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Ancient Greek Colonization in the 21st Century: Some Suggested Directions

General treatments of Greek history and archaeology discuss colonies and colonization in some way. Usually, the discussions are restricted to some two and one-half centuries (ca. 750 to ca. 500 BC) and to outlining the foundation and early material development of the colonies in familiar terms¹. There are two general problems with such discussions: a vagueness enshrouds the colonial world's long-term development, and these discussions are weakly, if at all, connected to ancient Greece's bigger historical and archaeological narrative, only referred to, out of necessity, to supply just enough context for understanding, say, the Athenian invasion of Sicily in 415 BC or the evolution of Doric architecture and town planning².

Avoiding vagueness helps to establish a proper connection. Greeks may have founded 500 or more colonies, which represent somewhere between about one-third and one-half of the total number of ancient Greek *poleis* estimated in the Archaic and Classical periods³. The geographical distribution of these colonies was both broad and varied: from France and North-east Spain in the Western Mediterranean, through Italy, the Adriatic and Libya in the Central Mediterranean, to the Black Sea and its approaches. In human terms, 10,000 or more Greeks may have moved to colonies by 700 BC alone⁴, and overall between 30,000 and 60,000 adult male emigrants are hypothesized to have left Greece⁵. By 500 BC Greeks had indeed settled outside Greece far and wide, producing societies which, by the fourth century BC, may have accounted for some 40% of all ancient Greeks⁶. Some colonies also became significant political, economic, and cultural achievers, examples being city-states like Syracuse in Sicily, Taras in Southern Italy and Thasos in the Northern Aegean. Attempting to be precise in this way should beg an important question: why do these colonies play, in light of these developments, a disproportionately small role in the overall narrative of ancient Greece? Since the 1990s the study of ancient Greek colonization has seen important advances, especially in the specialist realm, yet we still have no clear answer to this question and, more seriously, no perceptible change in general historical practice to counterbalance the well-entrenched trajectory of putting the focus on the Greek homeland in our historical and archaeological accounts. Considerable scope exists, therefore, in developing the study of ancient Greek colonization, especially since, as Nicholas Purcell has rightly

¹ Cf. WILSON 2006, 25–26 on the 'long-established certainties' of Greek colonization.

² For recent examples of this kind of approach, see POMEROY *ET ALII* 1999; WHITLEY 2001; PEDLEY 2002; OSBORNE 2004; SANSONE 2004.

³ RUSCHENBUSCH 1985; HANSEN and NIELSEN 2004, 53–54.

⁴ MORRIS 2000, 257.

⁵ SCHEIDEL 2003, 134–135.

⁶ While the absolute number of ancient Greeks is currently debated, the proportion of colonial population is not: cf. SCHEIDEL 2003, 131–135; HANSEN 2006, 84.

underlined, it is a subject currently in a state of crisis⁷. This paper will suggest new avenues of inquiry and practice aimed at moving the subject beyond its present intellectual crossroads and to answering the question just posed.

Analogy and terminology

It is becoming well established that classical studies are in general bound up in modern colonialism⁸, and that in particular the study of ancient Greek colonization has sought, for most of its life, intellectual inspiration from, and hence been heavily overwritten by, analogies with modern European imperialism and colonialism⁹. In consequence, our studies have been infused at their very core by concepts and concerns that have been revealed, thanks to post-colonial perspectives and the independent study of material culture, to have had a limited place in the early Greek world. A more complex picture has emerged, one that had remained hidden for so long. Great strides have already been made in looking critically at the analogies and terminologies we have inherited. But two more particular avenues of investigation can be pursued.

