MEDITERRANEAN INTRODUCTIONS

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The Mediterranean World

Over the past 12,000–15,000 years, the coasts and islands around and within the Mediterranean Sea have spawned some of prehistory's most diverse human societies and material cultures, an array of cultural developments and material practices that continues to reverberate today. Over most of that time, and in particular after the emergence of deep-hulled sailing ships sometime during the third millennium BC (Broodbank 2009: 696–97), the Mediterranean served as an important transport route, along which moved people, ideas, ideologies, technologies, and all sorts of raw materials and finished goods. Those who settled around or on the Mediterranean's coasts and islands benefitted from the region's rich and diverse natural resources: the olive and vine (plus lentils, figs, pomegranates), a range of secondary products (milk, cheese, wool), and the harvests of the sea (fish, shellfish, turtles, salt).

In the eyes of *Annales* historian Fernand Braudel (1972), the Mediterranean world comprised a series of compact mountainous peninsulas with fertile plains on their fringes, and a fragmented complex of seas – the Aegean, Ionian, Adriatic, Tyrrhenian and Alboran. Coastal plains are uncommon, and characteristically narrow, with mountains rising starkly from the sea (Figure 0.1). The Mediterranean's semi-arid climate, marked by summer drought, winter rains and mild temperatures, supports a comparable plant regime: drought-resistant flora such as summer-only evergreens, scrub or dry heath. It is assumed that light woodlands were once common in the Mediterranean, but when they were cleared for agriculture, the dense evergreen shrub, the *maquis* (*macchia*) – and *garrigue*, a thinner shrub – usually took over and remain ubiquitous in many parts of the Mediterranean, particularly on the islands of Corsica and Sardinia. Although limestone dominates the geology of the Mediterranean, there are also extensive outcrops of igneous rock on Cyprus (the source of copper ores) and in the central Mediterranean on Sicily, Sardinia and peninsular Italy. Mediterranean soils tend to be very thin and quite acidic, and usually are lacking in groundwater. Yet the archetypal Mediterranean landscape consists of *terra rossa* (deep red) soils, light-coloured limestone hills and the deep blue sea (Wainwright 2009).

Whilst most discussions of the Mediterranean tend to focus on islands or coastlines, ports, merchants and mariners, and other associations with the sea, it is crucial not to overlook the mountains, the people who dwell in them, make their living in them and identify with them as opposed to the sea, or the outside world overall (McNeill 1992). The entire Mediterranean basin, coasts as well as islands, can be seen as a mountainous complex with fragmented relief, where rugged fold mountains interface with older, rough-hewn tablelands (King *et al.* 1997: 8). Both Crete and Corsica are more mountainous than not, full of gorges, streams and caves, as well as pockets of flat or terraced land where crops (trees, vines) could grow. Until very recently, most Cretans or Corsicans were hunters, shepherds or farmers, not fishermen. On Sardinia and Cyprus, the mountains and their resources (wood, metals, charcoal, wild animals) have also played major roles in island life and subsistence. Sardinians, in fact, are notoriously seen as bandits and shepherds rather than sailors and pirates; often they have been stigmatised as living 'with their backs to the sea' (van Dommelen 1998: 13). Even on Sicily, with its broad agricultural plains, Etna and the mountains surrounding it seem to have served as a cultural divide between west and east, deeper than any separation between Sicily as a whole and the Calabrian mainland (Leighton 1999: 2–4, 13).

Mountain and sea, forest and orchard, town/village and country – all form the backdrop to long-term human settlement in the Mediterranean basin, and are part of what has been termed 'the Mediterranean *as experience*' (King *et al.* 1997: 5). At least some scholars – archaeologists, historians, geographers, ethnographers – have viewed the Mediterranean more in terms of its unity than its diversity, and still do so to varying degrees (e.g. Pitt-Rivers 1963; Peristiany 1966; Horden and Purcell 2000; Morris 2003; Bromberger 2008). It is equally clear, however, that the Mediterranean also has its share of social, economic and ideological divisions, boundaries and contradictions, not least between the European north and the African south (corresponding roughly to the modern divide between

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FIGURE 0.1. Sea and mountains: view of the Iglesiente mountains meeting the Mediterranean Sea in southwest Sardinia (Masua, Iglesias) (Peter van Dommelen).

