1 Introduction: identity and the construction of cultural difference

τὰ μὲν γὰρ ἐν τοῖς ψυχροῖς τόποις ἔθνη καὶ τὰ περὶ τὴν Εὐρώπην θυμοῦ μέν ἐστι πλήρη, διανοίας δὲ ἐνδεέστερα καὶ τέχνης, διόπερ ἐλεύθερα μὲν διατελεῖ μᾶλλον, ἀπολίτευτα δὲ καὶ τῶν πλησίον ἄρχειν οὐ δυνάμενα: τὰ δὲ περὶ τὴν Ἀσίαν διανοητικὰ μὲν καὶ τεχνικὰ τὴν ψυχήν, ἄθυμα δέ, διόπερ ἀρχόμενα καὶ δουλεύοντα διατελεῖ:

The peoples [ἔθνη] of the cold places and around Europe are full of spirit, but more lacking in intelligence and skill; and so it results that they are free, but are politically disorganised and not able to rule their neighbours. The peoples of Asia are intelligent and skilful of mind but spiritless; so it results that they are ruled over and enslaved. (Aristotle, *Politics* 1327b 23–6)

Aristotle's vision is of a world structured by opposites. Humanity is divided into two, each the mirror of the other. Europe and Asia are presented as being in direct opposition to each other – not only geographically and climatically, but also culturally and politically. This bipartite distinction is one that we still recognise in the twenty-first century. The idea of a 'clash of civilisations' features both in contemporary political rhetoric and current popular discourse. It appears in the speeches of world leaders, the pronouncements of social commentators, and the writings of academics and journalists. Like Aristotle, we often seek to understand cultural differences through binary oppositions. And like Aristotle, we often depict our world in terms of Us and Them.

The oppositional model of cultural difference is now so widespread that we sometimes assume it to be universal. It has been said that 'the tendency to think in terms of two worlds recurs through human history'.[1] When it comes to cultural models in particular, it is argued that there is 'a strong tendency towards dualism in most parts of the world'.[2] This binary division of the world has been variously conceptualised as East and West,[3] Orient and Occident,[4] North and South,[5] or the West and the Rest.[6] In each case, however, the opposition between Us and Them remains. Anthropological

[1] Huntingdon 1996: 32. [2] Mazrui 1990: 13. [3] E.g. Morris 2010. [4] E.g. Said 1978.
[5] E.g. Thompson and Reuveny 2010. [6] E.g. Huntingdon 1996; Ferguson 2011.

and social theories offer an explanation of this phenomenon, and have established that it is an important part of identity formation. It is now widely held that the idea of Self has little meaning without the idea of the Other; that the concept of Us bears little weight unless it is placed opposite a concept of Them.[7] Such oppositional identities were once assumed to be both natural and inevitable, arising automatically from geography, climate or biology. Racial theories and environmental determinism posited that cultural differences were explicable in terms of inescapable natural causes.[8] The fallacy of such approaches has long been recognised, and it is now widely acknowledged that identities are neither automatic nor inborn, and do not depend on the prior existence of either biological/racial or cultural differences. Instead, identities are socially constructed, given meaning and significance through complex cultural processes of differentiation and affiliation. One of the most important and widely discussed of these cultural processes is the differentiation between Us and Them, between Self and Other.[9] Making these distinctions allows us to define the boundaries of an identity group, establishing criteria for belonging and exclusion. Cultural traits such as language, religion, social norms and daily practices are the means by which such boundaries are created, negotiated, expressed and maintained. Cultural differences are not, therefore, the passive reflections of identities, but rather the active means of their construction.

While discrimination and boundary creation are vital components of identity formation, this does not necessarily result in cultural difference being conceptualised in terms of binary opposition. Constructing a sense of Us and Them does not have to entail a singular Self ranged in direct opposition to a singular Other. It is possible instead to recognise a range of many different Others, a plurality of other identity groups in addition to one's own. Instead of thinking in terms of the West and the Rest, for example, it is possible to think in terms of a more plural global structure comprised of multiple geo-political zones – perhaps including Europe, North and South America, East Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Central Asia. There is no abstract necessity to conform to Aristotle's vision of a

[7] The literature on this subject is both broad and rich, and so this point will not be addressed in detail in this book. The social construction of identities with respect to a symbolic Other has been widely discussed with reference to both modern and historical examples, and is now generally accepted within the humanities and social sciences. See for example Barth 1969; Cohen 1985; Jenkins 1997; Cohen 2000.