The first concerns the basic terminology that we still use to describe this field of study: 'colonies' and 'colonization' remain mainstay terms, ones which even the most self-reflexive and conscientious of scholars continue to use out of habit. A decade ago Robin Osborne wrote highly critically of this traditional terminology, calling for its complete elimination from our accounts of early Greek history and its replacement with a looser model of privately initiated migrations¹⁰. Other scholars have followed Osborne's critical line in re-evaluating other areas of early Greek history¹¹. But how successful has Osborne's plea been to the field he intended? Scholars have been quite successful in looking more closely and critically at the literary and archaeological evidence, either in combination or alone, as Osborne urged (see section next below), but they have done so by continuing to use the traditional terminology which they seek to disavow¹². In fact, the traditional terminology has been expanded with the term 'colonialism', which is now being regularly employed, mirroring a trend in studies on modern imperial history¹³. James Whitley expresses sentiments that probably explain generally the continuing use and expansion of the traditional terminology by ancient Greek scholars: '...we have to call this process something, and colonization is as good a term as any'¹⁴.

A certain psychological comfort lies behind these developments over the last decade. The comfort is twofold. The first involves how our subject is increasingly featuring in works that explore colonialism through time and space¹⁵. It is psychologically gratifying that we can contribute to important discussions of the human experience beyond our immediate field, instead of being saddled with the customary mind-set amongst the public and scholarly community at large that classical studies are mired in questions and approaches which are of diminishing relevance to the contemporary world. It is no doubt stimulating that our subject is being situated in such a wider context, especially since classical scholarship has traditionally shown an 'antipathy'¹⁶ to comparative perspectives. So, recently, has Peter van Dommelen written of the lessons that we can derive from the bigger subject of colonialism: 'These general principles can be applied equally fruitfully to the analysis of earlier pre-modern colonial situations, such as ancient Greek colonialism...'¹⁷. But there are dangers too in such linkages, dangers which are being averted by some scholars by redefining 'ancient Greek colonialism'. Chris Gosden, for instance, defines colonialism as a relationship humans have

⁷ PURCELL 2005, 115.

⁸ GOFF 2005.

⁹ See OWEN 2005 for a recent discussion.

¹⁰ OSBORNE 1998.

¹¹ *E.g.*, ANDERSON 2005.

¹² HURST and OWEN 2005; BRADLEY and WILSON 2006; only TSETSKHLADZE 2006, xxiii-xxviii notes that the terminology is in crisis.

¹³ HOWE 2002, 25; cf. also BOARDMAN 1999, 268 on the recent growth of '-ism' concepts in the study of the Greeks overseas.

¹⁴ WHITLEY 2001, 125.

¹⁵ RANDBORG 2000; LYONS and PAPADOPOULOS 2002; GOSDEN 2004; STEIN 2005.

¹⁶ TRIGGER 2006, 61.

¹⁷ VAN DOMMELEN 2006, 108.

to material culture, and on this basis he includes the ancient Greeks throughout his book¹⁸. But this definition has already been rejected by some¹⁹. Tamar Hodos, for her part, has recently tried bravely to salvage the terms ‘colony’ and ‘colonization’ for an ancient Greek context, redefining these terms and narrowing down their range of meanings²⁰. However, the underlying problem will simply not go away with any of these exercises. Instead, let us turn to the work of Jürgen Osterhammel, ‘the most systematic’²¹ study on colonialism available, for the correct definition:

Colonialism is a relationship of domination between an indigenous (or forcibly imported) majority and a minority of foreign invaders. The fundamental decisions affecting the lives of the colonized people are made and implemented by the colonial rulers in pursuit of interests that are often defined in a distant metropolis. Rejecting cultural compromises with the colonized population, the colonizers are convinced of their own superiority and of their ordained mandate to rule²².