Christianity and Islam). Although we might justifiably retrodict some of these divisions back into prehistory, in each case we could also highlight the intermediary role of the Mediterranean as both a frontier and a bridge, an area where human mobility and cultural encounters led to 'interlaced' social, cultural and material practices that both created and defined Mediterranean (pre)histories. Historians who see cultural integrity and at least a 'border-line' identity within the Mediterranean also acknowledge that this results from the hybridisation of people, cultures and ideas (e.g. Peristianis 2000: 185–88; Bromberger 2008; Chambers 2008).

Mediterranean Archaeologies

A social archaeology of the Mediterranean focuses on people and their daily practices; on households, monumental architecture, communities and human settlements in the wider landscape; on the interconnecting sea and seascapes. People used these landscapes and seascapes to sustain themselves physically and mentally: villages, fields,

forests, rivers, hills, harbours and the sea all enabled them to produce food, to exchange goods, to express symbolism and design, to make social statements, to commemorate events – i.e. to live their lives and bury their dead. As social archaeologists, we seek to understand the meanings, memories and legacies of all these people, practices, spaces, places and things.

For many archaeologists and historians who work in the Mediterranean, the defining moment in its history is marked by developments associated with the Classical world during the latter half of the first millennium BC. Yet the cultural 'integration' achieved in the first instance by Phoenicians and Greeks, and then its extension and politico-economic expansion under the Romans, was something entirely new to the Mediterranean world. Far more typical of the Mediterranean region over its *longue durée* was the autonomy and distinctive material and social practices seen in different regions, only a few of which interacted in any other way than spontaneously. In our view, these earlier periods – prehistoric and protohistoric – offer a dramatic counterpoint to any perceived cohesiveness

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during the Classical era; indeed, they are more consistent with the socio-economic, political and cultural plurality of the Mediterranean world today, even if the experience of modernity and prehistory differ in most other respects. Mediterranean prehistory – and the rich body of data that constitute it – thus warrants study on its own terms, increasingly so as the sites and objects that it comprises are now seen by many as a vanishing resource (Cherry 2003: 156–58; Stanley Price 2003).

Not long ago, Renfrew (2003: 315–18) singled out two major shortcomings of Mediterranean archaeology as practiced in the last quarter of the twentieth century: (1) the chronological and conceptual divide that separates the study of prehistoric Mediterranean societies from research into historical or Classical societies; and (2) the lack of comparative work and insights into Mediterranean societies and cultures, especially in light of the dramatic increase in published archaeological sites and materials. Renfrew's concerns were directed at the Aegean region, but in our view these issues are pervasive throughout Mediterranean archaeology. Indeed, it seems clear that the 'segmentation and hyper-specialisation' of Mediterranean archaeological research (Cherry 2004: 236) have discouraged comparative studies of all the material, cultural and socio-economic features and trends that interconnect or overlap in this region. Yet the deep time perspective hailed by archaeologists as their unique and distinctive window onto the past can only be enhanced by a comparative approach, and elsewhere we have already taken some preliminary but incisive steps in that direction (i.e. the various studies through time and across Mediterranean space in van Dommelen and Knapp 2010; see now also Broodbank 2013). In the present volume, we continue on this path, and aim (1) to break down further the prehistoric–historical divide, (2) to broaden comparative perspectives by engaging scholars who work throughout the Bronze–Iron Age Mediterranean, and (3) to present new syntheses of a wide range of Mediterranean archaeological sites, materials and associated ideas heretofore unpublished in anything like their present form.

Prehistory and Protohistory in the Bronze–Iron Age Mediterranean

Over the past two decades, new archaeological evidence and new ways of thinking about the past have transformed our understanding of the prehistory and earliest history of the Mediterranean world. As already emphasised, the archaeology of this region has placed much emphasis on the grand civilizations of the eastern or central Mediterranean (Greece and Rome), often ignoring or at best overshadowing the cultures to the west, making 'Mediterranean archaeology' virtually synonymous with 'Classical archaeology'. Recent fieldwork and research, however, have brought previously peripheral regions and cultures – such as the western Mediterranean islands and littoral, and the Phoenicians – into sharp relief, enabling a more balanced view of the Mediterranean region as a whole.