[8] There is a rich historiographical literature tracing the rise and fall of racial theories and the distinct but connected theory of environmental determinism. See Peet 1985 and Malik 1996: 39ff.

[9] Processes of affiliation have received less academic attention than processes of discrimination and the drawing of boundaries. See Vermuelen and Govers 2000; Jenkins 2008.

janiform cultural order, seeing the world as split into two, with ourselves on the one hand and everyone else lumped together on the other. Instead, it is possible to opt for a more nuanced and complex view. While social and psychological processes of identity formation, therefore, do explain the conceptual need for Self and Other, they do not account for the tendency to construe this Self and Other in terms of binary opposition.

Frequently, this tendency has been explained by historical precedents. The Western intellectual tradition, it is argued, has inherited the inclination towards binary opposition from classical antiquity. This was famously argued by Edward Said in his influential book of 1978, *Orientalism*. Orientalism, Said argued, is the phenomenon by which Western culture created a stereotyped image of 'the East' as the opposite of 'the West'. Said pointed out that cultural constructions in areas such as literature, the arts and academia were a crucial part of creating this stereotype, promoting the idea of a weak, decadent and exotic Orient in direct contrast to the vigorous and masculine West. Said's arguments have found many critics as well as champions, and the idea of Orientalism has spawned a rich and varied debate.[10] Although the book *Orientalism* focused primarily on later European traditions, Said traced the practice of Western Orientalist stereotyping back to classical antiquity, claiming that it was in classical Greece in particular that this model of cultural opposition had its original root. Said selected two Athenian tragedies to illustrate his point: Aeschylus' *The Persians* and Euripides' *Bacchae*.[11] He argued that these two plays set the agenda for later Western Orientalism: firstly by clearly distinguishing Europe from Asia; and secondly by investing this distinction with social, cultural and moral associations.

Since Said, classical scholars have explored the issue of ancient Orientalism further, and it has been confirmed that an oppositional model of cultural difference was indeed a feature of the classical Greek mind-set. East and West, Europe and Asia, Greek and Barbarian – these are the oppositions that emerge time and again from the ancient sources.[12]

[10] Said has been criticised on many counts, including factual inaccuracies, for unfairly characterising 'Orientalist' disciplines, and for creating an essentialised and stereotyped view of 'the West' in the same way that he criticised others doing for 'the East'. However, *Orientalism* remains an extremely important work, and its core ideas are still valid. Said has developed his thinking further since 1978 (see Said 1993 and the Afterword of the 1995 edition of *Orientalism*). For works influenced by Said, criticising Said and discussing the wider Orientalism debate, see Lewis 1993; MacKenzie 1995; Macfie 2000; Irwin 2006; Varisco 2007.

[11] Said 1978: 56–7.

[12] Early proponents of this view were Hartog 1980 and Hall 1989. The idea has been taken up and elaborated since. See for example Cartledge 1997; Isaac 2006; Mitchell 2007: 77ff.; Kim 2009.

We have already seen an assertion of Aristotle's dualistic perspective on culture and geography.[13] Similar ideas are frequently found in works of political theory and public oratory, works that explicitly set out to make political commentary.[14] However, they are also evident in the other cultural forms. Classical drama, and especially tragedy, often draws a binary cultural distinction, characterising the Orient as effeminate, decadent and cowardly, but at the same time exotic, threatening and tyrannical.[15] Similar images appear in the writings of classical Greek historians, and Greek victories over Eastern foes are often explained with reference to the weakness and cowardice of the enemy.[16] Visual sources are also testament to this wider trend. Representations of Easterners in vase painting[17] and the public art of Athens[18] depicted them as the antithesis of the manly and moral Greek. One especially vivid illustration of this trend comes from a pseudo-scientific text from the Hippocratic corpus known as *On Airs, Waters, Places*.[19] The author of this treatise draws a sharp distinction between the continents of Europe and Asia, not only in terms of geography and climate, but also of race, culture and society. Indeed, the latter are described as being dependent on the former:

περὶ δὲ τῆς ἀθυμίης τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ τῆς ἀνανδρείης, ὅτι ἀπολεμώτεροί εἰσι τῶν Εὐρωπαίων οἱ Ἀσιηνοὶ καὶ ἡμερώτεροι τὰ ἤθεα αἱ ὧραι αἴτιαι μάλιστα, οὐ μεγάλας τὰς μεταβολὰς ποιεύμεναι οὔτε ἐπὶ τὸ θερμὸν οὔτε ἐπὶ τὸ ψυχρόν, ἀλλὰ παραπλησίως.

Concerning the lack of spirit and manliness of the people [ἀνθρώπων], the main reason that the Asians are less warlike and more civilised than the Europeans is the seasons of their homeland, which do not make great changes either towards heat or cold, but are similar to [each] other. (*On Airs, Waters, Places* 16)

In a range of different classical sources, therefore, the Orient is indeed constructed in terms of opposition to Greece, Europe and the West. It should be noted that this opposition did not reflect or represent the entire range of Greek relationships with the East. Indeed, actual interactions

[13] See also Aristotle, *Politics* 1252b–1254b. For the Aristotelian theory of natural slavery, see Garnsey 1996 and Shields 2007.

[14] For ethnic stereotyping in fourth-century oratory, see Ziolkowski 1994. For the rhetoric of democracy and freedom in the classical period more generally, see McGlew 1993. For Athens in particular, see Rhodes 2004; Low 2005; Osborne 2010.

[15] This point was famously argued by Hall 1989. For a detailed discussion of Aeschylus, see Harrison 2000, and for the representation of democracy and tyranny as racially specific forms of political organisation, see Goldhill 2002.

[16] For the womanish physical weakness of the Persians, for example, see Xenophon, *Hellenica* 3.4.15; Xenophon, *Agesilaos* 1.28; and Plutarch, *Cimon* 9.5.

[17] Hall 1993; Miller 2000; Lissarrague 2002.

[18] Castriota 2000 and 2005.

[19] For the pseudo-scientific justifications for ethnic stereotyping as 'proto-racism', see Isaac 2006.

between Greece and the East were much more complex than these stereotypes suggest.[20] Objects, styles, customs, ideas, technologies and people regularly moved back and forth between Greece and its eastern neighbours, and the Near East can be shown to have had a crucial formative influence on the development of Greek culture from the Iron Age through to the classical period.[21] Even at the height of anti-Persian rhetoric in classical Athens, Persian styles in material culture and the visual arts were still highly regarded. Indeed, in the public sphere Persian architectural influences are evident on the monuments of the great Periclean building programme in Athens, while private citizens also made use of Persian objects, styles and practices to articulate both status and sophistication.[22] Subscribing to the oppositional model of cultural difference, therefore, did not preclude close interactions with or cultural borrowings from the East. On a practical level, classical Greece was a part of the wider eastern Mediterranean and Near Eastern world, linked into wide-ranging networks of trade, communication, cultural exchange and political interaction. But despite the realities of integration and interaction, the model of dualism and the ideology of cultural opposition prevailed. Indeed, the tendency towards binary opposition seems to have been so strong and so popular that they have sometimes been seen as a structuring principle underpinning classical Greek society.[23]

But can we confidently explain our own tendency to binary opposition as an intellectual inheritance from classical Greece? Was the dualistic mind-set really inevitable, a universal psychological construct established during antiquity and therefore inescapable in our own time? This book argues otherwise. Our understanding of classical Greece is dominated by Athens, and our sources for the period mostly reflect a particularly Athenian perspective. While this point is generally acknowledged amongst classicists and ancient historians, it has yet to be considered in relation to the oppositional model of cultural difference. Athens may well have subscribed to a

[20] Cartledge 1997 and Said 2002 both argue this point explicitly.

