Introduction

> The law respecting sufficiency of evidence ought to be the same for ancient times as for modern . . . [yet] our stock of information respecting the ancient world still remains lamentably inadequate to the demands of an enlightened curiosity. We possess only what has drifted ashore from the wreck of a stranded vessel. . . The question of credibility is perpetually obtruding itself . . . [with the result that] expressions of qualified and hesitating affirmation are repeated until the reader is sickened. Grote (1888: v–vi)

For the past decade I have worked at an American private liberal arts college whose small size obliges faculty to teach outside their specialties. Until recently, due partly to the press of administrative duties, I taught my specialty (ancient Greek history) only once every two years, yet as the resident economic historian I teach the "History of Capitalism" to M.B.A. candidates every semester, either in the evenings or on the weekends. Then in 1993, when no replacement could be found immediately for a departed social theory instructor, I volunteered to fill in and have been teaching it annually ever since.

One possible effect of teaching such different subjects outside one's own specialty is that in each one manages to learn just enough to be dangerous, yet in fact their effect on my view of the present subject has been chastening in two important respects.

First, teaching the History of Capitalism course reminds me constantly of how *very little* evidence there is for the place of maritime traders in the ancient world.[1] Imagine the mass of documents Alfred Chandler, the founder of the new subject of business (as distinct from economic) history, ploughed through to write his path-breaking books on the rise

[1] Cartledge (1998: 7–8) repeats this point, made as well by Grote in the opening quotation of this Introduction.

of the modern corporation and its managers.[2] Nor do we lack for a trove of evidence on merchants from the pre-modern era. Consider the large body of evidence unearthed by S. D. Goitein on the Cairo Geniza community of Jewish maritime traders in the tenth through the thirteenth centuries A.D., from which emerged his masterful six-volume account, followed by another devoted to a translation of the merchants' correspondence.[3]

Compare that with what we know of maritime traders in ancient Greece. The surviving evidence is not only meager but also markedly unrepresentative.[4] Most of our information comes from a series of forensic speeches delivered in fourth-century Athens, itself so singular among classical Greek poleis. Beginning there and working backwards, one must be careful not to generalize from Athens to elsewhere. Already by the fifth century the evidence runs out, leaving the historian at sea with his traders. I hope the failure to say anything new or bold about the archaic period will be attributed to a reluctance to generalize unduly from the few flawed bits of evidence rather than from a lack of imagination.

Teaching modern social theory has been chastening in another respect. Above all it has revealed the perils of misusing "ideal type" concepts. Ideal type constructs such as "administered trade" or "consumer city" play a vital role as components of new conceptual "maps" that, imposed on old terrain, transform its topography.[5] But when employed in questions aimed at eliciting empirically testable responses, ideal type concepts distort by implying uniformities or differences that do not exist. Was the "administered trade" of the mercantilist-minded early modern French state anything like the trade "administered" by classical Athens as described in Chapter 5 below?

[2] His principal books are *Strategy and Structure: Chapters in the History of the Industrial Enterprise* (1962); *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business* (1977), which received a Pulitzer Prize; *Scale and Scope: The Dynamics of Industrial Capitalism* (1990). Chandler's work represents a crucial intellectual benchmark ancient economic historians should be more familiar with, for reasons given in the Conclusion. For a survey of his career and a complete bibliography of his publications to 1987, see McGraw (1988: 1–21 and 505–17).

[3] Goitein (1968–93). The first two volumes (on *Economic Foundations* and *Community*) are most relevant for the study of these merchants' activity and place in society. See also Goitein (1973).

[4] For example I can locate no mention of *any* Rhodian *emporos* or *nauklēros*, unnamed or named, for the classical period. On Rhodes as a center of trading activity in the pre-hellenistic fourth century, see further Ch. 3 and the references in nn.27–8 of Ch. 3.

[5] Max Weber employed ideal type concepts to rewrite the conceptual map of Greco-Roman socio-economic life, although most ancient historians took little notice for decades. It in no way slights Moses Finley's achievement to say that he spent much of his career transforming into full-scale studies Weber's gnomic utterances in (1976: 727–814 = 1212–1372 in the Roth-Wittich two-volume translation [Berkeley 1978]).

