated material culture, into non-Greek spheres), such as mixing bowls (kraters), different types of cups, strainers, and other paraphernalia, were adopted as elements of a prestige goods economy, and
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did not signal anything about cultural assimilation. Rather, elites ‘were conversant in a symbolic vocabulary that transected ethnic and linguistic boundaries.’ Moreover, despite the mediating function of Greek wine and Greek sympotic practices, ‘to describe both cultural universes as “Greek” would be seriously misleading.”31 This is because, among other things, the drinking of wine does not necessarily bring with it all the social and political baggage of the Greeks when adopted by local elites (Etruscans, Gauls, or Sicilians) any more than does the drinking of tea (e.g. Riva’s chapter with regard to Etruria). For Hall

2.1a. Imported Attic red figure krater by Euthymides, late sixth century BCE (Photo: C. Antonaccio)
and Purcell as well, what is at work in the transcultural hybridities of the Mediterranean past, such as drinking and dining, is an elite discourse that, in Greek terms, is about notions of ἡβροσύνη (luxury), not ethnicity. Figure 2.1a shows a late sixth-century imported Attic red figure krater from Morgantina, which might be considered a prestige item, and Figure 2.1b shows a locally produced Archaic krater of the seventh century, itself a transculturated or hybrid object: local clay has been formed into a krater clearly modelled after a Corinthian import, but the decorative scheme is only derived from the Greek original, not closely copied. Figure 2.2 records the finds from a single Archaic tomb, a hybrid assemblage of local and imported drinking wares that indicates the importance not only of drinking, but of the diversity of the assemblage itself.

According to Hall, however, while elites might have been the agents of Greek ethnicity, class had little to do with exclusion from the fictive Greek kinship systems that Hellenic ethnicities reference. Rather, elite exclusivity made use of a prestige goods economy 'to participate in a symbolic universe that did not terminate at ethnic or cultural boundaries.'
Yet one may agree that there existed an elite discourse without jettisoning difference entirely. Indeed, this analysis ignores the crosscultural importance of exoticism in a prestige goods economy. Objects or materials are not just intrinsically valuable, but the control of space and time that is implicit in the presence of an exotic item is as much a part of elite discourse as are the commonalities in assemblages that enable that discourse. In other words, the origins, and the age and attendant stories of a given item and its derivatives are themselves criteria in a discourse of materiality.33

In considering another historical situation, Nicola Terrenato notes that in the Roman Empire it may have meant little to its elites if their
fine pottery was locally produced or imported from afar, for the material discourse was essentially the same, and did not seriously affect self-perception.\textsuperscript{34} The idea of a shared material discourse is comparable, but elites of imperial Rome disregarded the actual origins of an object or class of material so long as the qualities of that class remained. (This would make sense if the original regional, local, or qualitative aspects of the objects that were retained in its materiality were more important than the particular centre of production – the kind of resonance I have already identified.) Terrenato sees most human actors during the period of Roman consolidation and expansion as essentially unaffected by the changes and their material manifestations that are most often emphasized by modern scholars. Elite culture, moreover, is something that could undergo very rapid change, but the same was not true for everyone in the Mediterranean: ‘development in these conservative groups only happened slowly and within a limited range, allowing cultural continuity and self-consistency to be maintained.’\textsuperscript{35} Thus, for Terrenato as well, ethnicity is not a particularly useful category, but rather a kind of contemporary fixation inappropriately projected onto antiquity.\textsuperscript{36} I would like to turn back to the western Mediterranean, and the colonial Greek sphere, to focus on a more particular context in which to address these competing claims and ideas.

Hall examines the paradigm of Hellenization in Sicily and concludes that if attention is paid to context, rather than to the formal style of artefacts, the persistence of ‘local cultural traditions in the colonial world’ will be detected. But whether, ‘on the other hand, these traditions have an ethnic significance – as opposed to being the product of enculturating tendencies and/or a response to specific geographically-defined environmental, technological, economic and social factors – is another matter.’\textsuperscript{37} It is interesting to detect echoes of the Binfordian definition of culture in this view. It is not, says Hall, that common ancestry cannot be signalled by material culture, and he cites the strong case that ‘ancestralizing strategies’ in the Argolid (the reuse of Bronze Age chamber tombs, for example) during the Late Iron Age were doing just that. But in ‘the absence of an explicitly articulated ethnic discourse, there is nothing about these archaeological phenomena that necessarily makes them ethnic strategies.’\textsuperscript{38} Indeed, by using the term ‘local’ and warning elsewhere of the fallacy of conflating regional cultural distinctiveness
with ethnic distinctiveness, Hall's analyses of cultural indicia nearly always end up excluding any necessary relationship between material culture and ethnicity. It is unwarranted to dismiss the distinctiveness or marked qualities of objects as too vaguely 'local,' or 'indigenous' (as opposed to specifically ethnic, or to have 'ethnic resonance') to be useful.