For the early Greek world, there existed very little true colonialism as just defined, general conditions being not at all conducive²³, and it is only in exceptional circumstances, usually after about 500 BC, that this definition may sometimes be satisfied²⁴. So why do we continue to label and describe our subject with terms that, technically speaking, generally do not apply? In a modern North American context Stephen Silliman has called for the reverse of what I am proposing here for an ancient Mediterranean context²⁵. Silliman argues that more regular use should be made of the term colonialism, in lieu of the bland and less politically charged phrase ‘culture contact’ that is now dominant, for colonialism was the primary historical reality that native populations faced in North America. In a similar vein, it can be argued that we, as scholars of the ancient Greek world, should be using more frequently the term ‘culture contact’ to describe the historical reality we study, for that was the main historical reality in our time-periods. The excellent collection of essays edited by James Cusick demonstrates that a wide variety of historical situations and time-periods can easily be accommodated under the umbrella description of ‘culture contact’²⁶. The phrase ‘culture contact’ should serve as the first and general level of description, and then a case should be made to distinguish between the possible types of encounter. The onus must be on those scholars of the ancient Greek world who wish to use the term ‘colonialism’ to prove its existence, instead of batting the term about because it is fashionable. Secondly, the term is easy and satisfying to use, for it describes a phenomenon which people the world over are familiar with given historical developments of recent centuries. Put another way, using a language that speaks of ‘colonialism’, ‘colonies’, and ‘colonization’ readily brings to mind a mental picture that we have been accustomed, often unthinkingly, to accepting over centuries of (ab)use as roughly conveying the subject in all its dimensions. As Wilfried Nippel has rightly observed, ‘...es gibt jedenfalls eine ideengeschichtliche Kontinuität’²⁷. Nevertheless, as we all have clearly recognized, to describe most instances of ancient Greek ‘colonization’ as colonialism *sensu stricto* is false. The ‘word magic’ against which Moses Finley warned will ultimately continue to plague this field of study at a very basic level, unless the spell, which has enchanted us all, is broken for good²⁸.

What is needed is the coining of some new terminology and the use of the more acceptable terminology that already exists. The ancient Greek term *apoikia* (pl. *apoikiai*) deserves to be used more in place of ‘colony’. The term ‘apoikism’, derived from ancient Greek *apoikismos*, should be employed instead

¹⁸ GOSDEN 2004.

¹⁹ DAWDY 2005; HARGRAVE 2005; SILLIMAN 2005, 73 n. 1.

²⁰ HODOS 2006, 19–22.

²¹ HOWE 2002, 133.

²² OSTERHAMMEL 1997, 16–17.

²³ NIPPEL 2003, 14–5.

²⁴ WILSON 2006, 51; cf. BRADLEY 2006, xi–xiii.

²⁵ SILLIMAN 2005.

²⁶ CUSICK 1998.

²⁷ NIPPEL 2003, 15.

²⁸ FINLEY 1976. For a recent example of the magic at work, see DOUGLAS 2007.

of 'colonialism'. A new coinage can be suggested, namely, 'apoikiazation', instead of 'colonization'. The verb could be 'to apoikize' in place of 'to colonize' and the adjective could be 'apoikial' in place of 'colonial'. If true colonialism, as defined earlier, is being discussed, then again a combination of ancient Greek and new terminology could be used. Even at the risk of seeing matters through an Athenian and Ptolemaic lens, the ancient Greek term *kleroukhia* (pl. *kleroukhiai*) could generally be used as an equivalent for colony in the proper sense, 'kleroukhism' for colonialism, 'kleroukhiazation' for colonization, the verb 'to kleroukhize' for to colonize, and 'kleroukhial' for colonial as the adjective. In defence of these coinages, it could be observed that since the nineteenth century scholarship has had no problem in creating neologisms like 'Hellenization', 'Romanization', and the now much-vaunted 'colonialism' because of the need it felt to express in words historical processes deemed important enough to require a new coinage²⁹. It is in the same spirit that we must approach the present proposals, which can be easily applied to the full range of ancient terminology that builds on these basic ancient word-roots³⁰.

A second way to advance discussion in this area is to encourage further study of the modern historical phenomena from which the ancient analogies have been drawn. It might appear that sufficient studies on this topic have appeared since the 1990s, and that, consequently, further study is unnecessary. Nippel, however, has accurately gauged the matter: 'Eine umfassende wissenschaftsgeschichtliche Untersuchung über die althistorischen Arbeiten zur griechischen Kolonisation gibt es...meines Wissens nicht...'³¹. More individual contributions are needed to make such a desirable work possible. Therefore, we have hardly finished with studies on the history of scholarship. Here are a few possible directions.

