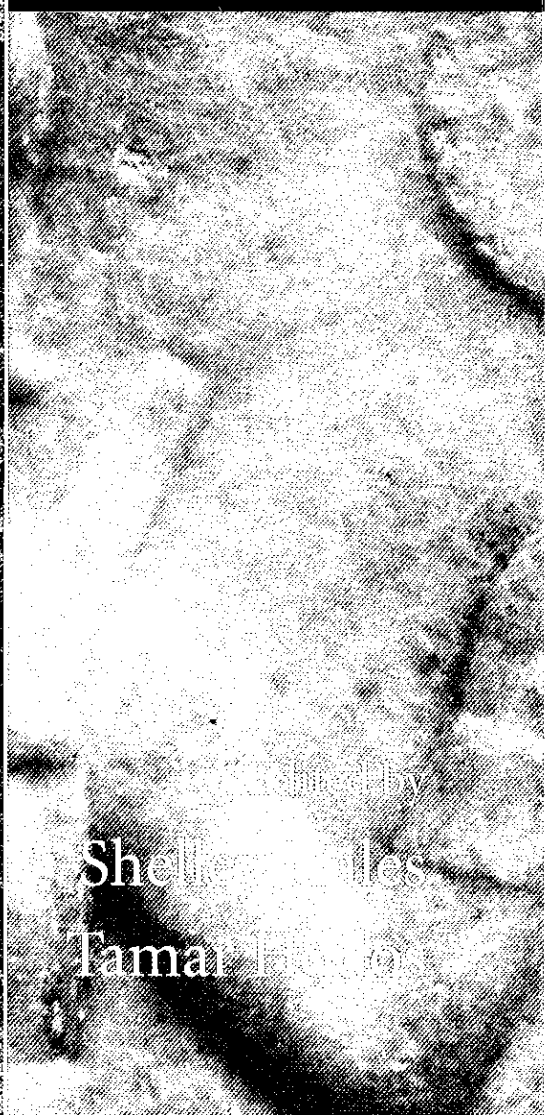


MATERIAL CULTURE AND SOCIAL IDENTITIES IN THE ANCIENT WORLD



Edited by
Shelley D. Dales
Tamar Nafok

CAMBRIDGE

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore,
São Paulo, Delhi, Dubai, Tokyo

Cambridge University Press
32 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013-2473, USA
www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521767743

© Cambridge University Press 2010

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without the written
permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2010

Printed in the United States of America

A catalog record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication data
Material culture and social identities in the ancient world/
edited by Shelley Hales and Tamar Hodos.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-521-76774-3 (hardback)

1. Material culture – Social aspects. 2. Group identity. 3. Social evolution.

4. Social archaeology. 5. Civilization, Ancient. I. Hales, Shelley, 1971–

II. Hodos, Tamar. III. Title.

GN406 M34916 2009

306–dc22 2008054356

ISBN 978-0-521-76774-3 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or
accuracy of URLs for external or third-party Internet Web sites referred to in
this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such Web sites is,
or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

CONTENTS

<i>Illustrations</i>	page ix
<i>About the Contributors</i>	xiii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xv

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

1	Local and Global Perspectives in the Study of Social and Cultural Identities	3
	<i>Tamar Hodos</i>	
2	(Re)Defining Ethnicity: Culture, Material Culture, and Identity	32
	<i>Carla M. Antonaccio</i>	
3	Cultural Diversity and Unity: Empire and Rome	54
	<i>Richard Hingley</i>	

CASE STUDIES

4	Ingenious Inventions: Welding Ethnicities East and West	79
	<i>Corinna Riva</i>	
5	Shaping Mediterranean Economy and Trade: Phoenician Cultural Identities in the Iron Age	114
	<i>Michael Sommer</i>	
6	Samothrace: Samo- or Thrace?	138
	<i>Petya Ilieva</i>	

7	The Big and Beautiful Women of Asia: Ethnic Conceptions of Ideal Beauty in Achaemenid-Period Seals and Gemstones <i>Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones</i>	171
8	Unintentionally Being Lucanian: Dynamics beyond Hybridity <i>Elena Isayev</i>	201
9	Tricks with Mirrors: Remembering the Dead of Noricum <i>Shelley Hales</i>	227
10	Neutral Bodies? Female Portrait Statue Types from the Late Republic to the Second Century CE <i>Annetta Alexandridis</i>	252
AFTERWORD		
11	Cultural Crossovers: Global and Local Identities in the Classical World <i>David Mattingly</i>	283
	<i>Bibliography</i>	297
	<i>Index</i>	335

SHAPING MEDITERRANEAN ECONOMY AND TRADE: PHOENICIAN CULTURAL IDENTITIES IN THE IRON AGE

Michael Sommer

For their neighbours, the cities of the Levantine coast were inseparably associated with long-distance trade. The Hebrew Bible pays tribute to Tyre's 'merchants who behaved like princes'.¹ Cuneiform documents from the Neo-Assyrian period provide us with vivid accounts of Phoenicians who pursued their commercial activities even while their city was besieged by Assyrian troops.² Egyptian texts give evidence of the Phoenician rulers' shrewdness when it came to selling raw materials onto the emerging markets of the Iron Age. And the Homeric epics portray the people from the Levantine coast as highly skilled craftsmen, but ethically ruthless traders who earned their living by travelling about in their round ships, selling and buying large quantities of commodities.

Trade invariably requires interaction with others. The purpose of this chapter is to explore how this interaction may have affected the projection and reception of the social identities of the traders. This Iron Age world was a world in transformation, transformed not least by long-distance trade, which turned a Mediterranean surrounded by isolated peripheries in the early Iron Age into the turntable of intercultural and commercial exchange it was in the Archaic period. The people the Greeks called 'Phoenicians' were one of the driving forces of this process, which shaped – this is our hypothesis – their own as well as their neighbours' cultural identities.

But who were the people who inhabited cities like Tyre (Sur), Sidon (Saida), Byblos (Gubla) and Arados (Arwad), all situated on the coast of

present-day Lebanon and Syria? The Greek texts, starting with Homer, apply two ethnonyms to them: sometimes they are called 'Sidonians' (Sidones) and sometimes 'Phoenicians' (Phoinikes). Phoenicians in its variations (Phoinikes, Phoenices, Poeni, Punici) is thus a term applied exclusively by non-Phoenicians – Greeks and Romans – to label others.³ The ethnonym, probably derived from *phoenix* (purple red), has been adopted by modern scholarship – rather *faut de mieux*: the few extant Phoenician texts – inscriptions mostly of a commemorative character – do not mention any collective ethnonym; nor do the Assyrian and Egyptian texts, or the accounts of the Hebrew Bible, though the Old Testament sporadically refers to the inhabitants of the Levantine coastal cities as 'Canaanites,' a rather vague term generally applied to the urban population of Bronze Age Syria, but still in use in Late Antiquity, as St Augustine tells us.⁴ Inferring from the texts, one is inclined to believe that the individual city was the chief horizon of identity for its inhabitants.