Paradoxically, the vast amount of new information available has not yielded a revitalised pan-regional perspective, but rather made Mediterranean archaeology a subject far too vast for any single author to command (but cf. Broodbank 2013). Acknowledging the complexities involved in dealing with Mediterranean connectivities overall (the 'Mediterraneanization' of Morris 2003), we feel that the debate over whether one can actually do 'Mediterranean studies' (Herzfeld 2005; Horden and Purcell 2006: 726–29) has become rather stale, at least when it comes to Mediterranean *prehistory*. To be sure, the trend has been towards localised studies meant to exemplify a larger Mediterranean context (e.g. Given and Knapp 2003; Alcock and Cherry 2004; Barker *et al.* 2007; van Dommelen and Gómez Bellard 2008). These highly focused studies are rich in detail, provide invaluable sources of basic data, and are essential for understanding micro-scale variations across the region. Otherwise, single-subject volumes have focused on the mechanisms behind various phenomena of social change in specific parts of the region (e.g. Tronchetti 1988; Webster 1996; Chapman 2003; Dickinson 2006; Gracia Alonso 2008; Knapp 2008, 2013; Sagona and Zimansky 2009; Rodríguez Díaz 2009).

Three syntheses of the region during prehistory have been attempted in recent years. The first, by Patton (1996), adopts theoretical positions stretched too tightly to cover the unwieldy and often mishandled data. The second, edited by Blake and Knapp (2005), gives a full introduction to the archaeology of Mediterranean prehistory; it covers a wide range of data, method and theory up to 2003–2004, and confronts head-on the notion of a 'Mediterranean prehistory'. The third, by Broodbank (2013), achieves what no other volume has, covering some five million years of Mediterranean pre- and protohistory, from the formation of the sea to the dawn of the Classical world; its coverage is Mediterranean-wide and it is fully up-to-date in everything it treats. With the exception of Broodbank's study, most others have ignored the Iron Age entirely. The latter is the focus of a recent study by Hodos (2006), one that does span the length of the Mediterranean but does so through just three regional case studies and thus falls back in line with the trend signalled above. One further volume, embracing the breadth and width of the Mediterranean, is focused on historical periods, covering Classical to medieval times (Horden and Purcell 2000). The more recent post-Roman and medieval periods are served by

the magisterial studies of scholars like Goitein (1999) and Abulafia (2011); these, however, are historical rather than archaeological in nature, and the latter actually presents very outmoded views on the prehistory and protohistory of the Mediterranean. Nevertheless, as the volumes by Horden and Purcell (2000), Blake and Knapp (2005) and Broodbank (2013) have made clear, there is much to be gained by confronting 'the differences that resemble' and by considering in which ways the region *is* an entity, rather than just the southern edge of Europe or the northern edge of Africa (see especially Broodbank 2013; Purcell and Horden n.d.).

Given this situation, we felt that a carefully theorised, tightly edited and thematically organised work on the Bronze and Iron Ages of the Mediterranean world would enable archaeologists, anthropologists and ancient historians to transcend the borders that separate Europe and Africa or the Middle East, and help to break down the political divisions that fracture this region into nation-states. Beyond the embedded commonalities seen in climate or geography, or even social interactions, the present volume provides new insights into the social identities of Mediterranean peoples, and helps to disentangle what connects and distinguishes them, particularly with respect to their material, mental and social histories.

In order to produce a volume that is innovative in terms of its themes, orientations and contributors, we took a bold new step in synthesising the multicultural, multivocal Mediterranean world of the Bronze and Iron Ages. Through initial discussions of such a volume with several possible contributors, we learned that virtually no one was interested in producing yet another summary of their specialist field or area of research for an encyclopaedic work or 'handbook' on the Mediterranean. Therefore, within the thematic parameters set for the volume, we decided to invite each contributor to select a topic on which *they would like to write*, and to work with them to settle on exactly how such a contribution would best be integrated within the overall work.

Each contributor was specifically selected based on their previous work in the Mediterranean world, from the Gates of Gibraltar to the Levantine coast. They are either well-established scholars known for innovative approaches to their field, or dynamic younger archaeologists whom we believe will breathe new life into their respective scholarly niche. These authors address a range of self-selected topics on Mediterranean archaeology, and present them in a theoretically informed manner. Perennial questions about the region's archaeology – e.g. social complexity, trade and interaction, and subsistence practices – are not explicitly considered but rather folded into our general themes, which aim to move beyond current practice, and to reflect

topical interests in everything from the body and materiality, to social identities, to mobility and hybridisation practices. Authors were not asked to conform to a narrow theoretical stance. They selected their topics based on the volume's themes, and adopted the approach best suited to addressing that topic in close consultation with us, in order to provide overall coherence to the volume.