Considerable attention has already been paid for obvious reasons to the relationship between the British and French Empires and classical scholarship; nonetheless, such studies should doubtless continue. But what about the less lengthy and less extensive German and Italian attempts at colonialism? While it is widely recognized that German scholarship laid the very basis of classical scholarship in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, hardly any attention is paid to the relationship between classical Greek scholarship and modern colonialism in Germany. A very obvious example of such a connection is the lecture 'Die Griechen als Meister der Colonisation' delivered by the distinguished ancient historian Ernst Curtius to Kaiser Wilhelm I as the 'Scramble for Africa' and other colonial forays by Germany were about to begin³². The time is ripe to explore further this modern German context³³. As regards Italy, the place of the ancient Greeks in Italian scholarship from unification to the end of World War II, when, interestingly, ancient Rome was the dominant intellectual model³⁴, has received some attention³⁵. Italian scholarship in this period, it can be noted, was already interpreting ancient cultural encounters with a kind of 'middle ground' model of interaction, an intellectual development which is usually thought only to have emerged in the 1990s³⁶. Greek 'colonies' and their cultural developments were also being treated less dismissively than British scholars did as mere provincial offshoots³⁷. The complexities of the Italian case deserve further attention. Overall, therefore, the full range of modern nations and empires involved in colonialism, whether on the giving or receiving end of it, or both, could be fruitfully studied (one thinks of the Austro-Hungarian empire, Spain, Ireland, Canada, the USA, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Russia before and after the Revolution, and so on).

In any case, the existing studies have, arguably, focused on the more obvious aspects of such faulty analogies and terminologies. Alongside these there must also be close attention to the more subtle influences wielded by modern colonialism. As Chris Gosden has observed, '...nineteenth-century views of colonialism still have a pernicious influence on all our views of colonialism, in a manner which is largely

²⁹ On the coining of the term 'colonialism', see BURKE 2005, 82–83.

³⁰ CASEVITZ 1985.

³¹ NIPPEL 2003, 14.

³² CURTIUS 1883.

³³ Cf. GAUER 1998.

³⁴ MATTINGLY 1996; BARBANERA 1998, 97–159.

³⁵ Cf. DE ANGELIS a, in preparation.

³⁶ Cf. GOSDEN 2004, 82–113.

³⁷ For an overview of the Italian position on ancient Greek art, see SETTIS 1994.

unacknowledged³⁸. Regardless of whether or not we accept Gosden's definition of colonialism, it is crucial to bear in mind that the very questions we ask, the very models we use, the very attitudes we adopt, and the very world we live in are all implicated in some way in our past, present, and future practices³⁹. Gosden himself singles out modern capitalism as having profoundly influenced how we look at objects, land, and labour, as well as the social and economic relationships governing them⁴⁰. He rightly questions the application of capitalist thinking to periods of history before the mid-eighteenth century, a concern which Sara Owen, following Gosden, has echoed for specifically an ancient Greek context⁴¹. I could not agree more. Some scholars working on modern capitalism have called for more work on how colonialism is related to the rise of capitalism⁴². We should be attentive to the results of such work, in order to help disentangle how modern capitalism has affected the study of ancient Greece. Therefore, in pursuing all these histories of scholarship, we can achieve greater clarity of the common ground, if any, and the contrasts between the ancient and modern worlds, since '[w]e need to understand a tradition which has shaped Mediterranean historiography, but not to adopt it'⁴³. In other words, there is no way out of a good understanding of the classical tradition and its relationship with modern colonialism and imperialism. We must continue, therefore, to engage the general discourse of colonialism, as van Dommelen and others have done, but also for a different set of reasons.

Our historical practices are also a product of the legacies outlined above, and, again, the shaping has happened in both obvious and subtle ways. Such matters require discussion on their own, if we are to break out, with any success, from the problematic framework we have inherited.