In this chapter, I investigate, specifically, the relationship between how ancient authors received the identity of the Phoenicians as socio-cultural populations, and the projection of that identity (or those identities) by the Phoenicians themselves through the material culture they traded. Focus will be on the Phoenician east, that is, the Levant, but the 'colonial' adventure of the Phoenicians in the west can hardly be ignored. The bulk of the archaeological evidence comes from outside the Levant, and this raises the first methodological issue: to associate a given group of findings with a collectivity we know of only from texts produced by others inevitably ends in aporia. This leads to a second methodological issue: identity and alterity – the expressions of 'otherness' – are usually merely two sides of the same coin.⁵ If we want to grasp Phoenician identity at all, we have to consider the texts as well: not as 'evidence,' but as narratives reflecting constructions of alterity circulating among their neighbours. Therefore, we cannot but begin with Homer.

Homer's Phoenicians

In the Homeric epics, the identity of the Phoinikes is seemingly unproblematic: Homer's Phoenicians are sailors and shrewd merchants who,

after crossing the Mediterranean, visit the Greek mainland and the islands to trade trumpery: 'Thither came Phoenicians, men famed for their ships, greedy knaves, bringing countless trinkets in their black ship. Now there was in my father's house a Phoenician woman, comely and tall, and skilled in glorious handiwork.'⁶ Thus begins the story of the herdsman Eumaios, who, being the son of a king, was kidnapped by Phoenician merchants. The Phoenician woman, who worked in the household of Eumaios's father and who played an inglorious part in the kidnapping, was from Sidon.

Whereas in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* the Phoenicians enjoy a rather dubious reputation as shifty, acquisitive tradesmen, the Sidonians are introduced as the skilled producers of fine luxury items, such as the garments that Hekabe, Hektor's mother, gets from her bedroom when preparing for a procession: 'But the queen herself went down to the vaulted treasure chamber wherein were her robes, richly broidered, the handiwork of Sidonian women, whom godlike Alexander had himself brought from Sidon, as he sailed over the wide sea on that journey on which he brought back high-born Helen.'⁷ Sidonians were also the producers of a prestigious krater, which Achilles offered as a reward in a sprinting contest: 'a mixing bowl of silver, richly wrought; six measures it held, and in beauty it was far the goodliest in all the earth, seeing that Sidonians, well skilled in deft handiwork, had wrought it cunningly, and men of the Phoenicians brought it over the murky deep, and landed it in harbour.'⁸ The passage highlights the perceived division of labour between the Sidonian craftsmen who produced valuable goods like luxury garments and precious vessels on the one hand, and the more generic 'Phoenician' carriers on the other. Homer's puzzling reference to 'Sidonians' – along with 'Phoenicians' – suggests that the question of Phoenician identity is more complicated than it seems.

Another episode featuring the Phoenicians as protagonists is the pretended story of Odysseus's life, told to the swineherd Eumaios by the hero in disguise. The 'Cretan Odysseus,' having returned home from the Trojan War, 'then to Egypt did my spirit bid me voyage with my godlike comrades, when I had fitted out my ships with care.'⁹ Upon their arrival in Egypt, despite Odysseus's warnings, the comrades 'set about wasting the fair fields of the men of Egypt; and they carried off the women and little children.'¹⁰ Odysseus's companions are massacred

by the Egyptians, but the hero himself is spared by the king, who hosts him. 'But when the eighth circling year was come, then there came a man of Phoenicia, well versed in guile, a greedy knave, who had already wrought much evil among men.'¹¹ The Phoenician takes Odysseus with him to Phoinike. There, the man persuades him to join a commercial enterprise to Libya: 'having given lying counsel to the end that I should convey a cargo with him, but in truth that, when there, he might sell me and get a vast price.'¹² They are shipwrecked, however, and Odysseus escapes to the land of the Thesprotians.

The story is purely fictional, of course: a fictitious narrative embedded in an epic that itself is fiction.¹³ But it is meant to be plausible both to Eumaios and the audience of the epic. The story points to an idiosyncratic maritime entrepreneurship that merges trade, piracy, looting, and mercenarism. Individual entrepreneurs form companies for joint operations. In such a business, ethnicity hardly matters. The *Odyssey's* account presents long-distance trade as largely multicultural. This multiculturalism - as will be seen - is reflected in the archaeological record from various parts of the Mediterranean: in the commercial exploration and colonization of the Mediterranean west, Greeks and Phoenicians interacted closely. In other contexts, ethnicity mattered absolutely: artefacts were labelled 'Phoenician' due to their perfection, value, and prestige; people in recognition of their craft and skills, but also because of their notorious greed for profit. When the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were cast into written form, stereotypes about Phoenician behaviour were already easily at hand; the construction of the Phoenician 'other' had just begun.

When we approach the Phoenicians through texts like the *Odyssey*, fabricated by their neighbours, they act as a homogeneous, monolithic group. The literary alter egos of the inhabitants of places such as Byblos, Tyre, and Sidon feature clear-cut markers that make them distinct and serve as 'identity cards' wherever they emerge. When viewed through the archaeologist's spectacles, however, the Levantine traders appear radically different: what we can trace in material culture is not the distinct monolithic collectivity portrayed in the narrative sources, but a highly hybrid class of merchants whose ethnic identity is equivocal, whose cultural borders seem to be blurred. The two perspectives are not necessarily contradictory and mutually exclusive, but can be

regarded as complementary:¹⁴ the construction of alterity through the narratives provided a framework for the Phoenicians to be assigned a place in the wider, 'global' world of the Iron Age Mediterranean (and possibly even helped them to find their own identity as 'Phoenicians' – an example of one of the paradoxes of globalization noted by Hodos in Chapter One), whereas their ability to adapt to other customs, values, and systems of communication enabled them to fit into cross-cultural discourses of status and prestige. But unlike in the Roman world, for which Hingley (in Chapter Three) argues 'heterogeneity becomes a binding force of imperial stability,' hybridity in the Iron Age was not a constituent of formal empire, but of a rather informal economic supremacy that involved a high degree of centrality and connectivity in the Mediterranean networks of trade and exchange. In many respects, this echoes Antonaccio's heuristic discussion in Chapter Two, where she argues for hybridity arising from encounters among peers; in this case, it is the merchant class rather than a purely elite one.

