Identity in the Classical World
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Introduction

The topic of identity in antiquity is one that has until recently been largely confined to studying texts that describe the barbarian as “other.” Current scholarship, however, is moving away from this approach to guide the discussion toward the varied and nuanced approaches to ethnic identity in the classical world. This focus allows scholars and students to explore new thought-provoking research on how classical civilizations addressed the concept of identity in their individual lives and communities. On the following pages, engaging studies and thoughtful questions are presented to start the conversation. All excerpts come from full volumes that you can find at www.routledge.com/classicalstudies.

To begin the discussion, the following passage is excerpted from the introduction to The Routledge Handbook of Identity and the Environment in the Classical and Medieval Worlds, edited by Rebecca Futo Kennedy and Molly Jones-Lewis. In this collection, the editors “give new direction to the study of identity in antiquity by showcasing environmental theories of ethnicity in their larger cultural and historical contexts.” After the introduction, Rebecca Futo Kennedy’s chapter from the same handbook, Airs, Waters, Metals, Earth: People and Environment in Archaic and Classical Greek Thought, examines how Greeks conceptualized human diversity in relation to the environment.

Next, in Colinisation, Matthew Dillon and Lynda Garland discuss the colonization of the Greek world, and the different names used to refer to the Greek people. This section is taken from Ancient Greece: Social and Historical Documents from Archaic Times to the Death of Alexander, 3rd Edition, part of the Routledge Sourcebooks for the Ancient World series.

Chapter 3 is also from The Routledge Handbook of Identity and the Environment in the Classical and Medieval Worlds. Overcoming Environmental Determinism: Introduced Species, Hybrid Plants and Animals, and Transformed Lands in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds, by Jared Secord, focuses on Hellenistic and Roman willingness to introduce animals and plants to new regions, and the results of these introductions.

Finally, in Chapter 4, Animals as Moral Beings, Stephen Newmyer explores ancient beliefs surrounding the question of whether non-human animals possess reason, which appears in a section of his book, Animals in Greek and Roman Thought: A Sourcebook.
Identity and the Environment

Rebecca Futo Kennedy and Molly Jones-Lewis

Speculation about human difference and unity is evident in some of the earliest written sources in the Mediterranean. Interestingly, the Greek sources of this period, unlike those that come to us in the Hebrew Bible, posit no single creator for all of mankind, but allow for varieties of creations and births. When a single “race” of humans is created, as in Hesiod, the “races” of mankind were generations of people, born (or created by gods) and then destroyed. The “races,” however, were not the origins of distinctive groups of humans, and most peoples with whom the Greeks (and, later, the Romans) came into contact were incorporated within this single human race through mythical genealogies. And yet, the ancients observed that humanity was itself divided into groups with distinctive physical features, languages, and customs.

Many theories arose to account for how these differences had come into being and what they meant for a group’s identity. Earliest Greek thought posited that peoples at the edges of the world were, in fact, not humans but monsters; this notion survived well into the early modern period. The scientific awakening of the Greeks and development of medicine in the Hippocratic tradition, however, gave rise to theories of geographic and climatic determinism that went beyond the process of placing monsters and wonders in the geographic extremes. Philosophers and early ethnographers addressed observable human difference with speculative theories of biological or hereditary determinism. Some ancient peoples even developed theories of separate human origins for themselves; they claimed to be autochthonous, born from their own land and not by evolution from the humans created by Deucalion and Pyrrha. Theories based on the mixing of peoples from these autochthonous origins through mythic conquests accounted for both human differences and similarities, and theories of colonization and migration abounded. But it was not always clear to the ancients (or to us now) what counted as a distinguishing characteristic: Were peoples to be distinguished by physical features, by language, by religious practices, by choice of government, or by funeral rights, etc.? Were these practices a result of phusis or nomos?

The multifarious theories the ancients developed which wended their way to the modern world through medieval and early modern audiences were not always distinct, nor did they develop chronologically, one theory building upon another. Rather, the theories often competed with each other, sometimes within a single text. As the Greeks and Romans expanded their explorations and conquests into northern Europe, Asia, Africa and beyond the Pillars, they found themselves confronted with increased
differences. At the same time, the “monsters” that had once been thought to inhabit the edges of the world came into focus as real peoples, with their own cultures and physical characteristics. As exploration and map making developed further in the late antique and medieval worlds, these monsters remained and retained much of their ancient function, as they were used to explain and categorize human differences on the periphery. Old theories were adjusted and new ones evolved.¹ Consistently, however, the Greeks and Romans and their intellectual heirs in the medieval world viewed environment—land, climate, geography, and man-made—as a key factor in defining identity. In some regions, the Greek and Roman blended with Christian, Jewish, and Arab traditions to give new life to the ancient ideas within environments the Greeks and Romans themselves would have considered foreign. Even as history moved beyond the “golden ages” of Greece and Rome, what was considered the world’s center and, therefore, the ideal environment to produce ideal peoples shifted away from the Mediterranean to other regions of the world—every culture inevitably becoming its own center with different peripheries. And yet, the ancient environmental theories continued to be used and adapted, or, in cases such as ancient China, seem to have developed concurrently with the Greek and Roman ideas.

Notes
1 See, for example, Grafton 1995.

Bibliography
Airs, Waters, Metals, Earth: People and Environment in Archaic and Classical Greek Thought
Chapter 1. Airs, Waters, Metals, Earth: People and Environment in Archaic and Classical Greek Thought

Rebecca Futo Kennedy

Introduction

“Do it, if you want. But be prepared to rule no longer but be ruled instead. For soft men tend to come from soft lands. It’s not common for marvelous fruits and men courageous in war to grow from the same earth.” The Persians agreed, defeated by Cyrus’ logic, and decided to return home. They thus chose to dwell in a poor land and rule rather than sow rich soil and be slaves to others. (Hdt. 9.122)²

The notion that soft men come from soft lands seems to have been an idée reçue for Herodotus and has remained so in the myths of the American West, Orientalist constructions of the East, and Blut und Boden ideologies. It rests on the notion that there is a deep and abiding connection between humans and their land. In relationship to their land, a people were thought to have developed their character and culture. More than just character and custom, the land also affected physiques. The softness of the Persians inheres not only in their temperament but in their bodies as well. Herodotus suggests this physical softness when discussing how the environment, in this case the climate, affects Egyptian and Persian skulls (Hdt. 3.12.2–4):

They say that the cause of this phenomenon is as follows (and they persuaded me easily): The Egyptians, right from childhood, shave their heads and the bone is thickened in the sun. This is the same reason why they do not become bald—Egyptians have the fewest number of bald men out of all mankind. This, then, is why Egyptian men have strong heads. The Persians have weak heads because they wear felt hats from birth to shelter themselves from the sun.

Persian skulls are weak and soft, while Egyptian skulls are hard and strong (and haired). For Herodotus, customs developed among the Egyptians that used the harsh sunlight to strengthen their skulls, while the Persians had a custom of wearing hats to protect themselves from their climate—environment determines bodies and determines customs. Which comes first, custom or nature (nomos or physis), is a hen-and-egg question, but clearly environment and culture intersect to create identifying ethnic characteristics—skull density is an ethnic trait as all Egyptians have strong skulls, while all Persians have weak ones.²

In this chapter, I explore three interrelated ways the Archaic and classical Greeks conceptualized the relationship between environment and ethnicity: myths of metals, autochthony, and environmental determinism. I argue that these approaches to the relationship binding human and land attempt to rationalize human difference in a way
that privileges indigenous status and encompasses ideas of hereditary superiority. This rationalization might be considered a type of ‘proto-social Darwinism,’ an organization of human diversity that ranks peoples on a scale from superior to inferior based on a normative standard of purity. This scale derives either from environmental metaphors or is in direct relationship to the environment itself. For my purposes, I am limiting ‘environment’ to earth and its elements, its climate, topography, and geography. I will not consider built environments except in so far as they are intended to emphasize natural environments.

In what follows, I provide a series of case studies that explore different ways Archaic and classical Greeks conceptualized human diversity in relation to environment, in particular, the land. These may not cohere into a single over-arching theory, but are nonetheless related. Each approach tries to reconcile the visibility of human difference, both physical and cultural, with the fact that humans are a single species who can, if they desire, sexually reproduce. The reconciliation works by organizing peoples into hierarchies based on purported inherent qualities, qualities that are derived from their locations of origin. These ideas offered a response to anxieties that may have affected the Greeks when faced with a world with frequent migrations. Kaplan shows that the Greeks may have assuaged this anxiety with migratory myths and traditions that posit horizontal kinship relationships between different sets of Greeks (as well as Phoenicians, Egyptians, and Persians) throughout the Mediterranean. The environmental theories, on the other hand, offered an explanation for why these peoples should be differentiated and further justified antagonistic political realities even amongst the Greeks themselves. Kaplan’s “discourses of displacement” may have been more common in the mythscape for some Greeks, but discourses tying people to specific lands still operated and often existed side by side with migratory origin stories.