Here it seems useful to remind ourselves that Hall's definition of ethnicity is admirably precise, but unrecognizable to most social scientists, especially anthropologists (and archaeologists). Gosden, for instance, concludes that ethnicity only emerges 'in the manner we understand it now' at the same time as 'an instituted view of territory which fixes a group to a particular spot, tethering its identity.' Thus, for Gosden, ethnicity, like hybridity, does not arise in the early Greek colonial context because of the fluidity of communities and identities. It required the rise of the city state in the Mediterranean region (Greek, Etruscan, Punic) and the territories that these urban communities controlled to produce ethnic differentiation. In the Greek case, however, the kind of territory that is implicated in ethnic identity is not that of the city state, but that of the region; communities attach themselves to ancestors and their associated homelands through myths of foundation and descent. Ethnicity is expressed as a tribal identity, not a civic one predicated on citizenship. It transcends any particular city, though a city may claim to be home to an ethnic hero.

Ian Morris, from the perspective of an interior site in western Sicily, has placed stress on native persistence until the fifth century, as seen in ritual, ceramic types, and architectural forms – an ethnic identity predicated on cultural and material difference. Noting the falseness of a particular assimilation model (Hellenization), he instead posits the emergence of 'winners and losers' in a kind of globalization to which resistance was futile, just like modern instances of resistance to globalization. But Morris's identification of 'local,' 'culture,' and 'ethnicity' would not satisfy Hall because it does not deal with a specifically ethnic identity as defined by criteria.

Meanwhile, and importantly, Irad Malkin has adopted the powerful model of a colonial Middle Ground from the Midwest of North America in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and transferred it to the western Mediterranean (see also Sommer in Chapter Five). As a case study, Malkin focuses on western Sicily in particular 'as a place of
mutual negotiation within the Mediterranean network. This ground, then, is not merely a metaphor but an actual physical space in which emerges a mutually intelligible world, imposed and controlled by no single party – though it must be recognized that this world might be predicated on misunderstandings and misperceptions – in contrast to the easily permeable elite culture previously discussed. Malkin stresses a mythical framework for this intelligibility; in his most recent work it is the figure of Herakles/Melqart that mediates between Greeks and Phoenicians, and between these two groups and the local indigenes (Elymians in western Sicily). In central Italy, Malkin suggests, it was Odysseus/Utuse who was a mediating figure between Euboian Greeks and Etruscans.

Malkin makes little reference to material culture, however, or to trade or the exchange or circulation of objects in this argument, except to note the thoroughly Greek-built environment of the Elymians of Segesta (or the prevalence of Odyssean imagery or heroic cult in central or southern Italy). Yet he concludes: ‘Observing ancient Greek colonization through the prism of modern imperialism and colonialism is... misleading,’ as are related postcolonial concepts of hybridity (‘too many biological connotations, and... [it] means little in and of itself’) and suggests instead the concepts of network (or the French réseau). The network is not a tree, with a trunk, roots, and branches, and thus a hierarchical structure, but something more like a rhizome or a perhaps a web. The lack of consideration of the wider built environment, defined broadly to include all artefacts or objects, ensures that a focus only on this kind of connectivity will miss a large part of the picture. And if hybridity seems too biological, why then is a rhizome acceptable? Hybridity does encompass well a kind of lifecycle of objects, to say nothing of the mixing of those organisms that constitute individual actors, which are operative in the colonial sphere. Indeed, Malkin omits the discourse about métissage, which can be applied to cultures and also to persons, for example the mestizos, who are what Gosden calls the ‘living embodiments of the middle ground.’ Gosden also criticizes the use of the term hybridity in colonial contexts, on the grounds that it supposes the blending of bounded, separate entities that he believes did not exist in colonial situations ‘in a shared cultural milieu’ such as that which applies in the case of Greek colonization. Malkin’s rhizome model is attractive as a way
of getting around this, but no organism, by its definition as a biological entity, is completely bounded: reproduction, which is necessary for survival, ensures change over time through adaptation and evolution.