We do not claim that the present volume offers fully encyclopaedic coverage of all Mediterranean regions in both the Bronze and Iron Ages, simply because not all lands and seas have received similar, let alone equal, intensity of research and resources. One region that has long been and remains understudied is north Africa, with the obvious exception of Egypt, and the general lack of attention to this region before the Roman or even Phoenician and Punic periods is reflected by the absence of a north African chapter in this book. Cyprus, by contrast, has a density of archaeological research, at least in the southern half of the island, that is matched by few areas, which explains why five chapters take the Cypriot archaeological record as their point of departure. By and large, however, we submit that the chapters in this volume reflect not just the outcome of our idiosyncratic selection process but also the preferences and biases of the discipline at large.

One bias that we have particularly worked hard to transcend is that of academic and national traditions. Because archaeological practice and theory in the western Mediterranean in particular are characterised by strong national communities with their own debates, usually conducted in their own language, we have deliberately looked beyond the English-speaking archaeological world and invited a substantial number of colleagues from around the Mediterranean Sea itself. Our guiding principle has consistently been that chapters should draw on regional evidence and discuss the broader themes selected in order to contribute to the overarching aim of this volume, namely to produce an archaeology *of* the Mediterranean. The result, we feel, is a wide-ranging collection of studies that roam the Mediterranean mountains, coastlands and seas from the Atlantic shores beyond the Strait of Gibraltar to the Nile and Euphrates Valleys, and that seek to bring out major connections and distinctions.

In order to foreground the connecting themes and to downplay any expectations of encyclopaedic coverage, we have also refrained from organising the chapters by region or period. Instead, we have set out seven themes that we consider as of major and particular Mediterranean significance. These are:

- *Insularity and Connectivity*, because islands make up a major portion of the Mediterranean and negotiating the seas between them has been a fact of life for many inhabitants across time;

- *Mobility, Migration and Colonisation*, because Mediterranean people have never stopped moving across the seas once they reached the islands and other far distant shores;
- *Hybridisation and Cultural Encounters*, because migration and connectivity have always led to contacts and encounters that did not remain without consequences;
- *Materiality, Memory and Identity*, because people who moved across the seas took with them their own material life world as well as their memories and sense of self;
- *Community and Household*, because these have always been the key units of everyday life through which Mediterranean people experienced contacts with each other and organised their lives;
- *Life and Death*, because it is not just in life but also in death that communities, memories and identities were forged and reconstituted;
- *Ritual and Ideology*, because belief systems and normative concepts provide the necessary guidance to human behaviour for dealing with both life and death.

Even if we have avoided themes like 'society' and 'exchange', which are both inherently relevant and too generic to be useful, the seven themes we have chosen are inevitably broad. The order of these themes and of the chapters within each section has been established to capture the partial overlap between them and to encourage comparison and contrast.

In order to facilitate comparative discussion by contrasting and integrating the material presented in the different chapters, we provide brief orientations to each of these thematic sections, in addition to this introductory chapter. In such a way, we hope to integrate effectively and concisely the different, if not disparate, parts, perspectives, approaches and practices as well as languages that today characterise the ever-changing arena that is Mediterranean archaeology. If the coverage of our book is seen as less than comprehensive and systematic for the times and all the places of the Bronze and Iron Ages, it is nonetheless guided by these thematic schema through which the prehistoric and early historic Mediterranean should not only be better understood, but also help to move the subject forward in a way heretofore never conceived.

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Insularity and Connectivity

Islands invariably call to mind insularity, and island archaeology today represents a dynamic and still-innovating subfield of archaeology. Emerging from a series of pioneering studies carried out during the 1970–80s (e.g. Evans 1977; Cherry 1981; Kirch 1986; Terrell 1986; Keegan and Diamond 1987), most of which were inspired by the work of Vayda and Rappaport (1963), island archaeology became firmly entrenched in analysing biogeographic factors such as insularity and isolation; size, distance and configuration; dispersal, adaptation or extinction. More recently, Rainbird (2004: 1–2, 63; 2007: 33–35) has argued that the narrow use of a biogeographic approach is overly deterministic, and that the old notion of islands as 'laboratories' is too restrictive. Indeed, living on an island involves social and cultural factors that may trump biogeographic principles (Broodbank 2000: 26–32; Efstratiou 2012: 33), but it would still be remiss to attempt to study islands and insularity without considering both limitations and possibilities, including those stemming from biogeography, biology and the environment.