Again, the Homeric epics are literature, not history. But they echo the horizon of experiences of people in early Archaic Greece. From a Greek perspective, the Phoenician sailors came from a distant coast of the Mediterranean of which one knew, in that period, relatively little. The *ethnikon* 'Phoenicians' may have meant, at that stage, little more than sailor merchants, who brought exotic goods (made by Sidonians), who spoke an exotic language, and who behaved in exotic ways. We should be extremely cautious when associating with such concepts a particular material culture or specific artefacts or material remains.¹⁵ The methodological flaws and risks of such constructions of 'archaeological cultures' have been observed repeatedly elsewhere,¹⁶ and indeed are discussed throughout this volume,¹⁷ so need not be discussed here in detail. That Homer's Phoenicians are a literary construct and not an accurate ethnography of the Levant goes without saying.¹⁸

But my aim here is not to reconstruct a particular, historical ethnicity, nor indeed to prove Homer wrong. I am concerned with cultural identities and how they are mirrored in the material evidence. As Hingley has suggested with regard to the paradigm of Romanization, modern concepts and models, be they explicit or implicit, usually derive from classical texts whose entire weight is then imposed on the material records. By doing so, they reduce the 'variety of cultural experiences' to

fit their categories, which in a sense is legitimate, but highly unbalanced (see Chapter Three). No study of the Phoenicians can ignore textual sources, but rather should take them as what they are: not 'evidence' in the proper sense, but 'narratives' created for all kinds of purposes, including handing down information. An alternative narrative can be constructed, however, by examining the material evidence in the Levant and colonial diaspora from a *longue durée* perspective. Such a narrative better accommodates the generalizations of the texts alongside the specific, and often varied and problematic, material culture patterning in localized contexts than do current models that emphasize only one of these elements. In individual cases it is often impossible to decide whether an artefact recovered in the Mediterranean west has been brought to the site by Levantine traders from the east, produced locally by manufacturers from the Levant, or crafted by local producers emulating Levantine models. The gradual shift from a Phoenician commercial and colonial network towards a hierarchic, hegemonic quasi-empire in which Carthage played a key role makes matters still more complicated, for while a Carthagocentric scenario is implied in ancient sources, this is difficult to map materially.¹⁹ Even at a basic level, the material record alone provides no clue whether a site was a Phoenician or a Punic foundation – or whether it was an indigenous settlement where people from the Levant lived or to where they brought objects from the east. The archaeological record from the Levantine cities themselves does not add much to the puzzling image from the west: for the most part, these sites are overbuilt by modern structures; Sidon and Tyre, the main Phoenician coastal cities, are still thriving Phoenician harbour cities, the latest military conflicts notwithstanding. This makes the small town of Sarepta (Sarafand), with its remarkable industrial quarter, the only Phoenician site that has been properly excavated.²⁰ Thus, in contrast with Greek examples from this broad period (see Antonaccio on Sicily in Chapter Two), there is little from the Phoenician homeland that can be used as a basis for comparison with material from the Phoenician diaspora.

From Byblos to Carthage

The Phoenician coast stretches roughly from Arados (Arwad) in the north, in present-day Syria, to Dor (Tel Dor, Khirbet el-Burj) in the

south, in modern Israel. Geography was a decisive factor at all times: since the dawn of history, this part of the Levantine coast was oriented towards the west. The coast itself, with numerous promontories, peninsulas and offshore islands, provided ideal conditions for seafaring, whereas the fertile, but restricted coastal plain allowed for little more than small-scale subsistence farming. The coastal alluvium was cut off from its hinterland by high mountains: Mount Lebanon rises to more than 3000 metres.²¹

In the early Iron Age, urban centres began to sprout along the Phoenician coast. Byblos gained independence from the Egyptians, who had up till now dictated the terms of economic interaction and negotiated new terms of trade for the exportation of raw materials, cedar wood in particular, to the Nile delta. Tyre and Sidon soon outflanked Byblos and began to rival with each other for regional hegemony. Tyre won the race by a canvas: the city established commercial relations with the rural hinterland and, increasingly, with the Mediterranean west, from where it obtained raw materials and slaves. A number of biblical narratives picture the flourishing Phoenician port, its immense wealth and ample commercial network: the books of Kings report the contribution of Hiram, the king of Tyre, to Solomon's temple projects and the commercial joint ventures of Solomon and Hiram, who sent their ships to the far-flung shores of Tarshish (Spain) and Ophir (possibly Nubia).²² Ezekiel 27 tells us about Tyre's trading partners and the commodities exchanged.²³ To be sure, such evidence needs to be seen in its narrative context, and it is almost impossible to unravel the texts' manifold chronological confusions; but there can be little doubt that, by the eighth century BCE, Tyre was a 'hot spot' of trans-Mediterranean trade. Politically, the city had subdued the southern part of the Phoenician coast, including Sidon.²⁴ Curiously, the city with its mainland possessions was known as the 'kingdom of the Sidonians.'

In the meantime, the system of interstate anarchy was replaced by renewed imperial hegemony. Expanding westward, the Neo-Assyrian Empire reached the Mediterranean under Tiglath-Pileser III (745-727 BCE). Even though it annexed most of the Levantine states and deprived Tyre of most of its mainland possessions, Assyria never achieved more than a loose suzerainty over the city, which for its part benefited economically from the Assyrian aristocracy's demand for

luxury goods. The Assyrian royal inscriptions boast of repeated victories over Tyre, but in fact a number of attempts to take the island by siege failed. The city was still unconquered when Nebuchadnezzar II put it under siege for no less than thirteen years (585–572). Shortly after the conquest, the Tyrian monarchy ceased, and the city temporarily became a republic.²⁵

Tyre and the other Phoenician cities retained a high degree of autonomy under Persian rule, when Sidon became the capital of a satrapy. The Levantine coastal cities provided the backbone of the Persian fleet during the wars with the Greeks. In August 332 BCE, Alexander the Great conquered Tyre, which he had to besiege. Because its inhabitants were reluctant to let in the Macedonian army,²⁶ the king enslaved the entire population and garrisoned a Macedonian unit within the walls. The dam Alexander built when besieging the city still connects the old town of Tyre with the mainland. With Alexander's conquest, the Phoenician cities lost their political importance for good, but they continued to be major hubs of the trans-Mediterranean long-distance trade. Phoenician cities carried on issuing their own silver coins well into the Roman period (58/59 CE), and bronze coins until the third century CE. This numismatic evidence stands out from other local eastern, 'pseudo-autonomous' coinage by showing no reflection whatsoever of the arrival of Roman imperial rule in 64 BCE.²⁷