A rhizome, as Carl Knappett notes, is moreover ‘antigenealogical,’ and ‘determinatorializing.’ And so it is precisely because of the criteria of homeland and descent, in the midst of mobility, contact, and interchange, that ethnicity is a relevant and powerful category to consider. Archaeologists, of course, construct typological and chronological lineages for objects—a way of thinking that employs the metaphor of coming into being, changing over time, grafting on new characteristics or losing them in the process, and eventual demise. As noted, objects have biographies—sometimes in the form of genealogies of their own, histories of their origins and exchanges. Objects interact with humans and with each other in various relationships and networks. In complex societies, and in interconnected societies, situations where objects from a wide variety of origins, materials, and styles may circulate, the assembling of artefacts (among other things) involves such relationships and to some degree involves various choices. These factors are just as creative and constitutive of identity as the construction of spoken or written discourses of descent. The identity I am referencing is one that provides an orientation in space and in time, and in relation to or in dialogue with others—whether those others are artefacts or individual members of a society.

Against this we may adopt the strategy of not tying our hands by considering only the intentions and experience of long-gone actors, but to locate identities that ancient actors might not have. As noted, all identity is produced in social interaction, of which material culture is the trace (and also, as I have shown, constitutive). While focused on and formed with regard to a colonial context, these observations are important for understanding the particular identity that constitutes ethnicity. Ethnicity is a particular kind of cultural identity, though we must refuse the idea that all material culture necessarily expresses ethnic identity. Rather than contest the importance of the criteria of ethnicity proposed by Hall, it seems more useful to contest the status of material culture in this discussion. For criteria of descent and homeland can be extended to constitute a definitive aspect of material culture. We archaeologists do, in fact, participate in this kind of discourse already—even if we do not explicitly acknowledge it—when we construct
archaeological typologies, chronologies, horizons, all of which identify the emergence of an artefact, and then follow change through time.

As I have tried to suggest in my own work on Sicily, the process that is ancient Greek colonization takes both individuals and their cultures from one region to another, bringing into contact things and persons that developed separately and distinctly, for the most part, in periods of relative isolation (I do not deny that contact, exchange, and other forms of connectivity existed before the eighth century). This particular contact and the settling down of stranger newcomers in territories they had not previously permanently inhabited is a context in which new hybrid cultures developed. As I have argued, both indigenous and Greek communities were hybridized, but what was signalled by their respective hybridities was different. For Sikels in eastern Sicily, Greek objects and practices were assimilated into an elite discourse similar to that proposed by Hall and others for the Greeks themselves in their Orientalizing (or hedonizing) turn (see Llewelyn-Jones in Chapter Seven). One could say that the Sikels were Hellenizing, rather than Hellenized, implying their active appropriation of a culture, and a degree of choice and self-determination. This agency, or individual ability to affect systems like social structures operates within a field of material culture in which some shared meaning makes intelligibility possible. For example, if local Sicilian populations had no ceramic tradition of their own, that vector for absorbing new types of vessels, new decorative schemes, and new technologies would not have operated in the way that it did. Meanwhile, the continued preference for certain forms (e.g. carinated cups and bowls, illustrated in Figure 2.3) is significant because of the context of change in so many other forms of ceramics – and indeed of the general matrix of material culture. For the ‘western Greeks’ (a term that itself implies a kind of local, hence territorial and quasi-ethnic, identity), the particular ways in which their colonial experiences gave them a particularly Greek cultural identity, and could produce such ethnicities as the Sikeliotai (Sicilian Greeks), is equally determinative.

