

## 1

---

## Phrasing the problem

### Introduction

We live in a world surrounded by ethnic conflict. Since the 1960s, ethnic resurgences have occurred between Walloons and Flemings in Belgium; Serbs, Croats and Muslims in Bosnia; Hutu and Tutsi in Burundi and Rwanda; Greeks and Turks in Cyprus; Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims in India; Catholics and Protestants in Ireland; Chinese and Malay in Malaysia; Ibo, Hausa and Yoruba in Nigeria; English and French in Québec; Christian Armenians and Muslim Azerbaijanis in the south of the former Soviet Union; and Sinhs and Tamils in Sri Lanka, to name just a few.<sup>1</sup> At first sight, the appearance of a book on ancient ethnicity might seem like a gratuitous and anachronistic exercise, attempting to impose upon antiquity a subject whose true relevance is more topical. Nothing could be further from the truth. Quite apart from the fact that the separation of past and present tends to be dissolved in the proclamation of ethnic claims and counterclaims (consider the dispute that arose between Greece and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia over the so-called ‘Star of Vergina’),<sup>2</sup> the study of ethnic identity in antiquity is nothing new as the remainder of this chapter will demonstrate.

Indeed, from as early as the eighteenth century, classical scholars were interested in examining the fields of art, architecture, music, dress, philosophy, customs and political forms in order to identify the specific ‘character’ of the various ethnic groups which inhabited Greece in antiquity. The construction of this discourse on ancient ethnicity was influenced primarily by contemporary romantic beliefs which attributed ethnic specificity to environmental and racial determinants, yet it is precisely the assumed immutability of these determinants which allowed romantic theorists such as Johann Herder and the Comte de Gobineau to lay the foundation stone for the racial philosophy of Nazism. In the wake of the Second World War – and more particularly the Holocaust – the motives for treating ethnic identity as a valid area of research were discredited. The subject of ancient Greek ethnicity was no exception, and scholars either practised a studied circumspection in this regard or else attempted to recast the ethnic groups of antiquity in a more

<sup>1</sup> For a fuller list, see Tambiah 1989, 337.

<sup>2</sup> See Borza 1981, 87 n. 60; Adams 1983, 6 n. 16; Green 1982; 1989, 160–64; Faklaris 1994; Brown 1994; Danforth 1995.

*Phrasing the problem*

sanitised role by substituting lexical terms such as ‘linguistic groups’ or ‘cultural groups’.

The anthropological response to the crisis of scholarship occasioned by the Second World War was the ‘instrumentalist’ approach to ethnicity which proclaimed that ethnic identity was a guise adopted by interest groups to conceal aims that were more properly political or economic. Yet the ethnic resurgences of the 1970s and 1980s presented a clear challenge to the validity of the instrumentalist approach; this prompted a renewed anthropological interest in the subject of ethnic identity which is examined in chapter 2. Current research tends to grant at least an intersubjective reality to ethnic identity, though it differs from pre-war scholarship on a number of important points. Firstly, it stresses that the ethnic group is not a biological group but a social group, distinguished from other collectivities by its subscription to a putative myth of shared descent and kinship and by its association with a ‘primordial’ territory. Secondly, it rejects the nineteenth-century view of ethnic groups as static, monolithic categories with impermeable boundaries for a less restrictive model which recognises the dynamic, negotiable and situationally constructed nature of ethnicity. Finally, it questions the notion that ethnic identity is primarily constituted by either genetic traits, language, religion or even common cultural forms. While all of these attributes may act as important symbols of ethnic identity, they really only serve to bolster an identity that is ultimately constructed through written and spoken discourse.

If the construction of ethnic identity is considered to be primarily discursive, then it is literary evidence that should represent our first point of departure. In chapter 3, I begin by examining ancient terminology and conclude that although the use of the word *ethnos* is not restricted to ethnic groups, it is often coupled with the terms *genos* and *syngeneia* which do explicitly introduce the notions of descent and kinship which are so central to ethnic consciousness. I then turn to consider myths of ethnic origin. These have often been taken to be the remnants of a genuine historical memory of migrations at the end of the Bronze Age, though I suggest that they are better viewed as the means by which ethnic communities ‘thought themselves’ in the historical period. Indeed, a close examination of the constitutive myths of the Athenians, the Dorians and the Herakleidai shows how these groups used and manipulated ethnographic and genealogical traditions not only to carve out distinct identities but also to effect assimilation with (and differentiation from) other ethnic groups. The fact that these myths exist in so many (sometimes contradictory) variants is testimony not to the confused debility of human memory but to the varying functions which they served through time and across different regions.