Connectivity involves the means of travel, the mobility of people and goods, and social exchange and communications. According to Skeates (2009: 556), connectivity '…refers to the social and geographical interdependence of small-scale, locally specific phenomena (including micro-regions, places, peoples, economic strategies, and inter-actions) with a dynamic network of relations enjoyed by them with the wider world'. Maritime mobility has been a key feature of island life in the Mediterranean throughout prehistoric and historic times: Horden and Purcell (2000: 224–30), for example, suggest that various aspects of production on Aegean islands resulted from '*all around* connectivity'. Islanders and coastal dwellers often formed open, or 'imagined' communities, sharing materialities and communicating by sea (Gosden and Pavlides 1994: 163). In terms of encounters with distant islands or other lands, island communities tend to develop a strong sense of their common identity, when insular attitudes and differences take on special currency (Parker Pearson 2004: 129; Constantakopoulou 2005).

Insularity has been described as 'the quality of being isolated as a result of living on islands, or of being somewhat detached in outlook and experience' (Knapp 2008: 18). Thus, we might think of islands as isolated places, and regard islanders as detached, or insular, in their thinking. In reality, however, people adopt aspects of insularity in many different ways. Insular living, for example, may be a temporary phenomenon, or something that is done repeatedly but only seasonally (Finlayson 2004: 18).

Islands themselves have been defined rather prosaically as land masses smaller than a continent, entirely surrounded by water (Fitzpatrick 2004: 6). Terrell (1999: 240), more spiritedly, suggests that '…islands are what they are because they are living spaces (habitats) surrounded by radical shifts in habitat'. Islands certainly elicit notions of remoteness, in part because of the length of the journeys it takes to reach them (even today), in part because of the sensation of being in such a distant, separate space once they are reached (Renfrew 2004: 275). The highly successful TV series *Lost* explored endless ideas about the (mis-) adventures of living on an island. Beyond even this notion of remoteness, islands are also seen as sleepy backwaters, beyond the pale of modern civilisation, where people of similar minds live at a slower, more natural pace (McKechnie 2002: 128).

The sea that separates an island from the nearest mainland or other island may be seen as an immense threshold. Whether one regards it as a bridge to what is near and familiar, or as a barrier from what is distant and exotic, depends on individual mind-sets (Helms 1988: 24–25). Regarding the sea as barrier, some island societies exhibit what are typically viewed as 'strange' material expressions or extreme cultural developments, for example the megalithic temples of Malta (Grima 2001; Robb 2001; Skeates 2008), or what has been called the 'Easter Island syndrome' (Parker Pearson 2004: 129). However, ideas and practices and things that appear to be strange or exotic to a mainlander, or even to a sailor, may be perfectly mundane or normal to an islander, part of her/his *habitus*. In other words, social attitudes to the sea and to voyaging condition the extent to which islanders are seen to be isolated from or connected to the other islands, mainlands and peoples that surround them.

In sum, even though islands serve as essentialising metaphors for isolation and insularity (Robb 2001), throughout prehistory they were exposed repeatedly to wider social, political, cultural and economic networks of mobility, interaction and exchange. Merchants, mariners and monarchs alike repeatedly sought 'exotic' resources or raw materials readily accessible on certain islands (e.g. copper on Cyprus; iron on Elba; obsidian on Melos, Sardinia or Lipari). These islands thus came to serve as points of connectivity, where maritime peoples met and communicated, where long-distance trade was conducted and island alliances formed or developed (Parker Pearson 2004: 129). And so Horden and Purcell (2000: 76) exclaimed that islands were literally 'in the swim' of things, surrounded by the sea, providers of exploitable resources.

Insularity may be felt to some degree on islands large or small, throughout any island group. As the chapters in this section demonstrate, insularity is not a condition that only or mostly affects the first colonisation of islands, even if many island studies have tended to concentrate on the early phases of island life. The physical aspects of insularity thus have to be seen in the context of social and spatial factors that operate differently in each place and time (Efstratiou 2012: 34). Insularity is therefore not a fixed geographic condition or environmental constraint that can provide a monolithic explanation of biological evolution, much less of cultural diversity or social practices. Instead, it should be regarded as a facet of island living at all times with the potential to modify social, political or economic developments in unique and unpredictable ways.