While ‘local’ may not be coterminous with ‘ethnic,’ humans’ ability to associate a thing with some other place gives it one of the criteria for ethnicity: an original homeland. The persistence of ‘local’ or ‘indigenous’ traits, habits, styles, and so on constitutes a kind of descent. Similarly, for the Sikeliotan ethnogenesis of the fifth century, Sicilian Greek ethnicity
was formulated on the basis of the shared territory of Sicily and their nearly three hundred years of shared history, as well as their local cultures, which constituted a variation on the theme of being Greek. That one could still speak of Greek or Sikel, or Elymian for that matter, well into the fifth century is a signal of the lingering ethnic consciousness — as I have defined ethnicity. It was not the case, as Hall also notes, that these different cultural systems were all ‘Greek.’ But to be able to make this distinction is to identify the original homeland of Greek, Sikel, or Elymian elements and to trace their descent until the process of hybridization makes something completely new. Of course, a hybrid may become so completely naturalized that it seems ancient and native; indeed, a hybrid may become the default and the process is endless. At the same time it is interesting to acknowledge that in the biological realm from which this metaphor comes, hybrids are often sterile, unable to reproduce.

The persistence of certain forms of material culture in colonial Sicily (to take just this one situation) must be considered within an understanding of objects as things, actions, and ideas all at the same time. Of course, the meanings of things are subject to change both through time and through space. What they index, in terms of actions or ideas, may also change from place to place and time to time. In other words, the ‘meaning’ of a vessel with a particular profile or decorative scheme in the seventh century may very well not be the same 200 years later. Indeed, the recontextualization of objects often entails a change in their meaning; thus an Attic Greek red figure krater in central Sicily does not carry with it all the institutions and customs of its producers, as previously noted.51 The co-occurrence of other forms of material culture also contributes to constituting its meaning, use, status, and so forth. So, of course, would the individuals in their social networks who used it; and, in turn, it would have helped to constitute them. The co-occurrence of local forms is particularly indicative, when they are found to continue to be made and used in times and places where the overwhelming majority of material culture (not just pottery) now originates from another place and culture. This kind of assemblage, hybridized both with transculturated objects that partake of both local and Greek form and decoration in one and the same artefact, as well as hybridized as a whole, with imported objects, locally made imitations, and completely local types and fabrics, is perhaps an example of how material culture
2.3a. Carinated cups of the Late Bronze and Iron Ages from Morgantina (Photo: C. Antonaccio)

2.3b. Carinated cup of the sixth century BCE from Morgantina (Photo: C. Antonaccio)
may shape humans as much as vice versa. For example, the significance of carinated forms in colonial Sicily lies in their persistence over time (see, e.g., Figure 2.3). This persistence in a home territory through time, changing but recognizable in their descent, makes them local — that is, territorially based — ancestral, and even, therefore, ethnic.

I have attempted to press the primacy of lived experience in the sense that it emphasizes the inclusion of the total built environment and also the different kinds of discourses and relations (or connections or networks, if one prefers) that pertained in the ancient Mediterranean. A full past means considering all aspects of what constituted and constructed experience in the past, as well as the present. While we are not bound by experience as a test of an identity, I suggest that the field of experience should include identities that might contradict what the actors would have said about themselves, sometimes called the emic view. Artefacts — produced through the interactions of humans, and also productive in relationships with themselves — generate a hybridity that may be defined as cultural, rather than ethnic, in the sense of an ethnicity of an individual person or group of people. The mixing of genealogies and origins of things that is at the heart of the concept of hybridity, however, makes the discourse of things inherently ethnic.