It is difficult to discuss identity without addressing the translation of the Greek terminology, in particular genos and ethnos, which are typically translated as ‘race’ and ‘ethnicity’ respectively. While the term ‘race’ frequently translates genos, this should not confuse us into thinking that it carries the baggage of the modern construct of scientific race as it appears in government census data and other official quarters, especially in the United States. The ancient Greeks did not have a concept of a ‘white’ or ‘black’ race, nor of ‘red’ or ‘yellow’ races. This does not mean, however, that they did not have some concept for groups of peoples defined through shared biological descent that can be approximated with non-scientific ‘race.’ The term genos is frequently used by the ancient sources in contexts of birth and descent. A genos is often linked by biology and genealogy, thus ‘race’ is not an inappropriate translation, even if it inadvertently assumes some modern baggage.

The connection between genos and kinship that we see in the texts discussed in this
chapter might lead one to assume that ethnos is used when identity is defined through political and/or cultural associations and is therefore understood as a subset of genos. This is sometimes the case, but it is also clear that ethnos is used as well in the ancient sources to denote peoples linked biologically or through kinship. Both genos and ethnos can refer to groups defined by distant kinship even if ethnos in the texts discussed in this chapter is also suggestive of shared culture or political structures. An ethnos is usually a group of people who share a government—among Greeks, the polis of one's origin is frequently an ethnos, while Hellene is sometimes a genos, sometimes an ethnos, and Ionian can be a genos, an ethnos, or phulē. Thus, the 'ethnic' for a metic in Athens was typically something like “of Byzantium” or “of Miletus”, while their genos was likely Hellene, if they lived in a period when 'Hellene' was recognized as a universal category for those living in the Greek world, who shared certain cultural characteristics and descent. If one were a Hellene and not an Egyptian, Phoenician, or Persian, for example, their phulē would have, perhaps, been Ionian or Dorian. Despite this lack of consistency, I have elected to translate the term ethnos with 'people' (as a collective singular), a usage that includes under its umbrella cultural, political, and kinship associations. For clarity's sake, however, I will include the Greek terms when they appear in each text for categories like race, ethnicity, tribe, or other similar affiliations.

What of the prejudices associated with modern categories of race and ethnicity? If there are no 'race' or ethnicity' as we understand them in modern terms, is there racism or ethnocentrism? Here things are even more difficult to sort because there is evidence from antiquity of stereotypes and prejudices against groups based on kinship, physical appearance, perceived inherent character, gender, language (including accents), and social or economic class, almost all of which groups can be defined using the terms genos or ethnos. Thus, the prejudices associated with the terms genos and ethnos in antiquity are not limited to modern racism or ethnocentrism. The type of hierarchization I am arguing for in this chapter, however, might fall clearly under the terms 'racism' or 'ethnocentrism' today. Some of the responses to and manifestations of these prejudices could even be called 'racialist,' as with the 451 BCE Citizenship Law of Perikles in Athens. But my argument is not that the relationship posited by these texts between identity and environment are racist, racialist, or ethnocentric in the modern senses of the words, and one may ask why we even need to find a modern practice that corresponds exactly to ancient types of discrimination. The Greek texts offer a variety of ways for their audience to imagine, construct, and define their own identity and the identity of others based on different associations with place and space, some of which appear analogous to racism and ethnocentrism. They are not the same as our modern pseudo-scientific model of racism, but inherent in these ways of imagining are value judgments that classify people as superior or inferior, as part of in or out groups, in
ways that could not easily be altered simply by moving to another climate or geographic location, environment at conception and birth mattered most. These value judgments are at first attached to consecutive genē of humans (as in Hesiod’s myth of metals), but soon are used to subdivide humanity just as the oikoumenē itself was divided. This division and the value judgments inherent in them begins with Hesiod, who presents us with an example of the notion of ‘purity,’ and who hints at a concept of anti-miscegenation that I think is one underlying current in the construction of ethnic identities in ancient Greece.

**Hesiod’s metal men**

Where did human beings come from? The Greeks told a number of different stories, some of which they derived from their eastern neighbors. In Hesiod’s *Works and Days* (Op. 109–201), the earliest of our Greek authors to speculate on the origins of people, humans are made by the Olympian gods (athanatoi poiēsan), presumably from earth and other natural elements. In fact, there are five attempts at creating humans, the first four of which end in mass extinctions. It has been long understood that the metallic associations of the five ‘races’ of mortal men (genē) reflects a valuation of the qualities of the humans made from them not only in life but also in death. One aspect of this valuation, however, has been overlooked, and that is the purity of the metals and its significance. While the first two genē are pure metals, the other three races are impure—they are either represented by alloys, are metals that require extensive refining and purification, or are products of miscegenation between two different genē. The status of pure or impure is reflected not only in their names, but in the way their lives and after-lives are represented. Purity equates with luxury, ease, and honors after death, while impurity equates with hard labor, lack, and no clear honor in death.

According to Hesiod, there are five genē: gold (chruseion), silver (argureon), bronze (chalkeon), “godlike race of hero-men” (andrōn hērōōn theion genos, 159) also called the “half-gods” (hemetheioi, 160), and iron (sidēreon). The first two genē are marked by ‘pure’ metals, noble metals that can be easily extracted from ores and do not oxidize. The hallmark of these groups is the ease of their lives—the land yielded up its fruits spontaneously (automatē) and ungrudgingly for the golden genos, and gave them a life free of sorrow and pain, just as the gods had (hōste theōn), while the silver spent the bulk of its life in childishness, tended by their mothers (we have no idea who they are). Further, in death, both were marked as blessed and granted honors. The golden was honored as “pure mortal spirits” (daimones hagnoi epichthonioi) and warded off of evil: “who watch over judgments and wicked deeds while clad in a mist, roaming everywhere upon the earth, granters of wealth” (Hes. Op. 122–6). The silver, while “by far worse” (polu cheiroteron) than the golden, “are called blessed mortals under the
earth (hupochthonioi makares thnētoi)—in second place, but similar honor accompanies them” (141–2).

The next two races characterized by metals—the bronze and iron—live lives of violence and need. The bronze genos (145–55), made from ash trees (ek melian), is enamored of violence (hubris) and is characterized by its brute strength (megalē biē) and hardness of heart (adamantos kraterphrona thumon); it kills itself off (151–5). Their association with bronze emphasizes their love of weapons and warfare—Hesiod tells us that their weapons and armor are all made of bronze. Bronze also was not a ‘pure’ metal, but an alloy made by mixing different, weaker metals (copper and tin, primarily). If the metal signifies their inherent character, in this third generation, the metal also suggests an impurity or even degeneration of the genos.

The degeneration of the genē continues with the iron genos, another ‘impure’ metal that needs to be worked and refined—in order to be useable (174–201). This race, the one to which Hesiod himself is loath to belong (174–5), is defined by its lack—lack of ease (176–8), lack of respect and reverence (182–8), lack of honor or sense of justice (189–96). This lack highlights what makes each of the races distinct, what defines them, and what their valuation means. Better men live in ease and comfort, closer to the gods than not. Better men revere the gods, uphold oaths, are bigger, better, and stronger than others. Even in their childishness and love of violence, the silver and bronze races still were closer to the gods than the iron men. The earth gave up its bounty for them without suffering and toil, even if, as with the bronze race, the men did not eat grain (151). The iron men, however, must labor for their harvest, just as iron itself must endure a smelting process to remove its impurities; the hard work it takes to achieve useable iron characterizes the lives of the iron men.15

Into this metallic hierarchy is inserted a fourth genos that is not characterized by a metal. These people, the hemitheioi, are hybrids born from the gods mating, it seems, with the genos of women descended from Pandora. This race, according to Hesiod here, while blessed in many ways, was destroyed in war, although Zeus whisked some away to the isles of the blessed “at the edges of the earth” (es peirata gaiēs, 168). Although Hesiod does not say in Works and Days, the hemitheioi are the result of procreation between gods and humans as opposed to the other genē who are made by the gods from earth or trees.16 This brings up two points of concern. First, they are not given a metal designation, but stand alone outside of this earth-linked discourse—they are not “born of the earth” and so are not designated by an earthly metal. Second, they are a product of the miscegenation of two genē, the genos of the gods and the genos of women, the descendants of the earth-made Pandora, as is discussed further below. In what is likely a part of the Hesiodic Eolae, it is Zeus himself who intends to destroy this particular genos of mortal men even as he fathered many of them (Berlin Papyrus
For high-thundering Zeus was devising wondrous deeds then, to stir up trouble on the boundless earth; for he was already eager to annihilate most of the race of speech-endowed human beings, a pretext to destroy [100] the lives of the semi-gods, [ ] to mortal children of the gods [ ] seeing with eyes, but that the ones blessed [ ] as before apart from human beings should have [life and] habitations. Hence [he established] for immortals and for mortal human beings difficult warfare.