Re-assessing historical practice

The historical practices followed in the study of Greek 'colonization' comprise both ones specific to this field and ones practised more generally by the disciplines of philology, history, and archaeology and their respective handling of the written and material sources available to us.

Before archaeological evidence came to be collected and incorporated systematically into reconstructions of the past, the first modern accounts of Greek 'colonization', such as those of William Mitford and George Grote⁴⁴, were naturally based primarily on the surviving literary sources. With the development of classical archaeology in the second half of the nineteenth century, efforts were concentrated on corroborating and expanding the surviving written sources, with archaeology occupying a subordinate position in the academy, something which was viewed as natural and normal⁴⁵. These developments have implications with which we must deal still today. Archaeology often received its marching orders from issues raised in the written sources⁴⁶. While there were hypercritical handlers of the ancient written sources in the later nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries, like Karl Julius Beloch and Ettore Pais⁴⁷, the trend for the century that followed was always towards a positivistic philological approach, which regularly treated these ancient written sources as 'authorities'. Developments in cultural history in the 1970s to 1990s brought about important theoretical changes⁴⁸, but by then the impact had already been profound and normalized. Timothy Taylor has drawn attention to this general problem on the heels of praising François Hartog's now classic book on Herodotus' representation of the Scythians:

³⁸ GOSDEN 2004, 20.

³⁹ See the recent collection of studies edited by DE POLIGNAC and LEVIN 2006.

⁴⁰ GOSDEN 2004, 8–9, 115–116.

⁴¹ OWEN 2005, 15–16.

⁴² JOHNSON 1996, 209–210; ALAVI forthcoming.

⁴³ PURCELL 2005, 134.

⁴⁴ MITFORD 1784-1810; GROTE 1846-1856.

⁴⁵ Cf. TRIGGER 2006, 62, 79.

⁴⁶ See SNODGRASS 2002.

⁴⁷ AMPOLO 1997, 96–99.

⁴⁸ BURKE 2004, 30–99.

Most archaeologists have read Herodotus with far less sensitivity. The chronicle of historical peoples and events has tyrannized protohistoric archaeology. Archaeological cultures and culture-groups have been uncritically identified with peoples described in the ancient texts... (whereas the results of excavation have not been allowed to challenge the overall conceptual framework provided by the texts). In south-east European and Soviet scholarship there has been a strong tendency to use partial and simplistic readings to justify particular lines of interpretation....⁴⁹.

There have also been more subtle ways in which ancient writings, often considerably shorter in length (sometimes a mere number of words) than Herodotus' account of the Scythians, have shaped the study of the past in equally noteworthy ways. Brief statements made by Thucydides in Book VI, for example, have been used to help formulate the absolute chronology of the Archaic period and have been taken as the model of (violent) culture contact between Greeks and natives in Sicily⁵⁰. Closer and more theoretically informed looks at the surviving ancient literary sources have proved extremely beneficial and fruitful, and they need to continue⁵¹. However, they need to continue more in conjunction with, or at the very least with an eye to, the material sources, because historical reconstructions of the early Greek world still tend, in narrow fashion, to privilege written sources⁵².