Clearly not. *Must* ancient Rome be either a "consumer" or a "producer" city?[6]

I can recall a time when practitioners of ancient Greco-Roman history never realized that their historical "cameras" even *contained* a "lens," so that "the evidence spoke for itself." Now, as if to atone for such an antediluvian point of view, some ancient Greek specialists devote much effort to lens-polishing rather than to looking *through* the lens at the historical reality beyond.[7] To do the latter well we obviously cannot fall back on the "common sense" invoked by vulgar empiricists of an earlier era; in order to achieve empirical "bite," our principal questions[8] must employ adequate concepts at a level of generality somewhat lower than that of the ideal type variety, concepts that do justice to the complexities of whatever historical issue we study.

The principal question of this study: What was the place, in the states they came from but mainly in the poleis they traded with, of those who engaged in inter-regional exchanges of goods with the poleis of classical and archaic Greece? Chapters 1–6 are devoted to the classical period; Chapter 7, to the archaic. Chapters 1 and 2 ask who maritime traders were, what they carried, and how important was long-range commerce in comparison with other modes of exchange. Chapters 3–6, the heart of the book, ask about traders' juridical place (citizens or non-citizens in the poleis with which they traded); their level of wealth relative to others; how they were officially dealt with in the poleis with which they traded; and, finally, their "social status" and its role in unofficial, individual Athenian evaluations. Chapter 7 inquires into the proportions of various modes of archaic exchange and the personnel involved. The Conclusion is an over-brief attempt to ask why the merchant's place in classical Greece differs so much from the place of his various counterparts in contemporary America.

This is not a novel, so its end can be revealed at the outset. I argue that those trading at classical Athens were mainly poor and foreign (hence politically inert), and that Greek poleis resorted to persistent yet limited measures, well short of war and lesser varieties of economic imperialism, to attract them; I argue, finally, that, in the minds of individual Athenians

[6] See, e.g., Parkins (1997); Whittaker (1990: 110–18). See also Whittaker (1995), Shipton (1997: 397–400), and the later references in n.7.

[7] E.g., von Reden (1995a). She multiplies distinctions beyond my comprehension. On the other hand my understanding of the relevant theoretical issues was enhanced by briefer expositions directly related to the topic of this book. I forego excellent older examples and recommend only the best of the recent lot, in order of appearance: Hopkins (1983), Morris (1994), Meikle (1995), Cartledge (1998), Davies (1998), and Morris (1999).

[8] On the neglected role of questions in intellectual inquiry of all sorts, see Collingwood (1939: 29–43).

at least, considerations of traders' indispensability to their city's welfare displaced what otherwise would have been low estimations of their social status.

On the subject of traders and trade in the archaic period, I merely refine what I wrote earlier[9] and update the bibliography. The brief Conclusion expands to the broadest possible perspective, charting the most crucial stages in the remarkable transformation in the place of merchants from ancient Greece to the present.

Given the principal question asked, my answer is "substantivist" to the core.[10] But I feel no obligation to defend that perspective with the theoretical luxuriance of a Sitta von Reden[11] or the fervor of a Paul Millett or Wesley Thompson.[12] The arguments herein in fact stand to be judged in light of important empirical studies offered by those – such as Edward Cohen and Thomas Figueira – whose non-substantivist perspective generated different questions on related topics.[13]

The rest of this Introduction is devoted to points of procedure and organization. *All* Greek terms and passages in this volume are translated into English, but in reproducing the original Greek I have resorted to two scripts – either the Greek transliterated into English or the ancient Greek, depending on the nature of the passage. When Greekless readers encounter transliterated Greek that is not preceded or followed by a translation, they should consult the sections at the front of this book entitled "Abbreviations" and "References to Greek Terms." If a Greek passage includes variations on the Greek terms defined in the aforementioned section or in the text, I use transliterated Greek there as well, on the principle that, in the same way children learn new words, the Greekless reader profits from recognizing the letters of a word he or she imperfectly comprehends. For all other Greek terms I use ancient Greek script, accompanied by an English translation. I apologize to purists for such an awkward compromise but am committed to accommodating the increasing number of Greekless students who opt for

[9] Reed (1984).