The key element of the above fragment is that this race was destroyed because it was godly, but not godly enough (something we should keep in mind when thinking about discriminatory laws). It was miscegenation with the gods that Zeus sought to end, miscegenation that created a lesser people. Here, as with the use of bronze and iron metals, there is a hint of impurity about this genos that, perhaps, explains why they are destroyed—as inferiors to the gods through miscegenation with humans, they are not worthy of the honors of the purer genē of gold and silver, even though some are granted an afterlife beyond the boundaries of the earth. It also establishes the principle that miscegenation between genē is bad and produces inferior, impure peoples. A similar dynamic appears, as we shall see, in discussions of the various peoples born from Pandora’s descendants and after the great flood. There we see numerous autochthonous groups emerge, some then “mixing” with others, some seeming not to have.

Born from the earth

Although it is not explicitly stated, except with the bronze genos made from ash trees, it can be assumed that the other metal genē were made or ‘born from the earth’ (gēgenesis or autochthony) through the agency of Zeus and the other gods. This idea
that peoples emerge from or are made from the land that they then inhabit has a long tradition, starting with Hesiod’s Pandora (Th. 570–93; Op. 60–105) and continuing throughout the classical period. In the section that follows, I argue that this distinction as a type of ‘earth-born’ people can be used to emphasize a hierarchy rooted in a notion that the land in which one is born was thought to imbue the peoples there with specific innate characteristics, just as the metal that designated the metal genē was a mark of their inherent value and genos-purity. These innate characteristics, I suggest, were thought to be suited to and shaped by specific landscapes and were not transferable to another space. Furthermore, to be ‘mixed’ was to be impure and so inferior, which meant restricting interactions between those not born of that land and the indigenous. Or, it risked a deterioration of the innate character and integrity of a people (deterioration such as could occur with iron through oxidation). There is also an element of manufacture—the less-labored, earth-born are superior (as with the gold, silver, and bronze races), while the more wrought or labored are inferior (as with the iron race and the hemitheoi); peoples who use technē to alter or combat nature are inferior to those whom nature properly endows. In these approaches, we see the conceptualization of identity through the relationship to environment as forming hierarchies among different peoples based upon not only the earthly elements from which they emerge or are made, but the geographic space whence they came.

Part of the process of creating hierarchies resides in the double meaning of autochthony in our classical Greek sources. It can mean both ‘born of the earth,’ arguably its secondary meaning, or ‘always having the same land,’ i.e., indigenous.20 As Rosivach has discussed at length, the earliest meaning of the term autochthon is most likely the latter and the term only acquired its connection to being born from the earth (gēgenesis in other sources) in the peculiar Athenian context where the earth-born early king Erichthonios (or sometimes Erechtheus) becomes the progenitor of all Athenians, who also lay claim to being the earliest and only true inhabitants of their land. Thus is born the notion of Athenian exceptionalism that they used frequently to set themselves above not only non-Greeks, but other Greeks as well, in ways that other ‘born of the earth’ peoples did not. I begin with pre-Athenian representations of gēgenesis and then discuss within this thought-scape the particular instance of Athenian indigenous status, one of the most prominent identities formed through connection with environment from the Greek world.

*Hesiod’s Pandora and her descendants*

The genos of woman, according to Hesiod in *Theogony*, is “molded from earth” (gaiēs gar sumplasse, Th. 571), “wrought as an evil for men” (teuksen kakon anthropoisi, Th. 570). She is not named Pandora here, but is dressed up with all the gifts of the gods,
including silvery garments, a veil, garlands of flowers, and a golden crown decorated with terrible wild creatures (knōdala deina) nourished by land (ēpeiros) and sea (thalassa) (Th. 582). As Loraux points out, the creation of woman is in addition to man and with her comes the need for sexual reproduction—gēgenesis of humanity generally stops with the generation of woman. In Works and Days, Pandora’s creation from the earth is also recounted. In this instance, Zeus orders Hephaistos to “mix earth and water” (gaian hudei phurein, 61) from which to make a “beautiful form of a maiden” (partheikēs kalon eidos, 64). Hephaistos obliges and “molds from the earth (ek gaiēs plasse) a likeness to a tender maiden” (70–71). In both accounts, the genos of women is an evil (kakos) or a trick (dolos) for men. This genos is a calamity (pēma), something denoted in Works and Days more explicitly because the earth itself is “mixed.” Phurein, although frequently treated as a neutral term in translations, is not. Phurein means to defile something, to pollute the earth with the water, to confuse or confound. Like the bronze and iron races of men who were generated before, woman is impure and a product of technē, and, as such, is an inferior genos, an inferior genos that taints even the gods, producing the hemitheoi. From the time of Pandora, the risk of impurity lingers for all peoples who must reproduce sexually. The symbolism of Pandora’s pithos as a womb has often been noted—to open it is to release evils upon the world.

It is important to note that for Hesiod and other Greeks, women were imagined as a separate genos, a “race apart.” There are “tribes of women” (phula) who make up the genos (Th. 591), phula whom Hesiod described at some length in his Catalogue of Women (Ehoiai). These tribes include Greek heroes born from the affairs of gods and the genos of women, presumably the men of the fourth, ‘heroic’ race. These peoples also seem to include such foreign ethnoi as the Scythians, Ethiopians, Pygmies, and Makrokephaloi, all peoples who lived on the edges of the world and who differed markedly in the appearances and cultures from the Greeks. In this tradition, then, whether for good or ill, human variation derives from the ‘mixed’ earthmade genos of women. And yet, the descendants of woman cannot account for all peoples of the world nor did all Greeks admit descent from the evil gift of Zeus to man. Instead, there are numerous stories of other generations of earth-born peoples, generations that had no connection to Pandora and her kind.

After the flood

After Zeus depopulated much of the earth with a great flood, one group of people was regenerated by Deucalion and Pyrrha. This pair were told to toss stones onto the earth and these stones became humans. According to Pindar, it happened at the village of
Opus (Olymp. 9.40–46): “Deucalion and Pyrrha, by the decree of lightning wielding Zeus, descended from Parnassus and first established their home. There they asexually (ater eunas) created a unified people (homodamos), made from stone, a people [laos] named from the stone (laos).” Pindar’s laoi are a unified, autochthonous people who are worthy to open his song. Their status as earthborn descendants of the legendary Deucalion marks them as both indigenous to their land and the progenitors of great men, such as Epharmostus, the victor celebrated in the ode. From the laos-born peoples came “your bronze-shielded ancestors from the beginning” (54–5) who were “always indigenous/true-born (egechorioi) kings” (57). This strand of indigenous people was ‘improved’, as Pindar tells us, when Zeus decided to infuse their stock with his own seed and transport the daughter of Opus to Locrus, which then opened its gates to “foreigners” (xenoi). Locrus becomes a haven for immigrants and foreigners and is derived from a mixed people, while Opus retains its pure, autochthonous status—and it is from there that the victor derives his ancestry, not from Locrus.

Although Pindar emphasizes the indigenous nature of the laos-born and the presumably superior status this connection confers, Hesiod, quoted by Strabo, links these stone-born men to the Leleges and calls them a “mixed people” (migadas), because Leleges derives from legein, “picked.” Furthermore, it is their mixed status that Strabo suggests was the cause of their extinction; “on account of this [being mixed] the genos died off (ekleloipentai)” (Strabo Geo. 7.7.2).26 But the tension between their ‘native’ and ‘mixed’ statuses suggest that lines of descent linking a people back to autochthons somehow confers a superior status on them over other men, while being mixed is considered weakness. The most well-known example of this dynamic comes from Athens.