In the study of Greek 'colonization' such privileging has a detrimental effect on both Greeks and non-Greeks, in that it silences a whole range of dimensions to our subject. The work of Michel-Rolph Trouillot is fundamental in understanding how historical narratives and their silences are created and shaped by power⁵³. For Trouillot, 'What matters most are the process and conditions of production of such narratives'⁵⁴. Power enters the story at different times and angles: it precedes the narrative and contributes to its creation and interpretation, but power always begins at the source⁵⁵. In Trouillot's framework, it is easy to see how the ancient Greeks are bound to come out ahead in modern scholarly works on account of two interrelated and mutually feeding factors: they have fairly abundant ancient sources, both written and archaeological, for their study, and modern scholars have traditionally favoured the ancient Greeks, giving them a loud and active voice over non-Greek peoples in historical accounts. Jonathan Hall has recently argued that this Hellenocentrism will continue to be inevitable in ancient Mediterranean history, for two main reasons: there are written sources for the ancient Greeks, and archaeological histories for non-Greeks will never be able to make up for that gap⁵⁶. Such statements have the power to encourage further historical reconstructions based only or primarily on written sources, and hence to strait-jacket definitions of history, and to stunt the development of archaeological practices that can also benefit immensely the literate ancient Greeks⁵⁷. Part of the way forward must surely lie in reassessing our over-reliance on ancient literature in our historical reconstructions and to appreciate the intricacies of oral cultures and the conversion, if at all, of their verbal stories into 'literature'⁵⁸. That written sources are somehow more reliable and better than material culture, and by extension that prehistoric peoples are somehow inferior than literate and hence 'civilized' peoples⁵⁹,

⁴⁹ TAYLOR 1994, 374; HARTOG 1988.

⁵⁰ DE ANGELIS a, in preparation.

⁵¹ DOUGHERTY 1993; DOUGHERTY and KURKE 1993; 2003; GARCÍA QUINTELA 2001; BERNSTEIN 2004; HALL 2007, 93–118; FAUBER in preparation.

⁵² HALL 2007, 17.

⁵³ TROUILLOT 1995.

⁵⁴ TROUILLOT 1995, 25.

⁵⁵ TROUILLOT 1995, 28–29.

⁵⁶ HALL 2007, 288–289.

⁵⁷ And a review of Hall's book has expressed much the same sentiment and course of action, though in more general terms: VLASSOPOULOS 2007.

⁵⁸ See CULLER 1997, 18–41, on modern ideas of literature, and GOLDBERG 2005 for a recent analysis of the oral/writing conversion from the classical world.

⁵⁹ GOSDEN 2003, 15–16; BURKE 2005, 110.

is a problem that has already started to be reconciled, but there is still a long way to go⁶⁰. Archaeology has helped to correct these prejudices, yet even here more can be done to develop two particular kinds of archaeology: prehistoric and contact.

The concept of prehistory is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, prehistory began as an intellectual concept and pursuit in the nineteenth century, when Europeans sought to measure their progressive development over peoples not regarded as advanced⁶¹. In other words, prehistory was born in the spirit of cultural superiority versus cultural inferiority and justified the place and policies Europeans enjoyed and forged. In this framework, as already said, peoples without written sources for study were condescendingly regarded as lesser subjects left behind in this linear, progressive thinking⁶². The contemporary creation of the concepts of migration and diffusionism as explanatory frameworks compounded the problem, doing so much to rob supposed inferior cultures of any agency or innovation; progress resided in the ‘cultural hearth’ that was Europe. History could only happen and exist when the two cultural systems came into contact, allowing thereby the supposed inferior culture to acquire the necessary significance⁶³. The sting of such pejorative formulations will certainly be lessened by considering the other side of prehistory’s double-edge: all literate societies, including the ancient Greeks and our own and future ones, will always have aspects of life that are not put down into words, hence making them ‘prehistoric’ in some sense too⁶⁴. Soviet archaeology’s focus on the study of everyday life has been successfully applied to ancient Greek ‘colonial’ contexts in the Black Sea, for the subject of everyday life is usually not illuminated to any significant degree in our ancient written sources. It is an important approach to essentially prehistoric contexts that, once shorn of its original, underlying ideological aims referred to above⁶⁵, can make a very positive contribution to Greek ‘colonial’ contexts around the Mediterranean⁶⁶. The growth and development of this sort of prehistoric archaeology should run in parallel with contact archaeology.