The role of ethnography and genealogy in the construction of ethnic identity is examined in further detail in chapter 4 by means of an extended case-study dealing with the Argolid region of Greece. The demographic composition of the Argolid is consistently envisaged as multi-ethnic in character by a number of literary

*Introduction*

sources ranging from the sixth century BC to the second century AD. Nevertheless, although the ethnographic picture provides a useful point of departure (and lends justification) for the analysis of ethnicity in the ancient Argolid, it is a rather blunt tool for capturing the subtle and dynamic operation of ethnic strategies. From this point of view, the genealogies which served to express the changing relations between ethnic groups over time are more helpful. By understanding the internal logic of these genealogies and thus identifying the contradictions which challenge that logic, it is possible to distinguish at least two originally independent genealogical assemblages which structured group identity. The first is concerned with exogenous origins and conquest and was eventually incorporated within the ethnic pedigree of the Dorians. The second stresses ancestral hereditary rights and is explicitly associated with the myth of the Return of the Herakleidai. Furthermore, the areas in which this second genealogical tradition is attested are those where particular accord was paid to the cult of Hera – a goddess who was not only thought of as the primeval patron of the Argive plain but whose name is etymologically connected (via Herakles) with that of the Herakleidai.

The emphasis on the discursive construction of ethnic identity and on the fact that ethnic groups are not primarily defined by language or culture obviously has important implications for the role of archaeology and linguistics in the study of ancient ethnicity. In chapter 5, I summarise the arguments that have been proposed for and against the historicity of the Dorian invasion on the basis of material culture and suggest that the *impasse* which has resulted is due to a misunderstanding of how material culture functions within strategies of ethnic self-definition. With the help of some ethnographic examples, I conclude that while material symbols can certainly be selected as active emblems of a consciously proclaimed ethnic identity, it is a mistake to assume that material cultural patterning can serve as an objective or passive indication of ethnic groups.

A similar conclusion is reached in the case of language (chapter 6). Traditionally, the distribution of the dialect groups in ancient Greece has been explained by (and used to justify) the literary tradition of ethnic migrations. More recently – no doubt as part of the post-war reaction to ethnic studies already observed – some historians have sought to reduce the ethnic groups of the literary tradition to the status of linguistic groups. In fact, a close analysis of these dialects reveals that linguistic boundaries are not entirely coterminous with ethnic boundaries, that the Greeks themselves could not have relied upon linguistic cues only in assigning dialect-speakers to ethnic groups and that linguistic development in ancient Greece may operate independently of ethnic factors. Again, however, linguistic symbols may be actively employed at certain times as part of an ethnic strategy, and I consider some examples where ethnic groups consciously sought to bolster their distinctiveness through the medium of language. The intention is not to deny the self-evident contribution of archaeology and language but to define more closely the role which they play in the study of ethnic identity in Greek antiquity.

*Phrasing the problem*

**The Dorians in a ‘sociology of knowledge’**

It is then that we are recalled to the life immediately before us, at our feet; the hundreds of workmen with marked Southern features, in varied and picturesque costumes; the small native horses drawing numerous carts with their rumbling noise, through which the shouts of the drivers pierce, – and all these men speaking the language of ancient Greece, changed and attenuated and abused, but still the tongue of ancient Hellas. Dotted among them are foreign-looking young men, different in feature and garb and tongue, watching over the work. And we ask, Who are these new men, *these new Dorians*, who speak the foreign tongue?<sup>3</sup> and whence come they, and wherefore? And the answer is, They come from afar, from the land of the setting sun, thousands of miles over the salt sea. But they come not to destroy and conquer, but to restore to the light of day the life that has been buried under that soil for countless ages. And we are overcome by the sense of the great poetic justice, the rightness of things, – that the youngest inheritors of Hellenic culture among the nations should restore to the light of day the oldest sanctuary of ancient Hellas.<sup>3</sup> (my italics)