Athenian indigenous status and autochthony

Athenian autochthony is the most well known and discussed version of the earth-born myths. Athenian myths, however, must be contextualized within historical rationalizations or discourses on indigenousness. The myth of Athenian autochthony, found fully developed and embedded in civic discourse from the Peloponnesian War on,27 sanctioned views of Athenian exceptionalism and ethnic distinctiveness; other Greeks were descended from an Athenian and a foreigner (as in Euripides’ Ion), whereas Athenians themselves came from the very soil of Attica and the gods (e.g. Pl. Crit. 109d) and were the only Greeks to have always inhabited their land (e.g. Isoc. Pan. 4.24–5). Even if Gruen is correct to say that “autochthony was hardly the prevailing notion,” or that “[a]utochthony did not have much purchase in Hellas as a marker of identity; it mattered to the Athenians in their definition of citizenship and ‘purity’.”28
The Athenians laws imply that they believed their autochthony meant that they were a ‘pure’ people. Such a view was, of course, contradicted in reality and in many of their other traditions. Nonetheless, autochthonous purity remained powerful on an ideological level.\textsuperscript{29} Susan Lape refers to the type of citizenship that evolved in Athens in the classical period as “racial citizenship,” a term meant to capture the focus on a purity of descent that the autochthony myths conjured up.\textsuperscript{30} The Athenians need not have believed the comic story of Hephaistos' attempt at wooing Athena to believe they were an exclusive and privileged people. Legislation intended to enforce this vision acted to limit citizens in Athens to those born of two citizen parents.\textsuperscript{31} This type of legislation rests on the idea that Athenian blood was superior to non-Athenian and that mixing of Athenian blood would weaken the city.\textsuperscript{32} Furthermore, foreigners and those who had mixed with foreigners were considered less loyal or even incapable of loyalty to the city. They could hardly be good citizens\textsuperscript{33} The underlying logic rested in part on the view that autochthony tied every Athenian to the land,\textsuperscript{34} and the myth’s greatest development coincided with the expansion of the citizen population of Athens to include non-land-owning Athenians. Their link to the land was mythical, ideological, and perpetual, not material and limited to those who owned land. Autochthony filled the gap between citizens and their land.\textsuperscript{35}

Herodotus discusses Athenian indigenous status as part of his tale of Croesus, who decided, in his power struggle with Cyrus, to befriend the most powerful Greeks (1.56.2):

Doing some research, Croesus discovered that the Athenians and the Lacedaemonians were preeminent among the Greeks. The Lacedaemonians were preeminent among the Dorian genos, the Athenians among the Ionian. They were the foremost peoples in antiquity as well—the Athenians among the Pelasgian peoples, the Lacedaemonians among the Hellenic peoples (ethnoi). The Pelasgian Athenians had never moved anywhere, but the Hellene Lacedaemonians wandered a great deal.\textsuperscript{36}

In this passage, Herodotus acknowledges two things—first, that the Athenians were not originally Hellenes, and second, that they are indigenous (autochthonous). Were the Athenians Pelasgians, then? Herodotus notes later that the Pelasgians he refers to “arrived at some point in the past and merged with the Athenians” (1.57.2).\textsuperscript{37} There were, therefore, Athenians in Attica already. Whether they were Hellenes or not, Herodotus does not say. One must assume that they were not Hellenes in the sense that they were descended from Hellen or from other Greeks. Instead, Herodotus tells us that, “if the Pelasgian language was common here and the Attic peoples (ethnoi) were once Pelasgian, then it seems clear that they changed their language at the same time as they became Hellenes” (1.57.3). To be a Hellene was cultural for the Athenians, not
biological. Herodotus never explains where those Athenians who preceded the appearance of the Pelasgians came from, but they have no fixed language of their own and so take up Pelasgian as their native tongue. The Athenians must have been indigenous—Herodotus offers us here nothing to show otherwise—and twice took on new cultural identities when they adopted new languages. Thus Herodotus acknowledges Athenian claims to autochthony, while culturally situating them as Hellenes. As Rosiland Thomas points out, Herodotus furthers this Pelasgianto-Hellene narrative later when he recounts that the Pelasgian Athenians were once called Kekropidae (after King Kekrops), but became Athenians with the arrival of Erechtheus.38

According to Thucydides, Athens alone of other Greek poleis still held its original inhabitants (anthropoi oikoun hoi autoi aiei, 1.2.5), but it increased its population in the earliest days through accepting immigrants (metoikoi) into the citizen community (1.2.6).39 This situation, however, did not prevent later Athenians from treating their indigenous and earth-born status as a type of purity, a purity that they contrasted with “mixed” (migadas) peoples (Isoc. Pan. 24). Consistent with the logic behind the myths of metals, a “mixed” status is worth less, a fact Theseus reminds Adrastus of in Euripides’ Suppliants (ca. 423 BCE) (Eur. Suppl. 219–25):

You, Adrastus, appear to me to be a fool along with this company. You followed the oracles of Apollo and gave your daughters to foreigners to marry, as if gods, not mortals, decided marriages. But doing so, you have mingled (summeixas) your clear line (lampron) with a muddy one (tholerō) and sorely wounded your house.

Theseus points here to a concept that was embedded in the Athenian consciousness and that had been codified into law in 451 BCE. That year, at the urging of the politician Perikles, the Athenians passed a law that limited citizenship to those born from both citizen fathers and mothers (Pl. Per. 37.1–5). Up until this time, only the father had been required to hold citizenship. Although the enforcement of this law went into abeyance during the Peloponnesian War for a variety of reasons,40 ideologically, the city continued to promote in public images, architecture, and performances the idea of the ‘pure’ Athenian of indigenous and earth-born descent. To be an Athenian citizen meant to be a part of Attika, and this bond was not something that could be shared by anyone of non-Athenian decent, who would, thereby, not be descended from indigenous stock.41

This notion is captured best in the representation and use of the myth of the Erechtheids. As Clements discusses, the landscape of Athens itself was enlisted to tell the tale of its identity.42 Such a bond between landscape and identity in this myth was further enacted on the tragic stage in two plays by Euripides, the Erechtheus and Ion. I pass over the Erechtheus because only fragments remain and its treatment of the myth
is unclear. The *Ion*, however, shows clearly the connection made between landscape and identity, embedding Athenian identity within the soil of Attica itself.

**Euripides' *Ion***

*Ion* tells the tale of Erechtheus' daughter Creousa, who was, prior to the action of the play, raped by Apollo and impregnated. She had exposed the child upon birth, but Hermes, at the request of Apollo, had secreted the child away to Delphi, where he grew under the name Ion as a temple attendant. As the play begins, Creousa has gone with her husband, the Achaeans Xouthous, to Delphi to ask the god about their childlessness. Apollo has planned to send his son by Creousa back to Athens with her to resume his rightful place. Before this can happen, however, Creousa attempts to kill Ion (and her) before it is revealed to her and Ion that they are mother and son. Tension over Athenian ethnic identity and descent run throughout the play—Creousa worries about her husband's foreignness, Ion is concerned about being accepted in Athens as a foreigner, and Creousa utterly rejects what she sees as a foreign takeover of Athens by Xouthous and Ion (when Ion is mistakenly thought to be the son of Xouthous). The identity of the Athenians—and the royal family in particular—is bound to its place; to be of Attica's soil alone marks one as belonging in Athens.

Scholars disagree whether *Ion* critiques or supports Athenian autochthony. Lape recently argued that "Characters in the play both embody and act out the belief that citizens were thought to inherit patriotism and special characteristics that qualified them for citizenship." Similar to other scholars' discussion of autochthony, Lape focuses on the ideological implications of descent and purity of descent within the framework of citizenship. What are the implications of the myth for the construction of indigenous status and its relation to the land? What does Attic soil, and by implication the soil of other lands, imbue its people with? It is more than a democratization of aristocratic *eugeneia*; it binds the people to their native soil. *Ion* (and autochthony broadly) is not only about ethnic purity, but about ensuring that people are where they belong. It is about binding a particular people to their environment, even after they leave it, and about privileging those people who 'belong' and are rooted in a place, not necessarily in a line of descent.

This dynamic of privileging indigenous inhabitants over immigrants appears vividly in Euripides' play where Creousa, Ion, Xouthous, and their respective descendants are associated with and disassociated from Athens. When Ion first meets Creousa in the temple of Apollo at Delphi, their exchange establishes the status of Creousa as a descendant of the earth-born Erichthonios. Erichthonios, her grandfather, "sprouted from the earth" (*ek gēs ... eblasten*, 267) and into the same earth. Erechtheus returned:
“Is your father truly covered over by a chasm in the earth?” (chasma ... kruptei chthonos, 281). Her family emerged from and will return to the Attic soil. Creousa claims to have gained no good fortune from this miraculous birth of her grandfather (268), although Ion tells her that she has a noble bearing (gennaiotēs), which proves her superior birth (eugenēs) (236–40). This superiority is linked explicitly to her autochthonous status, a fact revealed in the discussion of Xouthous’ identity and his relationship to Athens.