The Rise of a Commercial Class

The coins struck by Roman Tyre bear eloquent witness to the city's distinct civic identity, matching similar evidence from Greek cities. Tyre issued shekels (tetradrachms) with the head of the city god Melqart and an eagle. The bronze coins likewise displayed Melqart and the Phoenician legend LSSR (of Sur = Tyre). Melqart was the one deity that embraced everything the Phoenician metropolis stood for. He was the travelling god par excellence who congenially embodied the daring commercial spirit of Tyre, 'whose merchants are princes,'²⁸ and its maritime orientation. Not surprisingly, the god's *interpretation Graeca* was Herakles. Melqart seems to have appeared first in the tenth century BCE and is epigraphically attested from the ninth century BCE

onwards, thus representing at least some sort of religious continuity of more than 1200 years.²⁹

The god's very name (*mlkqrt* = 'king of the city') suggests that he was regarded as the divine ruler of the city, similar to Yahweh, the lord of Israel, where the spheres of politics and religion merged into theocracy. After Moses, core elements of politics (the 'law,' 'covenant') became constituents of the relationship between humans and the god.³⁰ Whereas in the Bronze Age states, the king, and the bureaucracy of the palace centres, appeared as representatives of the divine world, in Israel, God's own people, political institutions – the previously omnipotent king included – were completely marginalized by the primacy of religion. Tempting as it is to take Israel's theocracy as a model for nearby Tyre,³¹ things appear to have been quite different there.

To be sure, by this period the Phoenician kings lacked the prominent position their Bronze Age predecessors once had occupied.³² In the Phoenician epigraphic record, which is basically limited to royal tomb inscriptions, they become visible mainly in their religious roles, as priests of the city god, builder of temples, and, in the broadest sense, as guarantors of divine justice on earth and mediators between the human and the divine worlds.³³ The Greek, Hebrew, Egyptian, and Assyrian traditions add further details (the king as supreme justice, diplomat, military leader, city founder, builder, and dispenser of economic resources), but it is self-evident that external views and assumptions account for much of this image of an almighty king.³⁴

A narrative handed down by Flavius Josephus portrays the origin of the cult of Melqart as an intentional foundation act: 'When Abibalos [Abibaal] died, his son Eiromenos [Hiram] succeeded him in kingship.... He built the great place [Eurychoros] and put up a golden column in the Temple of Zeus. He also went and cut wood on Mount Lebanon for the roofs of the temples; he pulled down the old temples and built new ones for Herakles [Melqart] and Astarte; and he was the first to celebrate the awakening of Herakles in the month of Peritius.'³⁵ This is legend, of course, but the account, not included in the biblical narratives on Tyre, is likely to have a Phoenician source. Under the auspices of a political theology that is theocratic, such a deliberate choice in favour of particular gods is hardly conceivable.³⁶

There is, however, a second possible explanation for the gradual disappearance of the king from the political stage. The analogy in this case is not Israel, but Hellas. In early Archaic Greece, the monarchic institutions were gradually replaced by the community of the free and the equal, the polis as an autonomous commonwealth of citizens.³⁷ A major role in this process was played by military innovation, namely the rise of the phalanx constituted by citizen soldiers who demanded their share in political participation.³⁸ Lacking a comparable importance, the army's place in the Phoenician cities was taken by another pressure group: the merchants.³⁹ In the Levantine societies of the Bronze Age, merchants had been economic agents depending on the great institutions of palaces and occasionally temples.⁴⁰ In the Iron Age, the involvement of such institutions in the exchange of commodities seems to have dropped drastically. The report of Wenamun and the biblical account of Solomon and Hiram's joint commercial enterprises are the latest – external – pieces of evidence testifying a direct and major role of Phoenician kings in trade.

Instead of being representatives of a palace carrying out administered trade 'embedded' in reciprocity and mutuality, Homer's Phoenicians appear as economically independent entrepreneurs who operate on their own behalf, at least beyond their homeland. Nonmonetary intermediate trade and the supply of high-value, low-bulk luxury items is their base of existence in the wider Mediterranean: a service the provision of which depends on some rudimentary understanding of market principles, namely the fluctuation of prices according to supply and demand. An image consistent with this evidence is depicted by Ezekiel's 'lament over Tyre': a city having established a commercial network through the importation of raw materials and agricultural products from the periphery of the system and the production and supply of high-value finished goods. No mention is made of the 'state' or any palace institutions being involved.⁴¹

The importance of individuals for Tyre's long-distance trade is also highlighted by Neo-Assyrian cuneiform documents. The 'contract' between the Assyrian king Esarhaddon (680–669 BCE) and Baal, king of Tyre, – in fact a loyalty oath regulating the duties and privileges of Tyre within the Assyrian sphere of hegemony – mentions 'ships belonging to the people of Tyre,'⁴² undoubtedly merchant vessels that were the

property of individual ship owners. Other Assyrian documents report that merchants from Tyre pursued their business unhampered by political adverseness when the city was besieged by Assyrian troops around 720 BCE.⁴³

It is only logical that such economic independence from institutions that previously had dominated the economic sphere brought about a demand for political participation. In contrast to any other contemporary society, the vast majority of Tyre's inhabitants depended directly or indirectly on long-distance trade. It was not only the merchants themselves who were involved, but also the producers of luxury items destined for exportation. Even the pottery industry of the nearby town of Sarepta catered for external markets, producing an immense surplus of ceramic vessels. This coastal town in the vicinity of Tyre was small but featured a high degree of functional segregation between dwelling and industrial areas. The pottery industry was the domain of individual workshops, run by private (and literate) craftsmen, who thus had their share in Tyre's long-distance trade: apparently, the potters from Sarepta produced the packing material for many of the liquid goods Tyrian merchants shipped overseas.⁴⁴ Their economic key role nourished a strong feeling of class solidarity among the Phoenician traders that could be converted in the virtual monopolization of political power by a merchant oligarchy. Isaiah's 'merchant princes' of Tyre was no hollow phrase: it was these merchants who, in the Iron Age, took over political power from the royal palace as the Phoenician city's pivotal institution.