The above description of the American excavations at the Argive Heraion between 1892 and 1895 by Charles Waldstein (later Sir Charles Walston) is a perfect example of what Annie Schnapp-Gourbeillon has described as the ‘spectre’ of the Dorians which haunts the historians of ancient Greece.<sup>4</sup> In this unashamedly colonialist pastiche, the role of the latter-day Dorian intruders ‘from the land of the setting sun’ (i.e. the American trench supervisors) is contrasted with that of the indigenous ‘colourful’ labourers with their ‘abused’ language. Unlike their forebears, however, the conquest of these ‘new Dorians’ is cultural rather than territorial. The task of bringing to light ‘the oldest sanctuary of ancient Hellas’ (actually a good deal less ancient than Waldstein believed) appropriately falls to those whose neonate national identity was so bound up with classical ideals, exemplified by Thomas Jefferson’s foundation of the University of Virginia, or the practice of endowing new cities with classical names – for instance, Athens, Georgia; Troy, New Hampshire; Olympia, Washington; or Ithaca, New York.<sup>5</sup>

Throughout history, the Dorians have commanded interest as an *explanans*. For the ancients, the migrations of the Dorians southwards from central and north-west Greece served to explain the manner in which the last dynasties of Homer’s Akhaians were ousted, thus putting an end to the Heroic Age. In more recent scholarship, their role as an *explanans* has been rather to account for the widespread destructions which put an end to the Mycenaean palaces (chapter 5) and for the historical distribution of dialects belonging to the Doric dialect group (chapter 6). They have also, however, been treated as an *explanandum* – as a phenomenon worth studying in their own right. In this field, the concern has been to determine what characterised the Dorians as a collective entity and what it was that distinguished them from other groups such as the Ionians or the Aiolians.

<sup>3</sup> Waldstein 1902, 88.    <sup>4</sup> Schnapp-Gourbeillon 1986, 43.    <sup>5</sup> Hight 1949, 399–400.

Cambridge University Press  
 978-0-521-78999-8 - Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity  
 Jonathan M. Hall  
 Excerpt  
[More information](#)

*The Dorians in a 'sociology of knowledge'*

One of the most famous (though by no means earliest) attempts to re-enrol the Dorians in the historical imagination of modern scholarship was the publication in 1824 of Karl Otfried Müller's *Die Dorier* (translated into English in 1830). Müller's position within intellectual history may best be understood through an extract from his preface to the second edition of *Die Dorier*, regrettably omitted from the English translation:

. . . das wir uns einerseits schon einen Begriff von dem geistigen Wesen eines Volkes gebildet haben müssen, ehe wir dasselbe in dem äussern Handeln der Einzelnen, in denen sich die Sinnesart der Gesamtheit mehr oder minder darstellt, zu erkennen und nachzuweisen vermögen, und das uns andererseits doch nichts Anders als die unbefangenste Betrachtung des Letztern zur richtigen Erkenntniss des Erstern führen kann . . .<sup>6</sup>

On the one hand, we must have already formed a concept of the spiritual nature of a people, before we are able to recognise and demonstrate it in the external behaviour of individuals, in which the spirit of the community is more or less represented. On the other hand, nothing other than the most impartial examination of the latter can lead us to the correct recognition of the former.

This apparent contradiction between comprehending the *a priori* existence of the 'spiritual nature of the people' and the necessity of resorting to a rigorous and impartial examination of ancient behavioural patterns to recognise it more accurately is perhaps symptomatic of what Martin Bernal has termed Müller's 'romantic positivism'.<sup>7</sup>

Positivism may be defined as the philosophical belief in an objective knowledge, governed by laws akin to those postulated for the natural sciences, that can be arrived at through empirical induction.<sup>8</sup> In historical terms, positivism proclaims both the existence of a real, objective past that is external to the historical analyst, and the possibility of describing it in its most accurate details. For R.G. Collingwood, such ideas were symbolised by the *Cambridge Ancient History* which, apart from setting itself up as an authoritative and comprehensive account of antiquity, subscribed to a positivist vision of history as an assemblage of isolated and easily ascertainable facts through its practice of farming out chapters (or sometimes even subdivisions of chapters) to different authors. The compilation of contributions by authors from varying cultural, social, political and intellectual backgrounds, working in disciplines with their own unique methodologies and goals, was not viewed as problematic precisely because the past that they were describing was deemed real, objective and unitary.<sup>9</sup>

Strictly speaking, it is a little anachronistic to refer to Müller's work as positivist, especially since the term (first formulated in its current sense by the sociologist Auguste Comte) was not applied widely outside the social sciences until the second half of the nineteenth century. Nonetheless, there is a certain positivist flavour in

<sup>6</sup> Müller 1844, vii.