When Ion inquires of Creousa who among the Athenians is her husband, she tells him that he is not a citizen (astos), but an “import” (epaktos) from another land (291). Ion is puzzled at how a foreigner (xenos) could marry a “native” (eggenēs) (293). The answer is that Creousa was given, she says, as a “dowry (phernas) and spear-prize (doros labōn geras)” and she seems none too pleased about it. In fact, she was given to him in return for the help Xouthous gave the Kekropidae in conquering a foreign land (Euboea). Xouthous, regardless of his own high birth (he is the son of Zeus), is not considered by Creousa (or Ion) to have married into Athens. Although she calls him her “well-born husband” (eugenēs posin, 392), divine ancestry does not trump place of birth for the indigenous. Even once Ion has been given to believe that he is Xouthous’ son, he fears rejection by the Athenians, who are “not an imported race” (ouk epeisaktōn genos, 590). The language of “importing” is contemptuous even when used by Ion of his newly found father, whose status as an import will negatively impact Ion’s own status in the city: “I would be attacked having two diseases (duo nosō): the foreignness (eupaktos) of my father and my own bastard birth (591–2)”.

This language of importing juxtaposed with the discourse of autochthony suggests that there is something dangerous and invasive about even the well-intended xenos. The fact that Creousa’s and Xouthous’ subsequent children will all leave Attica to found other Greek tribes, the Dorians and Achaeans (1589–94)—a narrative that aligns with the migratory origin stories of those peoples—suggests that they do not belong in Athens. Of Ion himself, Athena states that he should be returned to Athens, the land of Erichthonios, as it is just (dikaios) that he rule over her land (archein tēs emēs hode chthonos, 1572–4). He will bear four sons, “four born from a single root” (miōs rheidēs) who will give their names to the peoples who dwell in her cliffs (1575–8). The land is Athena’s and those who dwell in it must be her children, her chosen ones. The repetition of “my” and “mine” as she speaks of the place that shares her name is emphatic. She will also further lay claim to the land known as Ionia through the grandsons of Ion (1581–8), but they are not imports to these lands; they are simply inhabiting land that rightly belongs to Athena already.

In Ion, we see the language of purity, indigenousness, and immigration all juxtaposed, suggesting that at least some Athenians understood themselves as exceptional and superior to other Greeks because they were not migrants, but of the land, perhaps
literally. Such a view of themselves was not out of step with other contemporary trends in understanding identity, as seen in the Hippocratic *Airs, Waters, Places*.

**Hippocratic environmental determinism**

The Hippocratic *Airs, Waters, Places* (AWP) is the most explicit presentation of the relationship imagined between identity and environment, though, in some ways, it is the most elusive. It posits multiple ways for humanity and nature to interact, but it begins from the premise that climate and geography shape human physiology and character. Thus, the text explains that peoples who reside in extreme climates and geographic points in the *oikoumenē* have radically different physical appearances from those living in moderate climates with central locations (i.e. mainland Greece). Further, the customs and the character of these peoples are shaped through adaptation to these climates. The author, however, does allow for custom to moderate the impact of climate, especially through the application of technologies to the body. I begin with a short overview of the general theory of environmental determinism in the text, then address two specific tribes: the Scythian Nomads and the Makrokephaloi, a Black Sea people who dwelt near the border of Europe and Asia.

The author of *AWP* early establishes a direct connection between the environment and physique. If a city is situated where it is exposed to hot winds (*ta pneumata ta therma*), the water will be somewhat salty, near the surface, and hot in the summer and cold in the winter (*Aer. 3.1*). People living in such a city would as a result have heads full of phlegm (*phlegmatōdēs*) and their bodies (*ta eideā*) would be rather flabby (*atonotera*) (*Aer. 3.2*). Cities situated exposed to cold winds (*ta psuchra*) would have cold and bitter (*sclērā*) water (*Aer. 4.2*), while the inhabitants’ bodies would be vigorous (*entonos*) and lean (*skeliphros*). Further, they are bilious (*cholōdēs*) and their heads hard. Inhabitants of these cities are said to have fiercer (*agriōtera*) instead of milder (*hemerōtera*) characters (*ta ēthea*) (*Aer. 4.2–3*).

Such relationships between the location and climate of a city and the physiology and character of its inhabitants continues with discussion of cities with an east-west orientation, whose people have good complexes (*euchród*), and better (*bētiōn*) temperaments (*orgē*) and intelligence (*sunesis*). Further, in the case of east-west orientations, the quality of the people is explicitly understood as of the same quality as "all other things that grow there" (*ta alla ta emphuomena*)—they are all "better" (*ameinō*) (*5.4*). In this case, as well as in the previous and successive examples provided by the author, the orientation and location of the city is linked explicitly to the quality of the water in the city and thereby directly to the health of the inhabitants. The health of the inhabitants is generally discussed with similar references—fertility, physical
hardness or softness, cultural adaptation to the landscape—when the author constructs the ethnic stereotypes in the second half of the treatise (e.g. Aer. 15 on the Phasians, 19 on the Scythian Nomads).\textsuperscript{55}

At section 12, the author switches to a discussion of how geographic location at the extremes of either Europe or Asia impacts the inhabitants.\textsuperscript{54} Asia and Europe differ "in all ways" from each other, a fact that causes the peoples (\textit{ethnē}) in each to also differ remarkably, particularly with regards physical form (\textit{tēs morphēs}). According to the author, the impact of the environment is as follows: a temperate, warm, dry climate with no noticeable seasonal shifts, such as that in Asia Minor, leads to milder (\textit{hēpiōteros})—a term that frequently itself is used of weather and climate—and more even-tempered (\textit{euorgēteros}) peoples. Physically, they will be tall and uniform in build. People in such a climate, however, will also be more subject to slavishness and pleasure seeking (\textit{Aer. 12}). The people’s stature correlates with the vegetation ("everything in Asia is by far more beautiful and larger," 12.2). There is a large section of text missing wherein the nature of the waters may have been discussed before the author shifted to Egypt (also missing). Given the discussion of waters earlier in the text, however, we can also likely assume that the waters of this region are sweet and engender the desire for pleasure.\textsuperscript{55} Peoples who live where Europe and Asia meet in the north, however, are fundamentally different: because the climate moves between extremes of cold and hot and the topography of the land is varied, the physical appearance and character of the peoples who live in the north varies greatly: "The natures of some of them resemble wooded and well-watered mountains. The natures of others resemble airy, dry lands, or marshy meadows, or bare, dry plains" (13.4).\textsuperscript{56} Also, variations in weather and landscape explain why "the physiques of Europeans show more variety than those of Asia and why their stature varies greatly even from city to city" (23.2).

The environment of Asia causes its peoples to be less warlike and more prone to live under a monarchy because the climate never changes (\textit{Aer. 16}); stable climates induce sloth: "Laziness is inherent in a uniform climate. Endurance of body and soul comes from change. Also, cowardice increases both from softness and laziness, while courage increases from endurance and work ethic" (\textit{Aer. 23.3}). The opposite is true of those peoples on the northern border of Europe and Asia, however, who experience regular shocks (\textit{ekplēkσies}), which results in "more deterioration in the coagulation of the seed" (\textit{hai gar phthorai pleiones . . . tou gonou en tēi ksumplēksei}) as the weather and landscape change, thus making them courageous, antisocial, and passionate.\textsuperscript{57} These characteristics also make Europeans less responsive to monarchical governments and more independent (23.4).\textsuperscript{58} This focus on the impact of the climate and geography of the "seed" (\textit{gonos}) as the point of impact is important and runs throughout the text.\textsuperscript{59} It is especially important in considering some of the more extreme people in the text, such as the Scythian Nomads and the Makrokephaloi. This discourse of the seed and its
generation or deterioration is, I think, a fundamentally important but underexplored aspect of the treatise that hints at a concept of ethnic purity that runs alongside the other forms of environmental determinism of the text.60

While in the text the term “Scythian” denotes the majority of the peoples (genē) of the Black Sea regions, they are divided into numerous tribes (ethnē), who differ from each other based on their climate and landscape. The Scythian Nomads inhabit the steppe and dwell the farthest north of all the Scythian tribes. According to the treatise, the Scythian Nomads are physically uniform as an ethnos because of the shared, stable climate; they are, as it were, “afflicted by cold” (Aer. 18.1). The harshly cold and wet climate of the region lasts year-round and so their summers and winters are the same. As a result (Aer. 19.5):

…they wear the same clothes, eat the same food, breathe the same damp air, drink from the same snow-and ice-melted water, and refrain uniformly from labor. It is well known that where there are no strong shifts in climate neither bodies nor souls can endure physical activity. By necessity, then, their bodies are stout, fleshy, joint-less, bloated, and flabby, while their lower bellies are the most bloated bellies of all peoples. It is nearly impossible for a stomach to dry out in such a land with a nature and climate of this sort. And, because of their fatness and smooth fleshiness, the bodies of all, male and female, are identical to each other. Since the seasons are constant, their genetic materials undergo no decay or damage when they merge, except through trauma or disease.