[21] This topic has been discussed extensively in the existing literature, and I will not attempt a summary here. This literature includes Burkert 1992; Morris 1992; West 1999; Whitley 2001, chapter 6; Riva and Vella 2006; Gunter 2009; Rutherford 2009; Vlassopoulos 2013. The 'Black Athena' debate is also relevant here: see Bernal 1987–2006 and 2001; Lefkowitz and MacLean Rogers 1996; and Orrells et al. 2011.

[22] The classic work exploring the phenomenon of Persianising trends in classical Athens is Miller 1997. Also relevant is Hagemajer Allen 2003.

[23] Note for example the title of the 1997 book by Paul Cartledge: *The Greeks. A Portrait of Self and Others*. The argument that Greek society was conceptually structured along sets of binary opposites was a central feature of the Structuralist School, which was particularly prominent in French scholarship of the 1960s–80s. Key scholars within this school include Marcel Detienne, Jean-Pierre Vernant and Pierre Vidal-Naquet.

binary world view, but this was not necessarily the case for others throughout the classical Greek world.[24]

This book focuses on one particular group of Greeks who do seem to have understood the world in a very different way. The Ionian cities were a group of thirteen (originally twelve) city-states located in the eastern Aegean islands and the western coast of Anatolia, an area that is generally referred to as Ionia (Figure 1). These cities are considered to be an integral part of the Greek world, and many famous developments in Greek culture – from the Homeric poems to philosophies of natural science, from early sculpture to monumental architectural forms – can be located in Ionia. Despite having many close connections with Athens, the people of Ionia did not adhere to the Athenian model of cultural difference that cast the world in terms of binary oppositions. Instead, they conceptualised cultural differences in a much more fluid, flexible and heterogeneous way. The Athenian model may have become stronger over time, and may have echoed over the centuries to leave its imprint on the more modern Orientalism discussed by Said. However, during the archaic and classical periods, this model was challenged by the people of Ionia. This book is dedicated to their dissenting voices.

[24] Vlassopoulos 2013 counsels against assuming that Greeks interacted with non-Greeks and perceived cultural difference in a single, monolithic way. He goes further than the argument laid out in this book, and suggests that not only the Ionian cities but the Greek world more generally also did not comprehend cultural difference in terms of binary opposition. While I would generally agree with this view, the aim of this book is to establish this point for the Ionian cities in particular through detailed analysis of their foundation myths. See also Skinner 2012 for a discussion of the diversity of the Greek ethnographic imagination.

2 Foundation myths and politics

Foundation myths are one of the crucial ways in which we construct and negotiate cultural difference. The stories that we tell about who we are and where we come from are a means of defining our identities, and positioning ourselves in relation to everyone else. Deliberately or unconsciously, as individuals or as groups, we use foundation myths to frame our political interactions. This is true not just of Politics with a capital 'P' – the Politics of nation-states and international relations. It is also equally true of politics with a small 'p' – the politics of individual interactions in everyday life. Of course, the past is inherently political. This has been demonstrated in many academic studies in the fields of anthropology, archaeology, classics, history, politics and reception studies, as well as being evident from contemporary experience.[1] We use the past to understand the present. But the political power of foundation myths goes beyond that of other types of historiography or heritage.

Foundation myths, by their very essence, are concerned with the beginnings of things. A foundation myth for a given place or people must necessarily be located before the rest of its history – the foundation has to come first, before anything else can happen. The primacy of foundation myths is one key factor that makes them especially politically potent. Over the course of history, many events and episodes can be said to have an impact on collective identity. However, none is so fundamentally crucial to the very existence of a group as its origins. Where, why and how a group comes into being is the basis from which all else springs – it establishes what the group *is* at its very essence. The primacy of foundation myths also means that they often are invested with particular emotional and symbolic significance. They are important because people *feel* that they are important. This