<sup>7</sup> Bernal 1987, 309.

<sup>8</sup> Collingwood 1946, 127; Lloyd 1986, 42.

<sup>9</sup> Collingwood 1946, 147.

Cambridge University Press  
 978-0-521-78999-8 - Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity  
 Jonathan M. Hall  
 Excerpt  
[More information](#)

*Phrasing the problem*

Müller's emphasis on the 'most impartial examination' of past behaviour. This was a dictate of *Quellenkritik*, or 'source criticism', which was developed during the eighteenth century at the University of Göttingen where Müller held a chair. By espousing a more systematic and 'scientific' approach to literary sources, which attempted to distinguish authorial bias from more reliable literary testimony, the aim of *Quellenkritik* was research that was 'historical and critical not of *things* to be hoped for, but for *facts*'.<sup>10</sup>

A good example of the positivist method in *Die Dorier* is the way Müller traces the migration of the Dorians. For Müller, Apollo was the principal Dorian deity – the 'totem of the tribe' – fulfilling much the same role as Poseidon did for the Ionians. The prevalence of cults to Apollo in Dorian cities, and especially Sparta, could be contrasted with the fact that the Akhaians and Arkadians possessed few Apollo temples, and that those that did exist generally commanded little importance. One had, therefore, only to trace the transmission of the cult of Apollo (widely regarded as a newcomer to the Greek pantheon) to track the migrations of the Dorians. In the first phase, the cult was diffused from the Tempe valley in north-east Thessaly towards Delphi, Delos and Knossos. The second phase involved a radiation from Krete both westwards to mainland Greece and eastwards towards the coast of Asia Minor. Finally, the cult of Apollo arrived in the Peloponnese as a consequence of the Dorian migrations described in the literary texts.<sup>11</sup> This reconstruction of the diffusion of Apollo cults was no mean achievement, not least because it predated the excavation of most of the major sanctuaries of Greece. In fact, Müller plumbed the murky depths of aetiological poetry such as the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, which purported to account for the origins of Apollo sanctuaries and which Müller took as a hazy reflection of a 'real', objective past.

It is, however, the decision to focus on the *Völksggeist* or 'spirit of the community' which reveals the more important contextual influence on Müller's work. The emphasis on the community as an organic whole, rather than a collection of individuals, is very much a product of romantic opposition to the Enlightenment. *Die Dorier* cannot be fully comprehended without reference to a German romantic paradigm, in which the two themes of environmental determinism and consanguinity ('the Dark Gods, Blood and Earth')<sup>12</sup> are dominant.

Environmental determinism is not a concept that is fundamentally novel to the student of classical antiquity. Herodotos attributes to the Persian king Kyros the Great the maxim that 'soft regions breed soft men', and the doctrine is elaborated further by the author of a fifth-century Hippocratic treatise, who argues that geography, local water-supplies and prevailing winds determine not only the health of a population, but also its collective character.<sup>13</sup> Where German romanticism differed from the classical picture was in its greater emphasis on the rootedness of the

<sup>10</sup> This citation of Friedrich August Wolf is quoted in Bernal 1987, 286. See also Collingwood 1946, 127–31. <sup>11</sup> See especially Müller 1830, 227, 266, 271, 276–77.

<sup>12</sup> The phrase is that of Gellner (1987, 87).

<sup>13</sup> Herodotos 9.122.3; Pseudo-Hippokrates, *Airs, Waters, Places* 24.