The Scythians have red hair and red skin because the cold burns them instead of the sun. The idea that cold burns and makes one red complements the commonplace in antiquity that Ethiopians and Indians were black-skinned because the sun had burned them. The culture, character, and physiology of the Scythian Nomads is unique among Scythians, but uniform among themselves due to the stability of the climate and the lack of shocks to alter the gonos, which would cause variety in physical form. Although climate does not shock the “seed” causing variation in Scythia (or in Asia, where the climate is equally uniform), cultural practices do impact the physiology and fertility of these nomads. The men are impotent because of their perpetual horse-riding coupled with poor medical practices,61 while the women, who lead a lethargic lifestyle in wagons, have bodies so obese that their uteruses are clogged and closed off to a man’s ejaculate (Aer. 21.2).62 This situation bodes ill for retaining a consistent population. However, the author says that some Scythian men avoid impotence and breed with slave-women (Aer. 21.3); presumably this is how they perpetuate their people. The consistently harsh climate itself, more extreme in the far north than elsewhere, can be assumed to impact the seed by creating physiques among the Scythians unique to their climate; its consistent cold ensures the uniformity of the physiques of Scythians even
for children not born of Scythian women. The lack of decay noted in the above passage means that the seed does not change during coagulation to impact this uniformity, but the impact of the extreme climate still marks the bodies of the Scythian Nomads as abnormal.

The infertility of the Scythians is one mark not only of the impact of climate on custom (they live as nomads because they live in the Scythian desert, Aer. 18), but of the inferiority of the Scythian Nomads to their Greek counterparts who dwell in a properly moderate climate. This inferiority is further marked by the necessary use of technē in order for Scythians to adapt and ‘normalize’ their bodies. The author assumes that the cold and wet climate would make them “by necessity” appear as “marvels of flab and fat” (Aer. 20), of a nature of the sort that is incapable of fertility (Aer. 21), and yet they do not: images of the Scythians found throughout the Greek world represent them as fit.63 The author instead imagines that the Scythian Nomads used cauterization in order to reduce the bloatedness in their shoulders, arms, breasts, hips, and loins. The evidence of this cauterization, according to Airs, is “obvious” when one looks at a Scythian and sees that he is not fat.

The author particularly singles out the Scythian Nomads and other peoples in the treatise as anomalous people because they differ greatly from Greeks and other northern peoples. The author states that he does not discuss others because he considers them similar to the Greeks. The implication, therefore, is a type of hierarchy or, at least, ranking, of sameness or difference.64 This difference and inferiority is further marked by the Scythians’ persistent infertility (and their failed cures for it)65 and their need for technē in order to appear ‘normal’.

A people similar to the Scythian Nomads in this regard are the Makrokephaloi. With the Makrokephaloi, we see two dynamics at play: first, the use of technology to alter their nature—a sign of lesser peoples—and, second, a recognition that they can only maintain their adaptations of their bodies through restricting intermarriage with outside peoples. The physical changes enacted through technology could become heritable if the alteration through custom persisted over time and so long as they remained an insular people. According to Hesiod, the Makrokephaloi were born of the union of the genos of women descended from Pandora with the gods (Most Fr. 101 (Eratosthenes FGrHist. 224F 157a + f = Strabo 1.2.35). They apparently looked like everyone else in the beginning,66 with heads of standard shape. Conical-shaped heads, however, seemed to them more aesthetically pleasing, and so they began to massage the heads of their infants until they achieved a conehead. The new shape then became a heritable characteristic: “Custom worked in the beginning in such a way that it forced nature to follow suit” (Aer. 14.3–4).67 It was only intermarriage with other tribes that eventually caused the cone shape to diminish.
The case of the Makrokephalois is interesting and is one of a number of instances in
AWP where human intervention alters the environmentally determined or 'natural'
appearance of a people. This case is unique, however, in that over time, nature itself
adapted the alteration and made it heritable. The Makrokephalois themselves are fairly
uniform in appearance—they live in a region along the Phasis River, an area identified
as fairly uniform in climate. Thus, when they consistently work to alter their appearance,
nature helps them retain this uniform shape since uniformity of shape is endemic to a
stable climate such as they inhabit. This process was known in the eighteenth and
nineteenth centuries as the heritability of acquired characteristics and was a hallmark
of Neo-Lamarckian evolutionary theory. It was, in fact, the thing that made evolution
possible. The Makrokephalois manage to create such a consistent (and to them pleasant)
adaptation that nature could not help but intervene. And yet, this preferred body shape
was eventually lost because the Makrokephalois became a mixed people through
marriage outside of their group. Once again, we see hints of a concept of ethnic purity;
even though the conehead would have been considered unpleasing to a Greek (Hesiod
places them among the children of the genos of women and links them to other
oddities of nature like the Pygmies and Kunophealois), to the Makrokephalois and
others, it was their defining characteristic—they are named for it, after all—and once
they permitted intermarriage with non-Makrokephalois, that defining characteristic is
lost.

Conclusion

There are a number of ways in which the ancient Greeks imagined the relationship
between identity and environment. They may appear on the surface wildly inconsistent
and they certainly cannot be constrained into a single theory of identity and
environment. Nonetheless, some underlying conceptual affinities and some modes of
thought connect them. In each case, an ethnic group shares physical features and
characteristics in part due to their relationship to the earth or environment. In each
case, the 'pure' or 'unmixed' people are represented as better off or superior. Deviations
from this 'pure' form are represented as 'corruptions' or 'deteriorations' of the human
'seed' (genos), though further consideration of this idea in light of the medical texts and
Aristotle is necessary. It is possible to say that some Greeks tended to understand that
specific peoples were bound to specific lands, that the characteristics of particular
lands and climates had determinative effects on human appearance, behavior, and
moral character, and that some geographic and climatic locations were superior and
others inferior. There is also sufficient evidence to suggest that some Greeks viewed
intermarriage between ethnic or tribal groups as a risky venture because it could lead
to degeneration of a people's character and customs and a deformation of their
physical appearance.

It must be admitted that this complex of ideas was not the only way to conceptualize the problem of human diversity, political and social status, marriage, and citizenship. There are other conceptualizations, e.g. the variety of migration stories also in circulation in antiquity, which coexisted and even conflicted with environmental ideas. But we can hardly expect consistency here. The Greeks were not a unified people and they interacted with a broad range of non-Greeks whose own ideas and customs varied greatly. To expect a singular mode of thought or a single theory of human diversity in this situation would be foolish. That said, although inconsistent, we can see throughout an interest in categorizing and ranking of peoples in a way that normalizes one’s own identity while marking that of others as defective or lesser. While some scholars prefer to link this interest to colonization and imperial aspirations, these are not always underscoring Greek interactions with each other or non-Greeks. And even if it is linked to these dynamics in one manner or another, it is not the only or necessarily primary mechanism driving the formation of identity groups. The question of whether this ranking is racism, proto-racism, or ethnocentrism is, I believe, the wrong question. Rather, instead of attempting to discover if the ancients categorized foreign peoples in a manner similar to the way moderns do, we should focus on the processes of identity formation and try to engage the ancients on their own terms. As such, I think we can most safely link their ways of engaging with foreignness to a desire to know and understand that often emerges from a wide range of motivators including curiosity, wonder, and fear of difference or the unknown.68

Notes

1 All text for Herodotus follows Hude. Other texts will be noted when cited. All translations of ancient authors are my own unless otherwise noted.