[1] The broader literature on this point across disciplines is extensive, and will not be discussed here, save to mention a few classic texts: Anderson 1983; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1992; Gathercole and Lowenthal 1994. The point is also widely discussed in relation to archaeology and cultural heritage: see Tilley 1993; Atkinson et al. 1996; Diaz-Andreu and Champion 1996; Kohl and Fawcett 1996; Meskell 1998; Barkan and Bush 2002; Diaz-Andreu 2007. The politicised use of classical antiquity by European nation-states from the Enlightenment onwards is a particular case of this: Rawson 1991; Davis 2000; Hingley 2000; Martindale 2006; Hamilakis 2007; Bradley 2010.

emotional attachment is another reason why foundation myths have a political value that is hard to match. The final reason why foundation myths are especially politically significant is their explanatory force. They are 'Just-So' stories, aimed at rationalising the connection between the past and the present. They discuss sequences of events in the past that led to the social and political configurations of the present, setting out the processes of how things came to be. Foundation myths, then, are extremely potent tools for the construction of identity and the negotiation of cultural difference. Their primacy, their emotional value, and their structures of explanation all contribute to their extraordinary political power.

The study of ancient foundation myths is a diverse but perennially popular field. The body of evidence is rich, and the nature of the evidence exciting. Perhaps counter-intuitively, most of the scholarship on ancient Greek foundation myths does not consider them alongside ritual, cult and other forms of myth.[2] Instead, they have generated a literature of their own, more closely connected to the study of ancient historiography. As already noted, foundation myths claim to explain the beginnings of things: of cities, dynasties or ethnic groups. This claim to historical explanation has encouraged many scholars to see foundation myths as a form of proto-history. It has long been acknowledged that modern notions of 'myth' and 'history' are not always applicable in antiquity. The distinction between the two – the former being fictive and legendary, the latter being historically accurate and 'true' – is far from a human universal. Indeed, it is evident that our modern understanding of historical truth and our ideas about the function of historiography are not the same as those of the archaic and classical periods.[3] Thucydides, often considered to be a champion of historical accuracy and a strong critic of false historiography, illustrates this vividly.

[2] An exception to this is Detienne 1990. Many different approaches have been adopted towards Greek myths more generally: see Bremmer 1987; Dowden 1989; Edmunds 1990; Buxton 1994. One approach that does not relate directly to foundation myths is that of seeing mythology as part of an inherited cultural system, preserving echoes of prehistoric stories, e.g. Burkert 1979. Another approach that is less directly relevant here is seeing myths as allegories for social organisation and popular morality, e.g. Detienne 1986; Vernant and Vidal-Naquet 1988; Sourvinou-Inwood 2005.

[3] It has often been remarked that it is modern terminology that labels foundation stories as 'myths', with all the associations that the word implies. There is a rich literature on Greek ideas about historiography, historical truth and the processes of composing historical works. For the classical period, much of the discussion unsurprisingly focuses on Herodotus and Thucydides. See for example Finley 1975; Hunter 1982; Fornara 1983, chapter 3; Hornblower 1994; Hartog 2000; Thomas 2000; Greenwood 2006; Foster and Lateiner 2012. It is argued that the lines between fact and fiction, belief and believability were less starkly drawn in the Greek world. See Clarke 2008, chapter 5, and Patterson 2010. A similar argument was put forward in Finley 1975.

He explicitly states his opinion that speeches in historiography were important not as verbatim reports of words actually spoken, but rather as a record of the things that needed to be said in the circumstances (τὰ δέοντα – 'the necessary things': Thuc 1.22.1). What actually happened was less important than what ought to have happened. For the fourth-century orator Gorgias, truth in speech or argument was synonymous with proper composition and order (κόσμος – 'order': *Encomium of Helen* 1). For poets of the archaic period such as Mimnermus, Archilochus and Simonides, recent battles were just as appropriate a subject for poetic verse as legendary wars. Overall, there is perhaps less interest in fact and accuracy than we might expect, and more interest in 'truth' in a more abstract sense. For an archaic or classical audience, truth may lie not so much in the detail of the stories you told, but rather in the principles and ideas you communicated.