[10] Cartledge (1998: 6) on the substantivist-formalist distinction: "For the formalists, the ancient economy was a functionally segregated and independently instituted sphere of activity with its own profit-maximizing, want-satisfying logic and rationality, less 'developed' no doubt than any modern economy but nevertheless recognizably similar in kind. Substantivists, on the other hand, hold that the ancient economy was not merely less developed but socially embedded and politically overdetermined and so – by the standards of neoclassical economics – conspicuously conventional, irrational and status-ridden." See also Morris (1994: 352–5 and 1999: xii–xiii); Davies (1998: 233 and 236 n.20); and Cartledge (1998: 6–7).

[11] See n.7 above.

[12] Millett (esp. 15–18, 163–6, 312 ["La lutte continue."]); Thompson (1978 and 1982).

[13] Cohen (1992), as well as Cohen (1993); Figueira (1998).

upper-level courses in ancient Greek history, especially given the increased interest in socio-economic topics.

I treat 323 B.C. as the terminal date neither because of political changes nor because of any subsequent transformation in the place of traders, but rather because the nature of our evidence changes drastically. Chapter 7 on the archaic period is of necessity speculative, but there and elsewhere I have not felt obliged to mention all the speculations of others. A mainly destructive treatment, intent on cataloguing the follies that have plagued studies of traders and trade over the past century, would have been more than twice as long as this work.

Finally, the reader should be alerted to five other features. First, the Catalogue (Appendix 4) is a prosopographical warehouse of particulars about traders in the classical period; it excludes groups of *emporoi* about whom little or nothing is known individually. Second, neither the Catalogue nor Appendix 2 on traders' states of origin pretends to be representative. Third, anxious to avoid the charge of "flawed cliometrics,"[14] I never offer various tabulations from the Catalogue as conclusive; they always are provided in tandem with other considerations. Fourth, slave, fleet, and army traders as well as trade are discussed at 20–5 below and included in Appendix 1; otherwise they are excluded from Chapters 1–6 and the Catalogue. Fifth, Chapter 7 discusses the archaic references to all the above categories – individuals about whom something is known, groups of traders, and slave/fleet/army traders.

[14] So named by Cohen (1992: 170–83); see also Cohen (1990b).

CHAPTER 1

Coming to terms

INTRODUCTION

This chapter addresses several questions. In the Greek world of the classical period what sorts of people engaged in inter-regional trade? Was there a clear division of labor, whereby some earned most of their living from long-distance trade and still others engaged in it as a sideline activity?

I argue that in the classical period there was a clear division of labor. One group, composed of those called *emporoi* and *nauklēroi*, derived most of their livelihood from inter-regional trade. (These two words are commonly and somewhat misleadingly rendered in English as "traders" and "shipowners"; in his 1935 article[1] Finley [333–6] rightly pointed out that *nauklēroi* may have regularly engaged in *emporia* themselves.) The second group consists of various sorts of people who engaged in *emporia* from time to time but who did not rely on it for most of their livelihood.

That in brief is the general picture. Can we be more specific? Yes and no. On the one hand we can mention other traits that usually seem to characterize those called *emporoi* or *nauklēroi*. On the other, as Finley (1935: 320–2, 333–6) showed, the ways in which these words were actually used prevent us from claiming that, because someone is called an *emporos*, then by definition he must have made a career of wholesale trade in goods, carried by him on someone else's ship, that were owned but not produced by him. Again and again in the ancient sources appear people called *emporoi* who fail to meet one or another of these criteria. But even if we abandon any pretense to lexicographical exactitude, it nonetheless remains important to ask what those called *emporoi* normally had in common, what those called *nauklēroi* normally had in common, and what *emporoi and nauklēroi* normally had in common. This chapter takes up where Finley left off,

[1] This article, published by Moses Finley at age twenty-three, was only his second on the ancient Greco-Roman world. There followed a hiatus of almost two decades before he next published on an ancient topic. See further Shaw and Saller in Finley (1981: ix–xxvi and 312).

adding or clarifying a number of crucial distinctions he either omitted or failed to discuss adequately. The first section deals with *emporoi*; the second, with *nauklēroi*; and the third with yet others who engaged in *emporia*.