2 See Thomas 2000, 31–2 for further discussion.

3 For discussions of built environment, see Clements and Spencer, this volume. On building programs as cultural enterprises that impacted ethnic identity in the ancient world, see, for example, Woolf 1994 (Roman East), Rowlandson 2003 (Alexandria and Egypt), and Andrade 2013 (Greco-Roman Syria).

4 Kaplan, this volume, and 2014.

5 For an overview of scholarship on the distinction, see Kaplan 2014 with bibliography, and Gruen 2013. Fraser 2009 gives a full treatment to the uses of various ethnic terminologies as a supplement to the Lexicon of Greek Personal Names.

6 Or, as they are now officially termed ‘Caucasian,’ ‘African,’ ‘Asian,’ ‘Native American,’ or ‘Hispanic.’ On the issue of ‘race’ as a modern, not an ancient category of thought, see Isaac 2004, 1–39; Hannaford 1996, 17–86, and McCoskey 2012, 1–34. Kametkar 2002 makes one of the sounder arguments I have seen for using the concept of race in studies of antiquity. On ‘whiteness’ as non-racial category antiquity, see Dee
2003. Sassi 2001 discusses the gender status of whiteness extensively. The idea of a singular black ‘race’ in antiquity is disputed as well, though there is a good deal of scholarship on ‘blacks’ in antiquity, including Snowden 1970 and 1991, Thompson 1989, and Bindman, Gates Jr., and Dalton 2010. There has been a great deal of controversy surrounding the issues of race in antiquity, the result of assuming that modern categories and systems of thought are mirrored easily in antiquity. I do not intend to engage in a debate over ‘blackness’ or ‘whiteness’ as ancient racial categories. There is no evidence that they apply in the classical period except in the eyes of the modern scholar. ‘Blackness’ as an idea existed, but it was not a genos, ethnos, phulê, etc. On whether there was such a thing as ethnicity in antiquity, see Gruen 2013.

7 This is not an exhaustive list of terms that can be used of identity groups in the Greek sources. These are simply the most common. Herodotus 1.56 uses genos to refer to Ionian and Dorian, but ethnos for Hellene and Pelasgian.

8 On the idea that racism or ‘proto-racism’ could exist in antiquity while race did not, see Isaac 2004 and 2006 and the essays in Eliav-Feldman, Isaac, and Ziegler 2009. See contra Tuplin 1999. Gruen 2013, 2–3 suggests that the ‘ethnic’ turn in scholarship is an attempt to avoid the cultural discomfort with the concept of race, a term McCoyskey 2012 intentionally uses in order to cause her readers discomfort. He sees, however, no difference between ‘race’ and ‘ethnicity’ as both focus on biological associations and heredity. See Hall 1997 and 2002 and the essays in Malkin 2001 for examples of reading modern concepts of ethnicity among the ancient Greeks.

9 For discussion of the use of the term ‘racialist’ to define the Citizenship Law, see Lape 2010, 31–41. Her decision to read the ancient Athenian myth of autochthony and to define its citizenship through the lens of modern race theory has been controversial. See, for example, the reviews of Vlassopoulos 2011 and Blok 2014.

10 Herodotus provides an example of how moving to a new geographic region would not change the essential culture of a people in his discussion of the Colchians (2.104–5), who, he asserts, originated in Egypt based on their appearance (melagchoroes eisi kai autotriches), on the practice of circumcision (which is shared with the Ethiopians), and on the way they work linen, which is unique to Egypt. For Herodotus, the cultural practices are the most sure identifiers of ethnicity since, as he says, appearance does not necessarily tell him anything, “for others are also such.”

11 On the eastern origins of Hesiod’s genesis of metal men, see Van Norden 2015, 50 with notes and bibliography.

12 All text for Hesiod follows G. Most.

13 Gold and silver were extracted from lead, copper, and other ores through cupellation in antiquity. In cupellation, the metals are heated to high temperatures that separate off the precious metals (which melt at much higher temperatures) from the base metals. The process is rather simple—because the base metals oxidize while the noble metals do not, the metals separate easily (though gold and silver do not separate easily from each other).

14 Van Norden 2015, passim discusses Hesiod’s golden men at length and the legacy of the ‘Golden Age’ narrative that derived from him in future utopian literature in Greece and Rome.

15 Not to mention the fact that iron, unlike bronze, silver and gold, rusts. There are intriguing possible connections between Prometheus as master of fire and technai with his later mythology as creator of mankind. There may be some component of ascribing inferiority to Promethean man versus Olympianmade man as well as connections of Prometheus’ granting fire to man with the creating of Pandora, the bane of humanity. In Prometheus Bound, Prometheus tells the chorus that he “planted blind hope within them” (tuplas elpidas, 250), perhaps a reference to Pandora and the jar. Prometheus also notes in the play that it
was he who led them to discover the metals hidden in the earth—copper, iron, silver, gold—and how to work them (*Prom. 500–503*). Surely, the play's author is engaging the tradition of Hesiod and the relationship between the *genē* of men and Pandora. On Promethean *technai*, see Calame 2010, 36–48.

16 They are said to have mothers, but where the mothers come from is unclear. The poem clearly states that Zeus made them, not that they were born.

17 I have retained the full Greek passage here because of its fragmentary nature.

18 This is not a comprehensive overview of stories of autochthony or *gēgenesis*. Such a discussion would take up more than the allotted space for this chapter. I have attempted to highlight particularly informative passages that show intellectual consistency with each other. For a general introduction to autochthony and identity, see Morgan 2014.

19 The story of Prometheus as the maker of humans is a rather late invention, appearing for certain in Ovid (*Met.* 1.76–88) at the earliest, though it may possibly have been circulating in the fourth century BCE; there are hints of a creator-craftsman god in Plato's *Protagoras* and *Timaeus*. See Stafford 2009, 430–43.

20 On the origins of the term *autochthôn* and its meanings, see Rosivach 1987.


22 From LSI: "mix something dry with something wet, mostly with a sense of mixing so as to spoil or defile (*gaian hudei*), Hes. *Op.* 61."

23 On the *pithos* as womb and sex as the source of evils, see Glenn 1977; Sissa 1990, 154–5; Zeitlin 1996, 59–60.

24 Louraux 1993, 88–102 discusses the distinction at some length, especially in connection with Semonides.

25 I discuss the Makrokephaloí and Scythians below. Most Fr. 98 (*P. Oxy.* 1358 fr. 2 col. I; 15: Strabo *Geo.* 7.3.7) suggests the *Melanes* (Black ones) and Ethiopians and *amenēnoi* (strengthless) Pygmies are born from Hephaistos with some unknown woman. The other distant peoples mentioned are the Hyperboreans, Laistrygons, and Kephallians. Most Fr. 101 (*Eratosthenes FGrHist.* 224F 157a + f = Strabo 1.2.35) mentions the Makrokephaloí, Pygmies, and Half-Dogs (Hemikunae). On these peoples, see Garland, this volume.

26 Later versions of this story make the *laos*-born men the replacement for all humanity destroyed in the flood (*Apoll. 1.7.2*; Ovid *Met.* 1.381–415).

27 Especially in funeral oratory and in public monuments like the Erechtheion (see Clements, this volume). I would even argue that the idea that all Athenians who died in battle should be returned and interred in Attic soil was a public/popular manifestation of this discourse. Practical considerations aside, the myth of autochthony had an ideological life of its own beyond the identity politics of the average Athenian; it was meant, in many ways, to supersede local identities that were still strongly embedded among the Athenian citizenry long after the Cleisthenic reforms. On funeral oration and autochthony, see Louraux 1986. On continuations of local identities as competitors with Athenian identity, see, on the Acharnians specifically, Kellogg 2013, Ch. 4, esp.

28 Gruen 2013, 4; See also Kaplan, this volume, and 2014. Gruen points to the criticisms of the autochthony myth in Plato's *Menexenus* as support for the lack of widespread support within Athens. Lape 2010 argues, however, that the discourse of autochthony borrowed from elite discourses of descent and privilege. It may have been the crassness and even comic nature of the autochthony myth (and its democratizing impact) that elites such as Plato scorned, not the notion of Athenian exceptionalism or
'purity.' As Peilling concludes, in Athenian rhetoric, "autochthony was a good thing to have" (2009, 474). But it should not surprise us that they attempted to make their autochthony superior to that claimed by others. On negative types of autochthony, see Calame 1985.

29 We might consider those who believe absolutely that the United States is a "white, Christian nation," despite ample evidence that the country has been culturally, religiously, and ethnically diverse since its origins.