Civic Identity

The oligarchic character of the Phoenician city-state is best documented for Carthage, although, like Athens, Carthage may be an exception rather than the rule. Nevertheless, it provides at least some indication of civic structure, and while it would be incorrect to suggest that political structures in Phoenicia and its diaspora were replicated and remained unchanged over time, there are a number of characteristics that may be viewed as shared ideologically, even if not identical in practice. It is also the case that, for the authors and readers of the Greek and Latin literary sources that shape our own view of the city, Carthage represented

the intrusion of the dangerous and alien eastern civilization into the western Mediterranean.⁴⁵ The city had a people's assembly ('*lm*), which could decide political issues, but only if the *sufets* (the chief magistrates) and the *h'drm* (the council or senate) disagreed or summoned the assembly.⁴⁶ This suggests a preponderance of the oligarchic institutions, even though for Polybios the Carthaginian constitution ranks among the 'mixed' ones, with a balance between monarchic, oligarchic, and democratic elements.⁴⁷ But the body of citizens seems to have been rather restricted: when Scipio Africanus conquered Carthago Nova (Cartagena) in 209 BCE, according to Polybios,⁴⁸ he immediately restituted full freedom to the *politikoi* (citizens), whereas he only promised it to the *ergastikoi* and *cheirotechnai*. Craftsmen, we may infer, were not citizens in the full sense.⁴⁹ Thus, there was a strong sense of civic identity in Carthage, but not everyone participated in full citizenship.

The merchants did, however. The second Roman-Carthaginian contract, dating from the fourth century BCE, determined that Roman merchants trading in North Africa or Carthaginian Sicily should be treated like Carthaginian citizens – and vice versa.⁵⁰ The offices and access to the senate were restricted to the wealthiest citizens⁵¹ – and the most promising way to acquire wealth in a city like Carthage, which largely depended on long-distance trade, was commerce. This makes the merchants the most likely candidates for an urban elite that ruled over Carthage and its empire.

For the Phoenicians in the Levant, there is far less evidence. But the concept of citizenship seems to have been exclusive rather than inclusive in the East, as well. At the climax of its power, Tyre controlled a formidable territorial state, which included not only other Phoenician cities (Sidon) and smaller urban settlements of a predominantly industrial character (Sarepta), but also large stretches of mountains and farmland, most prominently the fertile Jezreel Valley in Lower Galilee. Here, and in the hills of Upper Galilee, fortifications and settlement patterns seem to indicate that Tyre was in firm control of the area. Burials, however, reflect a more diverse situation. Cremation and inhumation occur next to each other, in contrast to the Phoenician coastal cities where cremation dominated.⁵²

It would be pointless to identify the different burial styles with specific patterns of ethnicity, but cultural diversity on the fringes of the

Tyrian territory is as such significant and sets apart the Phoenician city-state from the Greek polis, which culturally as well as politically was closely integrated. The 'kingdom of the Sidonians' was, in this respect, an empire *en miniature* rather than the unity of city and territory that was represented by the Greek polis. This may suggest that, though there are obvious parallels between the Phoenician and the Greek city, the 'Sidonians' represented a restricted urban elite that ruled over a politically and socially less privileged, ethnically and culturally diverse periphery. It may further imply that the 'Sidonians' monopolized political power in their kingdom.

As in later Carthage, there may have been some collective participatory institutions in the Levant. In the Near East, especially in Syria and in northern Mesopotamia, tribal assemblies and councils of the elders added a participatory element to the centralized societies as early as the Early Bronze Age.⁵³ Such institutions may have survived into the Iron Age, but there is little evidence for them before the Achaemenid period. During the uprising of the satraps (366–360 BCE), when Sidon also rebelled against Persian rule, according to Diodoros,⁵⁴ 100 *symbouloi* (council members) were sent to Artaxerxes in order to negotiate the terms of surrender. The 100 may well have been members of a kind of *boule*, or council of the elders. When Alexander approached Tyre in 332 BCE, the city sent envoys to the Macedonian king to negotiate peace. Any agreement was, however, subject to ratification by the people's assembly.⁵⁵

There is better evidence for magistracies. After Tyre had surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar in 572 BCE, *dikastai* (sufets) replaced the kings as eponymous officials for a number of years.⁵⁶ There is no evidence for sufets in Tyre before that date, but their existence may be inferred by the fact that Tyre's colony, Carthage, seems to have been governed by sufets from its foundation in the late ninth or early eighth century BCE onwards.⁵⁷ In Carthage, at least in later years, the sufets were annually elected eponymous officials. Josephus's *dikastai* held irregular terms, but they were certainly eponymous and also may well have been elected.

In the inscription on his sarcophagus, Eshmunazar, who ruled the city of Sidon under Persian suzerainty in the fifth century BCE, boasts of having received the towns of Dor and Ioppe from the Great King and of 'having added them to the territory of his country, to be possessed

by the Sidonians for ever.⁵⁸ The Persian king, entangled in concepts of monarchic and dynastic rule, had given the towns to the king of Sidon; Eshmunazar, for his part, added them to the country of the Sidonians. The notion of the city as the collectivity of a body of citizens also looms behind the famous Athenian *proxenia* decree for Straton, 'king of the Sidonians':⁵⁹ the king is declared *proxenos* of the Athenians – and every single citizen of Sidon with him. It is the collectivity of the Sidonians who benefit from the privileges vicariously bestowed on their king.⁶⁰ There is hardly any document that better bears witness to the Greek and Phoenician civic identities being, in principle, compatible.