The complex nature of the relationship between myth and history has led to a debate in classical scholarship between the two dominant schools of thought concerning foundation myths.[4] Traditional readings of Greek foundation myths assumed a positivist approach. The idea was that you could read a foundation myth and it would tell you about what actually happened, shedding light on real historical events. It was assumed that accounts of the original foundation would have been passed down through the collective social memory through the generations, until the time when the stories were written down as myths. These myths, it is argued, might sometimes be distorted through the processes of oral transmission, perhaps with some imaginative additions and elaborations over the years.[5] However, at the core of the story, it is argued, should lie a kernel of historical truth. Foundation myths, therefore, could essentially be taken at face value, and efforts could be made to uncover the elements of historical truth within them. Such efforts involved seeking corroborating sources of various kinds, such as literary sources that recounted similar tales; epigraphic or other evidence for later social organisation that might match details of the foundation myth (e.g. tribal divisions, names of months, festival calendars etc.); and archaeological evidence that could be interpreted as supporting the general story of the myth. This approach has commonly been applied to the foundation myths of the Ionian cities, and in particular the myth of the

[4] Hall 2008 offers a brief sketch of trends and schools in the study of Greek foundation myths, identifying three main approaches. The third of these is a judicious compromise position between the two schools discussed here, such as that advocated in Kerschner 2006a.

[5] For the likely relationship between oral tradition and history, see the agenda-setting book Vansina 1985. For examples relating to Homeric poetry, see Morris and Powell 1997 and Sherratt 1990. For the functioning of oral traditions in classical Greece, see Thomas 2000.

Ionian Migration. The myth itself will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7. It has been widely assumed that the story of the Ionian Migration is at some level factually accurate. Many scholars over centuries of study have sought to strip away the distorting 'noise' from the reliable information, establishing a core of historical fact preserved within the literary accounts of the myths.[6]

A contrasting approach to ancient foundation myths emerged in the late twentieth century. Building on postmodernist theories and literary criticism, there has been a shift towards seeing foundation myths as social constructs rather than as documentary history. This approach emphasises the strategic function of foundation myths and their political use in Greek society.[7] As we have already established, all historical writing, and foundation myths in particular, are imbued with a high degree of symbolic and political potential. The texts that recount these myths are not dispassionate documentary chronicles, recording the past in an even-handed and neutral way. Instead, they are complicated literary creations, their form and content carefully tailored in accordance with certain agendas and expectations. It is argued that questions of fact, fiction and historical accuracy are not the most useful way of approaching foundation myths. Instead, the constructivist approach focuses primarily on the social function and significance of these myths, and the way that they both were shaped by and had an impact on wider contemporary society. It has long been established in literary and archaeological theory that texts, ideas and objects have agency.[8] This agency means that foundation myths are not passive objects reflecting social realities, but active subjects that influence and create social realities. It is argued, therefore, that foundation myths can tell us more about the time in which they were written than the time that they were written about. This constructivist approach has also often been applied to the myth of the Ionian Migration. It has been noted that the idea of the Ionian Migration did not emerge properly until the classical period. Prior to this, individual myths of various migrations coexisted, but were not combined into a coherent, overarching narrative. It has been widely accepted that Athenian imperial ambitions in Anatolia were a major motivating factor behind this process

[6] See for example Bilabel 1920: 2–3; Momigliano 1933; Lenschau 1944; Roebuck 1955 and 1961; Sakellariou 1958: 39–76; Huxley 1966; Cook 1975; Emlyn-Jones 1980: 10–16; Herda 1998; Gorman 2001: 14–43; Finkelberg 2005; Sourvinou-Inwood 2005; Vanschoonwinkel 2006; Lemos 2007; Niemeier 2007a; Herda 2009: 67–101.

[7] See for example Finley 1975; Malkin 1987, 1994 and 1998; Brilliante 1991; Hall 1997 and 2008; Gehrke 2001; Calame 2003 and 2009; Cobet 2007; Patterson 2010; Foxhall et al. 2010; Griffiths 2011: 198ff.

[8] For theories of agency, see Butler 1997; Gell 1998; Dobres and Robb 2000; Gosden 2005.