EMPOROI

The traits that *emporoi* almost without exception appear to share I term "primary characteristics." "Secondary characteristics" apply to *emporoi* in the majority of cases. Primary and secondary characteristics differ only in the number of exceptions tolerated. There can be very few exceptions to a primary characteristic; there can be more to a secondary characteristic, but one still must be able to say that "usually" or "normally" the secondary characteristic applies. Beyond both primary and secondary characteristics are of course yet other features shared by many *emporoi*, but these need no special designation.

I argue that *emporoi* shared two primary characteristics. If we exclude army and slave traders, then virtually without exception those called *emporoi*:

1 ***Carried on interstate trade.*** Hasebroek (1933: 1–3) correctly insisted that this feature is what basically distinguished *emporoi* from *kapēloi* (retail sellers). Finley (1935: 333 and 328 n.37) claims one exception to this rule, "one instance where the *emporoi* were also shopkeepers in the Agora," but this exception is at best a very tenuous inference from Thuc. 3.74.2, in which a fire set to houses around the *agora* of Corcyra destroyed many goods belonging to *emporoi*.[2]

2 ***Relied for much (or probably most) of their livelihood on interstate trade.*** This primary characteristic, to which I find no recorded exception, is a neglected but extremely important one, for it not only serves to distinguish *emporoi* from all sorts of other people engaging in *emporia*,on whom see 13–14 below; it also points to the only sense in which *emporoi* had a "profession" – a word that, at least when applied to *emporoi*, has created a certain amount of confusion.[3] The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines "profession" in its most general sense as "any calling or occupation by which one habitually earns his living." But even in this broadest sense "profession" fails to encompass what *emporoi* did for a living. Sailing

[2] Cf. McKechnie (1989: 194 n.24).

[3] I do not claim that reflections on language can either "solve"or "dissolve" the question of whether there was a "merchant class" in ancient Greece. That is a sociological question, the answer to which depends on one's notion of "class." But the various notions cannot even be properly discussed in their ancient Greek context until certain prior clarifications are made.

conditions[4] forced most *emporoi* to limit their trade by sea to half a year or less. Since most *emporoi* were not wealthy,[5] most of them probably found it necessary to continue working in the off season as well. Our ignorance of the sort of work *emporoi* did outside the sailing season in no way alters the ironic result – that for half the year or more most *emporoi* probably did not earn their living by the activities that prompt us to call them *emporoi*. Still, they clearly must have earned a very important part of their livelihood by sea trade, else they would have chosen a less risky[6] line of work and remained ashore year-round.

There is no firm way to distinguish the following secondary characteristics from the primary ones just mentioned. In the face of source limitations one is obliged to speculate, relying more on general considerations than on specific evidence. I argue that (again, with the exception of army and slave traders) those called *emporoi usually* or *normally*:

1 ***Traveled by sea.*** The geography of the Greek world guaranteed that long-distance trade would normally be by sea.[7] At the same time Xenophon's claim that "Athens receives much merchandise by way of land"[8] disqualifies trading by sea as a primary characteristic of *emporoi*, although one wonders with Gauthier[9] just how important was the land trade to and

[4] On the dates of the sailing season see Casson (1971: 270–3 and nn.1–5). *Emporoi* could continue sailing between Rhodes and Egypt year-round ([D.] 56.30), but the northern grain and timber routes used by most of the *emporoi* trading with Athens, for instance, were closed for more than half the year.

[5] As I argue in Ch. 4.