Networking the Mediterranean

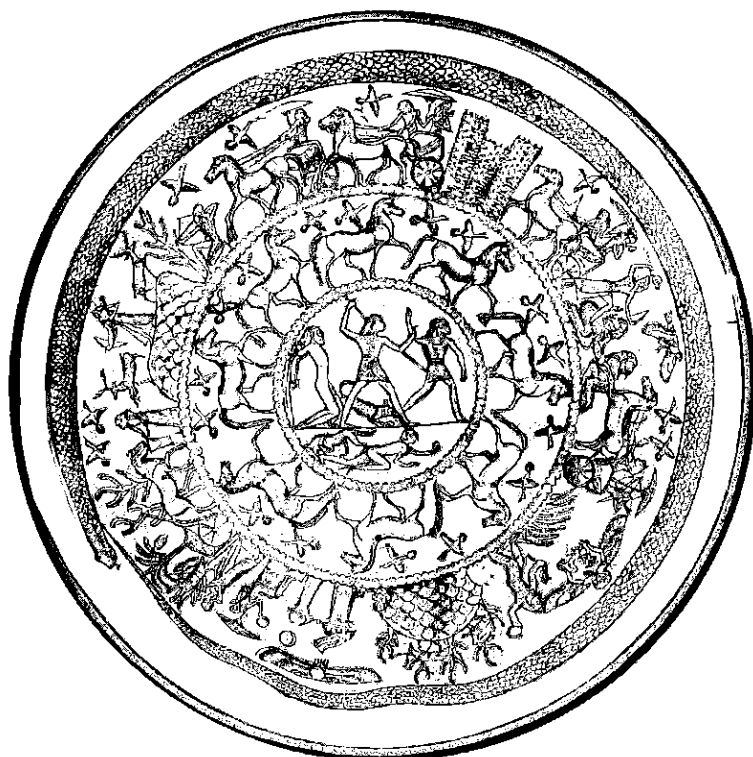
Though the individual city or city-state was obviously the most prominent reference point for civic identity in Phoenicia, there were other circles to which collective notions of belonging could be attached. Economic activities and interests shared together with people with similar cultural and linguistic backgrounds inevitably create strong bonds of solidarity. We know nothing about the composition of the ship's crew that kidnapped the young Eumaios, but its members were certainly tied together by a marked team spirit. Several individuals jointly owning a ship and sharing the risks and profits of long-distance trade – this is the model, provided by the trade companies of the early Hanseatic League in the European Middle Ages,⁶¹ which best fits Homer's descriptions of Phoenician trade.

Such a sense of a common bond must have existed on a much larger scale, too. Here starts the story of the Phoenician expansion in the west, which has been the subject of much scholarship in recent times.⁶² People from the Levant sailed to the coasts of the Mediterranean and beyond and some of them stayed overseas, settling down in or in the vicinity of indigenous villages and towns. This process, which took place from the tenth century BCE onwards, resumed earlier contacts between the Levant and the west (including the Aegean) in the Bronze Age. Archaeologically, the easterners in the west are difficult to detect. In Cyprus and the Aegean, the period is marked by a massive spread of 'Oriental' artefacts and therefore labelled 'Orientalizing': imported bichrome and later red-slip wares, which were often used as containers

Greek 'colonization' has long since been described in similar terms: as a process involving the use of force and violence against 'natives' in the beginning, leading however to a rather smooth integration of indigenous people into the *kosmos* of the Greek poleis, resulting in hybridization on both sides⁷³ and the adoption and inclusion of non-Greeks into the aetiological universe of Greek myth.⁷⁴ Neither 'Greek' nor 'Phoenician' identity in the Iron Age was hermetic, monolithic, or compact: both groups were protagonists in the establishment of a trade diaspora of outposts,⁷⁵ the driving force behind which was the search for economic opportunities. Even though the Levantines came probably first, both they and the Greeks formed part of *one* network with a high degree of connectivity in both directions and a common material culture, the 'Orientalizing' style.⁷⁶ The concept of a trade diaspora with individual actors as protagonists of cultural exchange and transformation – as opposed to diffusionist concepts of cultural change,⁷⁷ as well as hierarchic centre-periphery models such as the 'world system' concept⁷⁸ – bears the advantage of analytical flexibility. Instead of oversimplifying by imposing modern notions of ethnicity and 'national' identity on ancient societies, it takes into account the puzzling complexity of cultural identities.

All this is not to suggest that 'Greeks' and 'Phoenicians' became indistinguishable. Greeks and Levantines both retained distinct identities: at least from the Greek point of view the Phoenicians were clearly the 'others,' though possibly not as foreign as other 'barbarians.' But there are also marked differences we can trace back in the material cultures. Niemeyer has recently pointed to the sculptural revolution that happened in Greece, but left the Phoenician sphere virtually unaffected, the home country as well as the 'colonial' diaspora.⁷⁹ Only later, from the fifth century onwards, did the Phoenicians adopt Greek techniques of stone carving and start to produce free-standing sculpture and sarcophagi in considerable quantities, such as the sarcophagus of Eshmunazar from Sidon.⁸⁰

The Phoenicians' apparent reluctance to excel in fields which are – to us – emblematic of classical art, has devalued their artistic production in the eye of the modern beholder. Phoenician art has been repeatedly dismissed as eclectic, epigonic, and 'elusive'⁸¹ – a judgement that strikingly contrasts with the Greeks' pronounced esteem. But it was



5.1. Phoenician silver patera, Villa Giulia, Rome (Drawing: S. Grice, after Gehrig and Niemeyer 1990, fig. 23)

hardly a lack of artistic capability that caused the Phoenicians to focus on the 'minor' arts, such as ivory carving, faience and glass making, seal engraving and the production of metal vessels. The Phoenicians were masters of 'portable art,'⁸² and quite deliberately so. The products of their craftsmanship were designed for a 'market' stretching from the Assyrian Empire to the Columns of Herakles. Phoenician ivories, metal bowls, and glass amulets were as mobile as the Phoenicians themselves. They were made of precious materials and hence convertible into the value and prestige scales of various societies. Less convertible than material value is iconography, which can transcend the borders between cultural systems only if the recipients have a clue to the semantic code used.

Exemplary of the problems iconography raises are the low metal bowls of the patera type, of which many examples have been found in the Near East and the Mediterranean.⁸³ Heterogeneous in style and theme, they

all feature two rather simple iconographic patterns: one monoscenic mode of representation, which freezes a sequence of actions into one 'still'; and an episodic variation, in which a sequence of scenes is depicted, with recurring characters and objects (see Figure 5.1).⁸⁴ The grammars and vocabularies of the episodic representations can be deduced from the context. A beholder who lacks the cultural code will have far more difficulty with the monoscenic representations, although these prevail in the corpus of extant Phoenician bronze and silver bowls.⁸⁵

How could Greeks, Assyrians, and Egyptians understand the Phoenician bowls' iconography? How could the artefacts serve 'to define the status of local aristocracies as an élite,'⁸⁶ if the 'target groups' found it hard to get a clue to their meaning? The answer is quite simple: the Phoenicians catered for small, wealthy elites in assertive societies and these societies all shared a highly militarised, aristocratic system of values. The themes depicted on the bowls appealed directly to members of a military aristocracy, no matter to which polity they belonged: hunting, war, festivities and the relationship between the human world and the divine were the key themes recurring on the bowls.⁸⁷

The iconography of the Phoenician paterai is characteristic of the artistic production of a mobile society focused on the production for foreign 'markets' and foreign 'customers.' It reflects *their* demands and should not be mistaken for an expression of the producers' own cultural 'identity.' 'Portable art' is therefore an appropriate label for the artefacts in question: they carried a simplified inventory of Near Eastern visual art towards the west. Their apparent eclecticism and stereotypic triviality, often criticised by modern scholars, are in fact a reflection of the Phoenicians' versatility and their genuine ability to cater for the demands of others.