*The Dorians in a 'sociology of knowledge'*

*Volk* in its native soil. The theme of migration is recurrent in Greek literature, whether pertaining to a genuine historical memory or an aetiological construct, but the important distinction is that the migrating population could change its collective character along with its homeland: Kyros' utterance is designed to act as a warning against the Persians moving to a more hospitable land where they would lose their rugged temperament and cease to be rulers. In the romantic imagination, on the other hand, the character of the *Volk* was moulded more by its original homeland than by its current location. This is why the Dorians, even after their migration south from a homeland that romantic scholars were eventually to locate in Germany, could still be seen as representing the purer, more ideal model of Indogermanism (a term used in nineteenth- and twentieth-century German scholarship to denote what would now be called Indo-Europeanism).<sup>14</sup>

Consanguinity refers to a notion of kinship that uses blood as a metaphor. Again, this is to be found in antiquity: Homer uses the word 'blood' (*haima*) to express kin relationships, and Herodotos enumerates blood as one of the criteria of Hellenic identity.<sup>15</sup> For the romantics, blood symbolised the 'natural essence' of life; but it is this image of an essence that has led to some dangerous associations, because one of the qualities of an essence is its purity. Pure, 'unsullied' blood is blood that has been 'uncontaminated' by another type of blood – that is, blood of a different ethnic origin. Before the construction of a field of genetics, it was the image of blood as essence that lay behind the concept of 'racial purity' and permeated so much of nineteenth-century thought not only in Germany, but also in Britain in the work of people like Carlyle or Matthew Arnold.<sup>16</sup>

Elements of these two themes had already coalesced within the romantic paradigm in the few decades prior to the publication of *Die Dorer*. In the 1790s, Friedrich von Schlegel had studied the character of the Greek *Stämme*, as expressed through art, customs and political forms. Since, however, these *Stämme* were largely defined on the basis of literary genres, whereby epic poetry was categorised as Ionian, lyric poetry as Dorian and drama as Athenian, Schlegel did not envisage the boundaries between the groups as being necessarily impermeable.<sup>17</sup>

Müller was probably influenced also by the Norwegian natural philosopher Henrik Steffens, who argued for an indissoluble link between the natural environment, human nature and the history of humanity, and whose lectures Müller apparently attended.<sup>18</sup> By far the most important figure, however, in the genealogy of romantic thinking that Müller inherited was Johann Herder (1744–1803). Accredited today as the founder of *both* cultural pluralism as a good *and* racism, he proposed that humankind was divided into various races, each having its primal physical and mental characteristics shaped by its original environment. By adopting a supposedly scientific, multilineal evolutionary view (which in some respects

<sup>14</sup> This notion of a Teutonic homeland for the Indo-Europeans was later to receive support from archaeologists, especially Gustav Kossinna: see further chapter 5.

<sup>15</sup> Homer, *Odyssey* 8.583; Herodotos 8.144.2. <sup>16</sup> Bell 1975, 155. <sup>17</sup> Rawson 1991, 318–20.

<sup>18</sup> Wittenburg 1984, 1037.

Cambridge University Press  
 978-0-521-78999-8 - Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity  
 Jonathan M. Hall  
 Excerpt  
[More information](#)

*Phrasing the problem*

prefigured Darwin's theory of natural selection) Herder argued not only that humankind represented the highest organism in its development from animal life, but that within this humankind there emerged an even higher type of human organism, the historical human, who arose (hardly surprisingly) in Europe and was therefore moulded by the geography and climate of that continent.<sup>19</sup>

With the development of comparative philology, language also came to reinforce 'blood' in defining ethnic groups. Herder maintained that for a people to retain its specific character (which he defined in terms of its creativity, spirit, individuality and genius), it had to preserve its linguistic and ethnic authenticity.<sup>20</sup> Schlegel drew a distinction between the 'animal' non-inflected languages and the 'noble and spiritual' inflected ones, by which he was referring primarily to German and Greek – languages linked in the German imagination by the fact that they both used definite articles, a plethora of particles and prepositions, and were the languages of religious protest after the Reformation.<sup>21</sup> Müller's pupil Ernst Curtius was later to argue that a language as beautiful as Greek could not have developed in the Mediterranean, but must have originated further north.<sup>22</sup> In a similar vein, Karl Wilhelm von Humboldt claimed German and Greek to be 'pure' and 'uncontaminated':<sup>23</sup> the metaphorical allusions to the 'blood essence' are clear.