[6] For references to the threat of seas, wars, and pirates to *emporoi* and *nauklēroi* in the classical period, see esp. the following: Plut. *Cim*. 8.3–4; Thuc. 2.67.4; X. *Hell*. 5.1.21; Andok. 1.137–8; [Lys.] 19.50; 22.14; Isok: 18.61; Ephoros *FGrH* 70 F 27; D. 8.25; [D.] 12.5; D. 19.286; [D.] 34.8–10; D. 35.31–3; 37.54; [D.] 52.4–5. Middle and New Comedies also stress the dangers of sea trading: Alexis *CAF* F 76 = *PCG* F 76; Diphilos *CAF* F 43 = *PCG* F 42.10–14; Men. *Pk*. 808–10 (OCT); fr. 59 (OCT). The titles of three plays (one of them from Old Comedy) include the word *nauagos* ("shipwreck"): Ar. *CAF* F 266 = *PCG* F 277 (*Dionysos Nauagos*); Ephippos *CAF* F 14 = *PCG* F 14 (*Nauagos*); Paramonos *CAF* (*Nauagos Choregon*) = *PCG* (*Nauagos*). On the threat of piracy, see further n.41 of Ch. 5.

[7] Finley (1935: 328 n.37) cites X. *Eq. mag*. 4.7 to show that, although *emporoi* carried on interstate trade, it was "by no means necessarily by sea." Since *Eq. mag*. says only that all poleis welcome those who import things, it is hardly worth citing in this connection. To Finley's list (1935: 328 n.36) of sources confirming that *emporoi* normally engaged in travel by sea should be added Philo Judaeus' description (*De opificio mundi* 147) of the *emporos* (among others) as *enudros* (a "water creature"). Lib. 18.82–3 in particular confirms the superiority of water over land transport for bulky articles like grain. See more generally Burford (1960).

[8] X. *Vect*. 1.7: καὶ κατὰ γῆν δέ πολλὰ δέχεται ἐμπορία. Following Gauthier (1976: 51) and others, I prefer the neuter plural *emporia* to the dative singular. Finley (1935: 332) wrongly criticizes Hasebroek and Knorringa for failing to pay adequate attention to trade on land by *emporoi*. Hasebroek (1928: 2–3) not only acknowledges such activity; he also puts it in its proper perspective. And no scholar has more to say than does Knorringa (1926: 22, 42–3, 55, 63), albeit in his unsystematic way, on land trade by *emporoi* as the exception to sea trade.

[9] Gauthier (1976: 51). On Thuc. 7.28.1, which mentions overland trade between Euboia and Attica by the Oropos–Dekeleia route, see Westlake (1948).

from Athens. Finley (1935: 328 n.37) lists other references to land trade and traders but omits the following:

a Pl. *Plt*. 289e: someone characterizes *emporoi* (among others) as "traveling from city to city both by sea and by land."

b Diod. Sic. 11.56.3: Themistokles in 471/0 B.C. meets two Lynkestians (nos. 45 and 46 in the Catalogue) who are said to be "engaged in trade and . . . therefore familiar with the roads."

2 ***Traveled in someone else's ship.*** This applies to virtually all of those who share the secondary characteristic of travelling by sea.[10] Therein surely lies the basis for the phrase found throughout both the literary and inscriptional evidence – *hoi emporoi kai hoi nauklēroi*. And, if a shipowner engages in *emporia*, our sources distinguish between his *nauklēria* (shipowning) and *emporia* (trading).[11]

Why? It cannot be that *nauklēroi* do not do what *emporoi* do, which amounts to depending on interstate trade for much of one's livelihood. For, as has been mentioned earlier and will be explored at 12–13, that description applies to many shipowners as well. It must be that *emporoi* do not do what *nauklēroi* distinctively do; and that, as 12–13 shows, can only be shipowning.[12]

3 ***Owned the goods they traded in.*** Only two recorded cases possibly qualify as exceptions. One is that of Timosthenes (no. 24), who may be the agent of Phormion II (no. 23).[13] The other is that glaring exception to so many rules, the slave agent Lampis II (no. 13). His owner, Dion, may also have owned the goods Lampis II carried and traded in (on which see item 2 of no. 13). Whether many seagoing agents carried the goods of others depends on the level of business organization in classical Greece. At 36–40 below I argue that the rudimentary level of business organization precluded enterprises run by wealthy entrepreneurs who dispatched agents to do their trading.