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Notes
5. Jonathan Hall has drawn attention to Myres 1930 as an Anglophone example of this kind of thinking as applied to Greece: see Hall forthcoming; and Hall 2002. See also Hodos in Chapter One; and Thomas 2004, 137–48.
7. See especially Hall 1997; and Hall 2002; outside the field of classical studies, see Lucy 2005, affirming the importance of notional shared origins or descent, rather than indicia.
10. See the recent comments of Cochran and Beaudry 2006, 193–9. I have set out our earlier views in Antonaccio 2001; Antonaccio 2003; Antonaccio 2004; Antonaccio 2005. See now Lucy 2005, 101, suggesting that ethnicity in the past is better rendered as a spectrum of ‘communal identities’ expressed by means of ‘behaviour, everyday practice, use of space, architecture and landscape, and personal appearance.’ The best way of getting at ethnicity through archaeology is to study social practice that determines ‘shared ways of doing things.’
11. See Gell 1998, 163–6; and Knappett 2005, ch. 1, on the problems with using a linguistic concept, such as ‘discourse,’ in considering material culture; cf. Pinney 2005, esp. 266, on Lyotard and the limits of meaning as signification, contesting the notion of discourse, and 270: ‘there is an alterity (or “torque”) of materiality that can never be assimilated to a disembodied “linguistic-philosophical closure,” “culture,” or “history.”’
12. For a different take on colonialism, see Murray 2004, defining ‘settler societies’ as a global phenomenon. These societies, defined as ‘the product of a mass European immigration where people settled on land appropriated by conquest, treaty, or simple dispossession from indigenous groups’ and marked ‘by a link between mass migration, major ecological change, the introduction of new diseases, and a catastrophic impact on the viability of indigenous populations’ (5–6), do not seem to present an appropriate model for the situations discussed here.
15. Malkin has been responsible for introducing the ‘Middle Ground’ paradigm into the discourse on the ancient Mediterranean, most recently in Malkin 2004, though without reference to Purcell and much other recent work. See now Gosden 2004, ch. 5.
16. Purcell 2005, 126, also rejecting attempts to use the models of cultural hybridity or creolization, adopted from postcolonial theorizing.
17. Purcell 2005, 133.
19. Terrenato 2005 also urges attention to individual agency and the individual agents who enact and participate in broader processes. On the other hand, some commentators question whether the very notion of the individual is valid for the past, e.g. Thomas 2004, 6.
20. Thomas 2004, 54, drawing an analogy between the knowledge of creation beyond scripture and the use of archaeology to understand the past outside texts.
22. Gosden 2004 is an important book that deals with this and related issues in detail.
24. I have touched on the concept of ‘strategic essentialism’ in Antonaccio 2003.
26. See Knappett 2005, 5–6, and 137, on connaiss ance and savoir faire, respectively – as well as the limits of this model of material culture and human interaction with it. Drinking and feasting customs, as well as burial or other ritual contexts, are possible contexts to consider, but the possibilities include the ‘mundane’ (i.e. the household). See Lucy 2005, as well.
27. Gosden 2004, 35–6. We may compare this to the definition by Díaz-Andreu et al. 2005, 1–2: “Identity” [is] understood as individuals’ identification with broader groups on the basis of differences socially sanctioned as significant’ and is ‘inextricably linked to the sense of belonging.’ Moreover, ‘identification’ is a process and requires individual agency, and ‘identities can be hybrid or multiple.’
31. Hall forthcoming.
32. Hall forthcoming.
33. This has been discussed recently in the form of biographies of objects, in a number of contexts and cultures; see Malkin 2004.
35. Terrenato 2005, 68. See also Hurst 2005 against integration and a focus on elites, and stressing local variability.
36. See Isayev in Chapter Nine.
38. Hall 2002, 23. Gosden (2004, 157) notes that ‘it is a condition of novelty to seek links with the past.’
41. Malkin 2004, and also Malkin 1998; Malkin 2002; Malkin 2003. Knappett (2005, 78) suggests that there need be no dichotomy between the notions of ‘arborescent,’ hierarchical systems and the ‘rhizomatic,’ decentered and fluid ones. He advocates ‘a hybrid topology that combines the arborescent and the rhizomatic, the solid and the fluid, the striated and the smooth.’
42. Malkin 2004, 360.
44. See Thomas 2004, 26, pointing out (with Bruno Latour) that 'modern technologies and social systems depend on creating integrated hybrids of people and things,' trumping all attempts at keeping categories separate. It seems to me that Malkin’s preference for creolization (despite his ultimate rejection of this term and concept as well) with its linguistic model is a telling detail; see Antonaccio 2003 on both models; Gosden 2004, 91, on mestizos, and 69, on hybridity.
46. Gosden 2004, 155: ‘Middle grounds allowed new scope for individuality…through the possibility that the middle ground offered of stepping out of his native group. But such individuality was unstable through time and over space, depending as it did on the ever changing conditions of the middle ground.’
48. See Mace, Holden, and Shennan 2005 for an exploration of the notion of descent in cultural diversification on a global scale.
49. Antonaccio 2001; Antonaccio 2003; Antonaccio 2004; Antonaccio 2005; Hall forthcoming. Knappett 2005, ch. 4, and 68, suggests that ‘most sociotechnical networks we observe in the world are hybrid forms’ and discusses the concepts of flow and structure in communication and trade networks.