It would be wrong to suggest that Karl Otfried Müller was purely a 'man of his time' – an ineffectual actor in a socially determined world. In fact, many of his influences derived from closer to home. In a work of 1817, entitled *De arte Aeginetica* ('On the art of Aigina'), he attributed to the Dorians characteristics such as moderation, simplicity, frugality and steadfastness – all traits which, as Andreas Wittenburg has pointed out, assume a greater relevance when one learns that Müller's father was a Protestant military chaplain in Silesia.<sup>24</sup> In other words, the character of Müller's Dorians is uncannily Protestant.

Nevertheless, *Die Dorier* clearly does find its niche within the romantic paradigm. Shades of Schlegel resurface in Müller's stress on the 'nordic character' of the Doric dialect, particularly in the use of masculine endings in *-r*, and the presence of intervocalic aspirates in word roots.<sup>25</sup> Just as Greek was a 'noble and spiritual' language, Doric was held to be the 'true Greek' dialect, of which the Ionic dialect could only be an enervated and degenerated form resulting from Asiatic influence.<sup>26</sup> The themes so dear to Steffens also show through in Müller's attention to geographical determinants.<sup>27</sup> It is, for example, the destiny of Illyrian blood and earth which assigns to the Thessalians their 'impetuous and passionate character, and the low and degraded state of their mental facilities'.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>19</sup> See Collingwood 1946, 89–90.

<sup>20</sup> See Fishman 1983, 135.

<sup>21</sup> Schlegel 1808, 60–70. See Bernal 1987, 193, 231.

<sup>22</sup> Curtius 1857, 19–20; Bernal 1987, 335.

<sup>23</sup> Humboldt 1903, 266; Bernal 1987, 288.

<sup>24</sup> Wittenburg 1984, 1031–34.

<sup>25</sup> Müller 1830, 18.

<sup>26</sup> Müller 1830, 18–19.

<sup>27</sup> E.g. Müller 1830, 75–76.

<sup>28</sup> Müller 1830, 5. That said, the destiny of blood was not always immutable for Müller. In the case of the Dorians of Phokis, it was the number of non-Dorian strangers flocking to Delphi which led to 'a lazy, ignorant, superstitious, and sensual people...[which]...cast a shade over the few traces of a nobler character': Müller 1830, 422.



Cambridge University Press  
 978-0-521-78999-8 - Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity  
 Jonathan M. Hall  
 Excerpt  
[More information](#)

*The Dorians in a 'sociology of knowledge'*

Müller approached the question of the Dorian *Volkgeist* by considering art, music, dress, architecture, philosophy but more especially the oppositions articulated in the literature of the Peloponnesian War period – particularly by Thoukydides – between Sparta, the archetypal Dorian *polis*, and Athens, its Ionian equivalent. For Müller, the Dorian character represented the polar opposite of the Ionian character in seven respects: (i) the Dorians are represented as defending a sense of freedom while the Ionians are enslaved to the ambitions of the state; (ii) the Dorians fight, in the time-honoured tradition, on land while the Ionians take the cowardly option of fighting on the sea; (iii) the Dorians place their faith in the integrity of their manpower while the Ionians use their wealth to buy support; (iv) the Dorians value tradition while the Ionians welcome innovation; (v) the Dorians act cautiously and after due deliberation while the Ionians act rashly and impetuously; (vi) the Dorians predicate their collective consciousness on ancestry while the Ionians resort to *ad hoc* contingencies; and (vii) the Dorians prefer aristocratic forms of government while the Ionians opt for democracy.<sup>29</sup> Above all else, the Dorian spirit was characterised by a tendency to subordinate individual elements to the whole and to preserve unity, from which obedience and self-restraint sprang.<sup>30</sup>

Much maligned and seldom read today, *Die Dorer* did, nonetheless, set the stage for the way in which the Dorians have been viewed by historians even up to the present day. In the second half of the nineteenth century, however, two new themes became entwined with this essentially romantic vision of the Dorians: the first was social evolutionism, the second the rise of true historical positivism.