The chapters in this section treat islands large and small, their interconnectedness or isolation at different times and in different ways (the Cyclades, Malta and Sicily, Sardinia), their early exploitation and subsistence strategies (the Balearics), their transformation from prehistoric fortresses to proto-urban centres (Sardinia). Drawing on the theme of insularity and connectivity, all these chapters speak eloquently by and for themselves.

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1 A LITTLE HISTORY OF MEDITERRANEAN ISLAND PREHISTORY

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Abstract

Before the mid-1970s, a distinctive subfield of 'Mediterranean island archaeology' cannot be said to have existed; there were only archaeologies of individual islands or island groups. So far as the Mediterranean is concerned, an interest in studying islands in a collective and comparative framework, and trying to understand what impact the quality of insularity may have on material culture and human behaviors, can be traced directly to two influential articles by J.D. Evans in the 1970s. This chapter addresses the development of Mediterranean island prehistory from Childe to Evans's watershed papers, and charts the emergence of a comparative and explicitly quantitative island archaeology, heavily informed by biogeography, in the 1980s and 1990s. It then moves on to the critique of the 'new' Mediterranean island archaeology that emerged in the early twenty-first century, and highlights how it has opened up new avenues of inquiry in insular prehistory, not least by emphasizing connectivity, island identities, and the formation of distinct island communities. Using data from the period between the later Upper Palaeolithic and the Late Bronze Age, it seeks to draw out the practical and heuristic consequences of different paradigms, and to suggest future areas of development in Mediterranean island prehistory.

Introduction

The distinctiveness of the Mediterranean, an inland sea as its name indicates, surely depends to a significant extent on the multitude of islands it contains. Indeed, for many of the sea- and sun-seeking holidaymakers who seasonally double the population of the region (Inglis 2000), 'the Med' is virtually synonymous with the island-based tourist destinations – Mallorca, Corfu, Mykonos, Cyprus – to which they throng. Other inland seas enclose islands, of course, but not at all like the Mediterranean in their size and distribution: for instance, the Caspian Sea, one-sixth its size, has numerous islands, but all small, very close to the coast, and mostly uninhabited. In the Mediterranean, by contrast, some 150 islands are larger than 10 sq km, 50 larger than 100 sq km, and nine surpass 1000 sq km. An
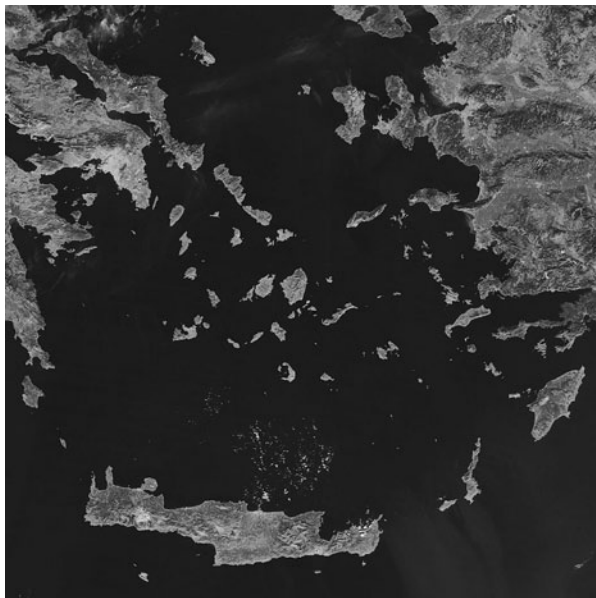

FIGURE 1.1. Satellite image of the Aegean and its closely crowded islandscape. (NASA, The Visible Earth – http://visibleearth.nasa.gov/).

exact count of all its islands is unrealistic, however, because there also exists a myriad of tiny islets, some barely cresting the surface – certainly more than 5000 islands in total (Figure 1.1).

This, moreover, is merely 'our' Mediterranean, now. In reality, the islands we study today are remnants of a drowned landscape, much more of which was above water at the glacial lowstand of the sea (some 120 m below current levels), about 17,000 years ago. Sea-level rise since the glacial maximum, to −25 m around 8000 BP and −7 m around 5000 BP, created a dynamic succession of island configurations dramatically different from the present (van Andel and Shackleton 1982; Shackleton *et al.* 1984; Lambeck 1996; Lambeck and Chapell 2001; Lambeck and Purcell 2005), to which prehistorians interested in the post-Pleistocene occupation of the islands must attend. Yet even a glance at the map of today's Mediterranean, which closely approximates the way things have been for the past several thousand years, reveals some major contrasts in size and spatial

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