4 ***Did not produce the goods they traded in.*** No doubt throughout the classical period many farmers and craftsmen continued to follow an older

[10] Finley (1935: 333–4 and 329 n.43) claims that "some *emporoi* unquestionably did own vessels," but both the cases he cites are questionable: τὰ πλοῖα τὰ αὑτῶν in D. 8.25 and τὰ πλοῖα τὰ αὑτῶν τὰς τῶν ἄλλων ἐμπόρων ναῦς in Isok. 17.57 might simply be telescoped versions of "the ships on which they sailed and carried their goods . . ."

[11] For example Andok. 1.137 and *IG* i^3 133 (after 434/3).

[12] Why, then, one might ask, if the activities of a *nauklēros* so often include *emporia* and not vice versa, did the Athenians in an honorary decree (*IG* ii^2 360) choose *emporos* (the word with fewer connotations) to describe Herakleides of Salamis in Cyprus (no. 60), who is almost certainly a *nauklēros*? (See further item 2 of no. 60.) At 51–3 below I argue that this very revealing abnormality can be explained only by its appearance in an *official* setting, where it further confirms what we already knew about attitudes of the Athenian polis towards foreign *emporoi* and *nauklēroi*.

[13] On Timosthenes see further item 3 of no. 23, and no. 24 *in toto*.

pattern of trade, hawking their goods along the coast in small vessels, as Hyperbolos,[14] the Athenian abused as a lampmaker who entered politics, may have done. Were these called *emporoi*? They never are in the surviving evidence,[15] and there is a good reason why. Such people were viewed by contemporaries as deriving most of their income from farming or from lampmaking and so were called[16] "farmers" (γεωργοί) or "lampdealers" (λυχνοπώλαι) despite taking to sea to sell their goods. This is not to say that an *emporos* could not have produced things in the off-season that he peddled on the first leg of his sea travels. But my guess is that such a person was termed an *emporos* if he derived most of his livelihood from trade in goods he did *not* produce, such as timber or grain from the northern Aegean or Black Sea areas.

I claim further that two other characteristics of *emporoi* are not primary or secondary characteristics, since too many exceptions exist to the rule that *emporoi*:

1 ***Remained emporoi year-in, year-out.*** The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines "profession" in part as something one "habitually" does for a living. Our evidence seldom reveals whether an *emporos* or a *nauklēros* continues to go to sea year after year; we usually see the *emporoi* and *nauklēroi* in the Catalogue at only one point in their lives, but the following exceptions are instructive:
   a An unnamed retired *emporos* (no. 8) says he engaged in foreign trade "for a long time." ([D.] 33.4).
   b Nikoboulos (no. 22) mentions his career in what may be sea-trading (D. 37.54), and other passages (D. 37.6, 10, 15, 25) suggest that he has not yet retired. On him see further Millett (1991: 193–6).
   c Pyron of Pherai (no. 42) is described by Isokrates (17.20) as one who "was accustomed to sail to Pontos." Nothing more is known of Pyron, who possibly qualifies as a long-term *emporos* on the strength of this passage alone.

[14] Aristophanes *(Eq*. 1315) alludes to Hyperbolos' sailing in a σκάφη to hawk the lamps he made. We will find no solid information in a passage compounding comic sarcasm with the ambiguity of σκάφη (on which see Ehrenberg [1974: 125]). Even in its seaworthy sense σκάφη ("skiff") refers to a vessel too small for coastal trade (Casson 1971: 329–31 and 335–8). For further references in the plays and scholia to Hyperbolos' lampmaking, see *PA* 13910; on Hyperbolos' background and career see further Davies (1971) no. 13910 and Connor (1971: 152–5).

[15] Neither of the exceptions listed by Finley in (1935) 336 n.67 refers to *emporoi* who produced the goods they traded in: Heraclides 60 (fr. 611 Rose) refers to a γεώργος ("farmer") who sells his own products, while Pl. *Grg*. 517d in fact distinguishes the suppliers (*emporos* and *kapelos*) from the maker (*demiourgos*) of goods.

[16] Normally in the classical period producers who sold their own goods are identified by their craft or by the goods themselves and not by the blanket term, *autopoles*. Finley (1935: 336) rightly notes the rarity of that word, in spite of Heichelheim's claim to the contrary (Heichelheim 1964: II 54). See also Finley (1935: 336 n.68).