The populations of many Classical *poleis* were distributed among *phylai* (singular, *phyle*) – a word that is generally, although not entirely adequately, translated as 'tribe'. In describing the attempts on the part of Kleisthenes, the sixth-century tyrant of Sikyon, to humiliate his Dorian opponents, Herodotos recounts how he changed the names of the Dorian *phylai*:

And in this he ridiculed greatly the Sikyonians, because he altered the *phyle* names by adding endings to the words for swine, donkey and piglet, with the exception of his own *phyle*, to which he gave a name deriving from his own rule. These then were called the Arkhelaioi ('leaders of people'), but the others were called Hyatoi ('swinemen'), Oneatoi ('assmen') and Khoireatoi ('pigletmen'). The Sikyonians used these names for the *phylai* during Kleisthenes' reign and for sixty years after his death, but then, after consultation, they changed them to those of the Hylleis, Pamphyloi and Dymanes.<sup>31</sup>

It is debatable how seriously we should take this story, though the increasing number of inscriptions which were coming to light in the nineteenth century did reveal that the names of the Hylleis, Pamphyloi and Dymanes recurred throughout many of the cities which called themselves Dorian in the historical period. At Megara and Sparta only these three *phylai* are attested until the Roman period.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Müller 1830, 221–23.

<sup>30</sup> Müller 1830, 405. See also the analyses of Rawson (1991, 323) and Musti (1985a, xiv).

<sup>31</sup> Herodotos 5.68. <sup>32</sup> Roussel 1976, 229; Jones 1987, 96.

*Phrasing the problem*

In other cities a fourth (supposedly non-Dorian) *phyle* appears: for instance, the Hyrnathioi at Argos or the Skheliadai at Troizen.<sup>33</sup> At Epidauros, the two otherwise unknown *phylai* of Azantioi and Hysminates appear alongside those of the Hylleis and the Dymanes.<sup>34</sup> The distribution of the same *phyle* names throughout the Dorian cities was considered important for two reasons. Firstly, it seemed to lend support to the literary tradition's view that the Dorians had formed a cohesive unit, divided into three sub-units, prior to their migration southwards. Secondly, it appeared to imply a more 'primitive' stage of social organisation prior to the rise of the *polis* – something that was completely in tune with contemporary ideas about social evolution.

Social evolutionism concerns the growth, progressive specialisation or increased unity of societal forms. Like environmental determinism and consanguinity, it too is an idea that is not totally alien to classical thought. In accounting for the formation of the state, Aristotle proposed an evolutionary conglomeration of discrete cells. In the first stage man unites with woman, and the free master with his slave, to form the household. Driven by the necessity of satisfying more than daily needs, households then come together to form the village. Finally, the state emerges from an association of villages.<sup>35</sup>

A teleological confidence in the idea of 'progress' during the nineteenth century dictated that the past was to be viewed as an earlier evolutionary stage along the same axis as the present. The development of a society was represented metaphorically by the life of a human, so that as early as the 1730s Thomas Blackwell could see the Greeks as the childhood of Europe – in other words, they represented an earlier stage along a European axis that claimed unconditionally the Greek heritage for itself.<sup>36</sup> In the 1860s, Fustel de Coulanges was similarly to suggest that the evolutionary development of a society mirrors that of a young man.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, the contemporary ascendancy of positivism assisted in the treatment of social forms as if they were natural scientific categories, and so theories of natural evolution (which were circulating before Darwin published *The origin of species* in 1859) came to be applied to social theory, notably through the work of Herbert Spencer.<sup>38</sup> Darwin's importance lay in the mechanism he proposed for evolution – natural selection – which in some intellectual circles served to attribute differing values to specific ethnic categories or social forms.

In his *Ancient law* of 1861, the English jurist and anthropologist Henry Sumner Maine focused the spotlight on 'tribal societies', defining them as assemblages of kin whose rules were dictated more by kinship than by any state structures. It was only as populations became more sedentary that territoriality began to replace kinship as a principle of social organisation.<sup>39</sup> A decade later and in a similar vein the American anthropologist Lewis H. Morgan published *Systems of consanguinity*

<sup>33</sup> For the Hyrnathioi: *IG* 4.600, 601, 602. For the Skheliadai: *IG* 4.748. <sup>34</sup> *IG* 4<sup>2</sup>.1.166.

<sup>35</sup> Aristotle, *Politics* 1.2. <sup>36</sup> Blackwell 1735. See Bernal 1987, 208.

<sup>37</sup> Fustel de Coulanges 1980, 121. <sup>38</sup> Banton 1977, 90–91.

<sup>39</sup> For a recent assessment of Maine and his work, see Diamond 1991.