The artefacts imported from the Levant were indeed objects of much fascination in Archaic Greece and a major stimulus for Greece's own artistic development. The krater set out by Achilles bears eloquent witness to the esteem in which the Greeks held Phoenician metal work. Even more striking is the famous 'shield description' in Book 18 of the *Iliad*: 'About the other city there lay encamped two hosts in gleaming armour, and they were divided whether to sack it, or to spare it and accept the half of what it contained. But the men of the city would not yet consent, and armed themselves for a surprise; their wives and little

children kept guard upon the walls, and with them were the men who were past fighting through age.⁸⁸ Cities put under siege belong to the standard motifs of Phoenician paterai. Another passage is literally a word-for-word quote of a scene typically depicted on Phoenician bronze and silver bowls, the fight between wild animals and hunt: 'Two terrible lions had fastened on a bellowing bull that was with the foremost cows, and bellow as he might they haled him, while the dogs and men gave chase: the lions tore through the bull's thick hide and were gorging on his blood and bowels, but the herdsmen were afraid to do anything, and only hounded on their dogs; the dogs dared not fasten on the lions but stood by barking and keeping out of harm's way.'⁸⁹ Other recurring themes on the paterai are music and dance, also taken up by Homer in the text.⁹⁰

Such themes were popular in the Bronze Age Aegean already and can be found on many Mycenaean vases. In the Dark Ages they still represented a notion of a commonly shared background among elites, cross-culturally, from Etruria to Mesopotamia. Whether in the Aegean this idea of 'Mediterraneanism' was a reflection of continuity between the Bronze and Iron Ages or indeed resurrected by the influx of Levantine goods, is secondary. What is decisive is the fact that Phoenician art tapped into common themes and that, therefore, it appealed to the well-to-do in the Aegean as anywhere in the Mediterranean and beyond. Reading Homer's ekphrasis of the shield, we can observe how Levantine images modelled after ancient Mediterranean archetypes penetrated Greek imagination: when the *Iliad* was composed, they already had found their ways into peoples' minds. Though the object in question is a shield, not a bowl, the parallels to the iconography of Phoenician paterai are more than obvious.⁹¹ Once more, the evidence of Phoenician material culture points towards a diasporic, as it were 'cosmopolitan,' collective, identity, which complemented the strong sense of civic identity that was undoubtedly there, as well. The notion of belonging to a coherent social class, bound together by commercial spirit and economic interest, divided and alienated the Levantine merchant aristocracy – Homer's Phoenicians – from the vast majority of their home towns' populations, but at the same time it connected them to the many nodes of the Mediterranean network in which they played such a decisive role.

Conclusion

The model presented here – a cluster of various interlaced circles of cultural identity, be they civic, social, or diasporic – is only one way to tackle the manifold problems Phoenician identities pose. I have not attempted to address the difficulties arising from the slow and apparently smooth process that, in the late sixth century BCE, transformed the open network of the Iron Age Mediterranean, to which the Phoenicians had contributed so much, into a space controlled by few powerful polities: the Persian Empire in the east, a handful of Greek poleis in the Aegean, and first of all Carthage in the southern and western Mediterranean. The transition from network to hegemony, and later from hegemony to empire inevitably brought about changes in the cultural identities of the people inhabiting the Mediterranean coast, which, for the Punic West at least, are almost impossible to trace, given the scarcity of the written and the problematic nature of the material evidence.

The ancient texts themselves present generalizations of the Phoenicians; emic Phoenician identities are not distinguished. As such, the etic perspective we have from ancient literary sources may be considered as a kind of global reception of who the Phoenicians were. A more nuanced perspective may be gleaned from the traded items of Phoenician material culture that were popular with other Mediterranean populations. The Phoenicians, themselves, understood the sociocultural and commercial values of such objects as ideas of culture, and they manipulated this perception of themselves held by others to their own commercial advantage. This is shown here by the example of the *paterai*. Yet concurrently, such trading activities also served to reinforce Phoenician identities among themselves, especially the identity of the merchant class, expressions of which are not as apparent from other ancient sources. In some respects, therefore, the rise of the merchant class represents a development in Phoenician society that may be regarded as the hybrid result of global engagement. As such, this case study blends the models of globalization and hybridity, as outlined in Chapter Three by Hingley and in Chapter Two by Antonaccio, to reveal their close interrelationship.

The open, trade diaspora network, which dominated the Iron Age and was established and maintained to a large extent by Levantines,

people from 'Phoenicia,' but which also involved Euboeans, Phokaeans, other Greeks, individuals from Asia Minor, North Syria, Egypt, and Israel/Judaea, not to mention indigenous people from all parts of the Mediterranean, laid the ground for the 'classical' Mediterranean where all regions interacted with each other and secluded isolation was henceforth impossible. Their achievement makes the Phoenicians – in the perspective of a very *longue durée* – the true protagonists of 'Mediterraneanism,' for which Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell have made such a strong case.⁹²

Acknowledgements

This essay is dedicated to the memory of Hans Georg Niemeyer (1933–2007).

Notes

1. Isaiah 23:8.
2. Saggs 1955, no. 2715.
3. Prag 2006, esp. 7–29, with an in-depth discussion of the epigraphic evidence. See also Isayev, Chapter Eight, on the labelling of Lucanians by outsiders.
4. Augustine, *Ad Rom.* 13.
5. See the contributions in Essbach 2000; and Gehrke 2004.
6. Hom. *Od.* 15, 415–18, trans. Samuel Butler.
7. Hom. *Il.* 6, 288–90, trans. Samuel Butler.
8. Hom. *Il.* 23, 741–4.
9. Hom. *Od.* 14, 246–7.
10. *Ibid.*, 263–4.
11. *Ibid.*, 287–9.
12. *Ibid.*, 296–7.
13. Kullmann 1960; Latacz 2003 [1985]; Latacz 1985.
14. On the concept of hybridity in archaeology, see Sommer 2005b, 402–8; Hodos 2006, 13–18; van Dommelen 1997, 309. On hybridity and the related concept of *créolité* in general, see Hall 2003a; Hall 2003b; Bhabha 1994.
15. Coldstream 1982; Markoe 1985; Markoe 2000, 143–69; Moscati 1975, 99–152; Moscati 1992, 65–71; Sommer 2005a, 84–96.
16. Jones 1997.
17. See especially chapters in this volume by Antonaccio; Hales; Hodos; Ilieva; Isayev; and Riva.
18. Garbini 1980, 127–8; Winter 1995.
19. While the concept of a Carthaginian empire has been deconstructed by recent scholarship, Carthage nevertheless maintained a significant presence in the activities and interactions of the Phoenician diasporic communities of the central and western Mediterranean. Fuller discussion lies beyond the scope here. For further details see Aubet 2001 [1993], 185–217; Garbini 1980, 125–50;