The traditional carving up of Mediterranean archaeologies into prehistoric versus classical does not do justice to and handily avoids the ancient cultural encounters and overlapping that occurred through contact, as well as the messiness of competing methodologies, terminologies, and theoretical frameworks⁶⁷. This artificial distinction between different disciplines has also been maintained in other parts of the world with contact zone history⁶⁸, but the situation is slowly changing for the better there too⁶⁹. While the marriage of textual and material sources has been under way in some quarters of Greek ‘colonial’ studies⁷⁰, it is something that can be encouraged even further⁷¹. In particular, regardless of the question(s) asked, the union of textual and material sources has to be balanced and aimed at recapturing as many of the complexities as possible of ancient contact zones, not just to the ancient Greek side of it, or whatever side we might wish to identify with⁷². Therefore, to be done properly, in my view, contact archaeology should be multi-sided and interdisciplinary and demands that the scholars who practise it have an independent handle on both the textual and material sources of all parties concerned, something which is not for everyone and still in its infancy as a practice in Greek history⁷³, let alone in Greek culture contact history. No one source should be regarded as subservient or inferior to another in this framework⁷⁴.

⁶⁰ TRIGGER 2006, 498.

⁶¹ McNIVEN and RUSSELL 2005, 11–49.

⁶² POMIAN 1984; TROUILLOT 1995, 7; DUARA 2002, 419.

⁶³ McNIVEN and RUSSELL 2005, 88–180.

⁶⁴ This is one of the recurrent arguments made by GOSDEN 2003; the recent call for the abandonment of prehistory seems unnecessary in this light: SILLIMAN 2005, 74 n. 2.

⁶⁵ But see also TAYLOR 2003.

⁶⁶ Cf. TRIGGER 2006, 334–341 on this Soviet contribution to archaeology.

⁶⁷ GRAS 2000a, 601.

⁶⁸ LIGHTFOOT 1995.

⁶⁹ MURRAY 2004.

⁷⁰ See, for instance, GRAS 1995; 2002; ROLLE, SCHMIDT and DOCTER 1998; DE ANGELIS 2003; OWEN 2003; cf. BRADLEY 2006, xiii.

⁷¹ Cf. TRIGGER 2006, 65, 502.

⁷² Cf. WACHTEL 1977, 2.

⁷³ MORRIS 2002, 50, 67.

⁷⁴ Cf. TRIGGER 2006, 504.

Both prehistoric and contact archaeology in the ancient Mediterranean have had few practical applications of post-colonial theory to their data⁷⁵, though some such studies do exist⁷⁶. Here too there are many more possibilities.

Studying ancient Greek 'colonization' is quickly becoming, therefore, an intellectually challenging endeavour, for all the reasons just outlined, as well as for the vastness of time and space encompassed by the phenomenon. As Michel Gras has rightly urged, a certain intellectual courage is needed to tackle this period of early Mediterranean history, an intellectual courage that is not afraid to experiment or make mistakes⁷⁷. The latter must explain in part why historical narratives are currently stacked against Greek 'colonization' being an integrated part of the ancient Greek story⁷⁸. The rest of the explanation must also lie in these scholarly frameworks that put the focus on the Greek homeland in the first place as the 'cultural hearth' of a supposed 'colonial' world. The general problem has recently been summed up by Christopher Smith in reviewing Whitley:

If there is a disappointing aspect of the book, it is perhaps its self-imposed limitation as an archaeology of Greece.... Arguably, however, the peculiar triumph of Greek art, and perhaps the most important reason for its claim to art-historical significance, is not its self-sufficient beauty, but its remarkable adaptability to different historical and geographical contexts, and its openness to external influence. The radical fluidity and 'connectivity' of the Mediterranean world...is only one part of a wider undermining of the conceptual validity of Greece as an object of study separate from its Mediterranean setting⁷⁹.

The ancient Greeks need to be studied more in their Mediterranean setting in order to understand them better⁸⁰, and Greek 'colonization' offers an ideal lens through which to do so⁸¹. To do so will require the adoption and development of a new set of methods, perspectives, and attitudes. We will all need to move away from the familiar and the comfortable. There is much to be gained in doing so. Some of the benefits have just been discussed, but there are others of contemporary relevance that transcend the field itself.