- Huss 1994 [1990], 4–38; Moscati 1988c; Moscati 1992, 132–7; Sommer 2005a, 122–7; van Dommelen 2002.
20. Pritchard 1978.
 21. Aubet 2001 [1993], 12–16; Sommer 2000, 37–40; Fisher 1978 [1950], 375–6; Mensching and Wirth 1977, 209–12; Moscati 1988b; Vaumas 1954, 217–33.
 22. 1 Kings 5–6, and 10:11.
 23. Liverani 1991.
 24. Aubet 2001 [1993], 77–118; Sommer 2000, 97–9; Sommer 2004, 237–40.
 25. Katzenstein 1973; Sommer 2005a, 179–90.
 26. Arrian, *Anab.* 2.24.5; Polyb. 31.12.11–12.
 27. Acquaro 1988, 464–6; Destrooper-Georgiades 1995, 157–60; Millar 1993, 288.
 28. Isaiah 23:8.
 29. Bondi 2005; Bonnet and Xella 1995, 327–28. This is not to suggest that ritual and religious practices remained unchanged throughout this time, but some characteristics retained a resonance. See also Bernardini and Zucca 2005.
 30. Assmann 2002, 46–52; Assmann 2006 [1992], 81–2.
 31. Garbini 1980, 58.
 32. Bondi 1995b, 295.
 33. Donner and Röllig 1962, nos. 13, 14; nos. 10, 14, 15, 16; nos. 4, 6, 10.
 34. Sommer 2000, 240–1.
 35. Josephus *AJ* 8.146.
 36. Sommer 2001, 72–3.
 37. Meier 1994 [1993]; Meier 2001 [1980], 108–81; Snodgrass 1980. On the rise of the occidental city in general, see Weber 2005, 923–1033.
 38. Hansen 1993; Raaflaub 1997; Raaflaub 1999; Raaflaub 2005.
 39. Bondi 1995a, 349; Brizzi 1995, 304–6; Sommer 2000, 249–53; contra Ameling 1993, 169–76, who emphasizes the importance of the military, at least in Carthage.
 40. Liverani 1988, 546–52. Aubet 2007, in general.
 41. Ezekiel 27:4–25.
 42. Watanabe, Reade, and Parpola 1988, 5.
 43. Saggs 1955, no. 2715.
 44. Pritchard 1978, 113.
 45. See, among many possible others, Miles 2004.
 46. Huss 1994 [1990], 333–4.
 47. Polyb. 6.43.1.
 48. Polyb. 10.16.1; 17. 6.
 49. Bondi 1995a, 348–9; Gschnitzer 1993, 192.
 50. Polyb. 3.23.
 51. Arist. *Pol.* 2.11.
 52. Balensi and Herrera 1985; Briend 1980; Prausnitz 1962. On burials in general, see Teixidor, Gras, and Rouillard 1989, 215.
 53. Jacobsen 1943; Liverani 1976, 284–5; Postgate 1992, 81–2.
 54. Polyb. 16.45.1.
 55. Arrian. *Anab.* 2.15.6: *koinon*; Curt. Ruf. 4.3.21: *contio*.
 56. Josephus *Ap.* 1.157.
 57. Huss 1994 [1990], 334.
 58. Donner and Röllig 1962, no. 14.
 59. *IG II²* 141.

60. Gschnirzer 1993, 196–7.
61. Dollinger 1998 [1964], 17–24; Friedland 1991, 31–71; Schildhauer, Fritz, and Stark 1982 [1974], 28–74.
62. Botto 1995; Bunnens 1979; Niemeyer 1982; Niemeyer 2002; Niemeyer 2003b; Niemeyer 1995; Sommer 2005a, 113–43.
63. On Syro-Phoenicizing or Orientalizing motifs, see Riva, Chapter Four. See also Gubel 2006; Aubet 2006; van Dommelen 2006b.
64. As gifts, see Boardman 1999 [1964], 272; imported, see Bonnet 1995, 656–7; Niemeyer 2004; produced locally, see Coldstream 1982; and other ways, see Lemos 2005, 54.
65. Boardman 1999, 276.
66. Cerchiali et al. 2004, 40–1; Hall 2007b, 99; Teixidor et al. 1989, 144–5.
67. Teixidor et al. 1989, 145–7; Amadasi Guzzo 1987, 23.
68. Ridgway 1992, 111–18. This is not to suggest that generally people at Pithekoussai buried in diverse manners or with non-Greek objects must have been of different, non-Greek, ethnicities; rather, the suggestion is specific to this individual example.
69. Lehmann 2005, 84–6; Lemos 2005, 57.
70. Niemeyer 1990, 52–4.
71. For recent discussion of these case studies, with bibliography, see, e.g. Aubet 2001 and Sagona 2004 (Toscanos); Hodos 2006 (Al Mina and Pithekoussai).
72. Hall 2003a, 30; see also Berg and Mair 1999; Gehrke 2004; Waldenfels 1999.
73. Antonaccio 2001; Hall 2002, 90–124; Hall 2007b, 257; and see Antonaccio, Chapter Two.
74. Malkin 1998, 207–9.
75. E.g. Stein 2002. For the Phoenicians, specifically, see Aubet 2001, 350–1.
76. Sommer 2007.
77. E.g. ‘Romanization’: see Hingley, Chapter Three.
78. Kristiansen 1998; Sommer 2004; Woolf 1990.
79. Niemeyer 2003a, 202–3; Niemeyer 2007, 14; see also Markoe 2000, 150.
80. Markoe 2000, 150–2.
81. Harden 1971 [1962], 171.
82. Markoe 2000, 150.
83. Markoe 1985.
84. Markoe 1985, 60–4.
85. See, for comparison, Riva, Chapter Four.
86. Niemeyer 2003a, 205.
87. Sommer 2002, 218–20.
88. *Hom. Il.* 18. 509–15.
89. *Hom. Il.* 18. 579–84.
90. *Hom. Il.* 18. 603–7.
91. Revermann 1998, 31–2.
92. Horden and Purcell 2000, esp. 522–3.