Contemporary relevance

The stories that scholarship told until recently about ancient Greek 'colonization' have served their original purpose: that is, of disseminating a higher and aggressive classical culture to more primitive and passive peripheries. In other words, the ancient Greeks acted as a mirror and precedent for the contemporary aspirations and behaviour of European states and empires⁸². Does the study of ancient Greek 'colonization' have any relevance or value today, now that the original contexts that motivated its study continue to disappear? The broad question of the relationship between Hellenism and modernity is something that I will take as read; here the focus will be on the future of the study of Greek 'colonization' and in particular what it can teach us in a world that is increasingly becoming integrated and characterized by the migration of peoples⁸³.

Marc Ferro has observed that decolonization since the end of World War II has multiplied the centres of historical production in the world⁸⁴. The entry of many more nations into the practice of history-writing,

⁷⁵ WEBSTER and COOPER 1996; VAN DOMMELEN 2006; cf. also BURKE 2005, 104–108.

⁷⁶ See ANTONACCIO 2003; 2005; MORRIS and TUSA 2004; STREIFFERT EIKELAND 2006.

⁷⁷ GRAS 2000b, 230.

⁷⁸ This problem continues in the most recent account of the early Greek world: HALL 2007; cf. also the review by VLASSOPOULOS 2007.

⁷⁹ SMITH 2003, 213; WHITLEY 2001.

⁸⁰ For a still too rare example, see DEMAND 2006.

⁸¹ DE ANGELIS b, in preparation.

⁸² TRIGGER 2006, 73.

⁸³ PAGDEN 2001.

⁸⁴ FERRO 2003, 361.

themselves often forged as nations out of European colonial and imperial pasts, has inevitably raised the question of a multicultural past, present, and future⁸⁵. Multicultural history-writing is no less politicized than homogeneous one-sided views of the past, and nowhere more in the study of ancient Greece will the political and cultural views of particular practitioners become apparent⁸⁶. Someone who lives in, say, Canada with its officially bilingual and multicultural policies will certainly have a different take on the past than someone writing in, say, the USA or France with their policies of cultural assimilation. Many other contrasting viewpoints could, of course, be cited. Nevertheless ancient Greek culture contact history is one of those historical case studies that is, to use that oft-employed phrase, good to think with, especially because of the widespread study of and fascination with ancient Greece around the world, including in non-Western contexts⁸⁷. In engaging multicultural issues in the past, and the interdisciplinary and comparative perspectives needed to understand them, our own world is inevitably thrown into the spotlight. Greek 'colonization' was also characterized by the interplay of local, regional, and global dimensions of the human past, and so it is another example of world history, which is again coming back into vogue and which, as just discussed, will only enrich our understanding of the ancient Greeks⁸⁸. Studying Greek 'colonization' introduces students and scholars alike, therefore, to a multitude of modern historical perspectives. This in itself is a good thing, something which should be stressed in the teaching of students right from their first encounters⁸⁹ with the ancient Greeks. Greek 'colonization' is a topic that needs to be added consciously to discussions about the future teaching of classical studies⁹⁰.

The study of Greek 'colonization' was no doubt thrown off its traditional course in the 1990s, and Purcell, cited at the outset, is correct in thinking that this is a field currently in crisis. But I suspect that the crisis will not be long-lasting or detrimental to the future growth and development of the subject, for classical scholars have always had a remarkable ability to evolve and adapt⁹¹, and Greek 'colonization' (or 'apoikiazation'!) provides ample opportunities for this to happen. It is time to bring the other half of the ancient Greek world into our historical and archaeological discussions in a serious way.

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⁸⁵ See in general GABACCIA 2002.

⁸⁶ OBER 2003; cf. also GABACCIA 2002, 442–4.

⁸⁷ SETTIS 2004.

⁸⁸ BENTLEY 2002; BURKE 2005, 186–7.

⁸⁹ So FERRO 2003.

⁹⁰ For which, see most recently BULWER 2006.

⁹¹ SPIVEY and SQUIRE 2005, 8.

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