31 On the citizenship law and relevant bibliography, see Kennedy 2014, 12–25.


33 Bakewell 1999, 10; Kennedy 2014, chs. 2 and 4.

34 On landownership/agrarian ideology and citizen identity, see Morgan 2014, 68–73.

35 Meaning, it bound the landless craftsmen, sailors, and others to the city despite their lack of agrarian roots: Kennedy 2014, 8.

36 Strabo later asserts that the Pelasgians were Arcadians, citing Hesiod.


38 And then added the name Ionians, when Ion, son of Xouthos becomes their leader (8.44.2): Thomas 2000, 120. Sourvinou-Inwood 2003 does not see the Athenians/Pelasgian connection incompatible with Athenians as Hellenes, Pelasgians being just another of the Greek ethnē (138–40, esp.).

39 On Thucydides’ use of the autochthony topos, especially with respect to non-Athenians, see Pelling 2009, 476–9.

40 Kennedy 2014, 17–19, with bibliography.

41 The right of enktesis is a manifestation of this connection—one may not own land, but one may have the right to ownership. See Leão 2012 on enktesis and Euripides’ Ion.

42 See Clements, this volume.

43 For example, Saxonhouse 1992, 77 writes that Euripides’ decision to assert the importance of woman in preserving Athenian purity works against the idea of autochthony, which Loraux 1993 and others argue elides women out of the reproductive process.

44 Lape 2010, 95.

45 See also 668–75 where Ion hopes that his mother is an Athenian since “if a foreigner, even if a citizen in name, comes to that pure city (katharan polin), his tongue is slavish and he lacks parhesia.”

46 See Kennedy 2014, 26–38 on a similar dynamic in Aeschylus’ Suppliants.

47 This phrase concerning the descendants of Ion as born of the same root recalls the entrance of Athena in Aeschylus’ Eumenides where she states that the land of the Troad had been given to her “root and stock for all time.” Her claims to land outside of Athens run deep. On Athena as synonymous with Athens in tragedy and civic discourse more generally in Athens, and for tragedy and Athena in particular as a vehicle for imperial expansion, see Kennedy 2009. On the colonialist roots of Apollo and the name Ion in the play, see Doughtery 1996, 260–62.

48 I use the Greek text of Jouanna 1996.
49 Calame 2014, 2 briefly discusses AWP as part of his re-examination of the nature/custom divide in French Structuralist thought.

50 See Kennedy, forthcoming, for a discussion of the Hippocratic idea of using technology to alter environmental impacts and its reception, and Spencer, this volume, for the importance of environmental technologies as an ethnic identifier in Vitruvius.

51 The theory may be rooted in the idea that humors (i̇k̄mades) existed within the earth as well as in people. This is an idea that needs exploring in another context. See Thomas 2000, 50–51 on the importance of i̇k̄mades in Hippocrates and Herodotus.

52 On water and health in AWP, see Jouanna 2012. See also Lincoln 2000, 15–20.


55 On the waters of Asia as inducing pleasure-seeking, see Harmon, this volume. An apt comparison is to the Lotus Eaters of Homer’s Odyssey.

56 Expanded upon at Aer. 24.

57 The text here recalls Cyrus’ admonition to his troops in Herodotus cited in the opening quotation to the chapter. Herodotus considers such shocks resulting from climate shifts as the cause of ill health (2.77.3); just as they alter physical appearance, so too they cause diseases. It is only a short next step to equating visible ethnic differences with being diseased, or with monstrosity or deformity. See Garland, this volume.

58 Roman authors such as Pliny (Natural History 2.80), Vitruvius (de Architectura 6.1.3), and Seneca (de Ira 2.15) who adhere to the environmental view of character, classify the Germans much like how Greek authors represent the southernmost of the northern tribes whose bodies undergo repeated shocks from the fluctuation of extreme temperatures and landscape. See Irby, this volume.

59 But it is not addressed in On the Seed and it is unclear to me yet whether the idea occurs elsewhere in the Hippocratic corpus. See Isaac 2004, 74–8.

60 Perhaps a comparison with other Hippocratic texts or Aristotle’s embryology will elucidate the matter further, but that is for another study. Another comparata is the Aristotelian Problematia (third century BCE–fifth century CE) 14, which lies outside the time frame of this paper. See recently, however, Leunissen 2015, 190–213. Ward 2002 also discusses the climatic impact on ethnē in Aristotle’s Politics, which appears to follow the Hippocratic tradition rather directly. The Problematia, as Leunissen remarks, is focused on “the causal interaction between the mixture of the environment and the mixture underlying the material properties of the peoples living in that environments” (190).

61 See also Hdt. 4.67 and 1.105.4 on the Scythian Enarees, and Thomas 2000, 33.

62 The fertility of the women in various climates is a focus throughout the work. Some modern studies of the impact of extreme obesity on fertility look backward to this text as early recognition of the connection. Quoting the description of the Scythian nomads specifically, one such study comments: “A thousand years ago [sic], Hippocrates has already recognized the influence of nutritional status and obesity on reproductive function . . .” (Diamanti-Kandarakis and Bergiele 2001).

63 On images of Scythians in Greek sources, see Ivanchik 2005.
64 This hierarchy is made explicit in the writing of the Roman authors who considered the temperate zone where Rome was located to be the best climate to produce the best peoples. See Spencer, this volume.

65 Aer. 22. The cure they use, according to the author, is to cut the vein behind the ears—this 'cure' is what actually causes the impotence, according to the text.

66 Possibly Hephaistos, in a transparent attempt to connect physical difference with deformity and the lame god. On deformity and associations with Hephaistos, see Garland 2010, 61–3, esp.

67 The ancient notion of heredity expressed in this treatise lacks a complete understanding as to what is and what is not a heritable quality and how something becomes so. For example: "If, then, bald children come from bald parents and grey-eyed children from grey-eyed parents and deformed children from deformed parents, and so on, would it not be the case with other physical characteristics?" (Aer. 14.4).

68 Many thanks to those who helped me bring this chapter to its final form (though the ideas are far from finalized). In particular, I owe thanks to the audience at Brown University, where I presented a portion of this chapter, for their comments and suggestions. I am also grateful to colleagues and scholars on Academia.edu who took the time to read and comment on the short version. Both Max Goldman and Molly Jones-Lewis also took time to read and comment on more than one draft of this chapter before the end and deserve some credit, though no blame, for the final version.

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Chapter 2

Colonisation
Chapter 2. Colonisation

Greek history begins with the Mycenaean world, which comprised a chain of city-states across mainland Greece inhabited by the historical originals of Homer’s warlords. Shortly after the capture of Troy — if that was indeed a historical event — Greece was to enter a Dark Age until the eighth century and the dawn of the history of archaic Greece. But, even in Mycenaean times, Greek states were not confined to the mainland. As early as the fifteenth century BC, there are records of Greeks in Western Anatolia (Asia Minor), and archaeology makes clear the fact that Greek expansion had already taken place, with evidence for settlements and trading centres along the Asia Minor coastline. From c. 1200 to c. 1000 BC a major wave of migration took place from mainland Greece to Asia Minor.

Greece always comprised far more than just the well-known cities of the Greek mainland. From the eighth to the sixth century BC, a period sometimes known as the ‘Age of Colonisation’, the Greeks of Asia Minor and the Greek mainland sent out large numbers of colonies, both east and west of their homeland. This, however, was not the only period during which colonies were settled, and Greek cities founded several important colonies in the fifth century and later (cf. docs 2.21, 2.24). In this way, Sicily and southern Italy, the Black Sea area, Africa, and even France and Spain provided sites for new Greek cities.

The reasons behind colonisation are frequently debated, but it appears that ‘land-hunger’, trading considerations, drought and political problems at home were the primary social and economic factors that impelled cities to send out settlements elsewhere. Certainly many of the colonies in the west were inspired by the availability of agricultural land, and the presence of fresh water and a good harbour was also important (doc. 2.11). While the specific choice of location for individual colonies, such as Pithekoussai (doc. 2.10), can still be the subject of much debate, good agricultural land in the vicinity would always have been an incentive, for colonists would have needed to be self-sufficient in food. Most colonies probably resulted from mixed motives; when the Phokaians established colonies in the far west, like the Teians in Thrace (doc. 2.13), they did so because they were fleeing from Persian domination. This provides a political explanation for their settlements, but it is also clear that the Phokaians both in Corsica and in Sicily made the most of opportunities for trading and for piracy.

The Spartans founded Taras in south-east Italy in the late eighth century to solve the pressing political problem of the parthenial, who were clearly Spartan in origin but without political rights (doc. 2.23), but Dorieus’ attempt to colonise Africa and Italy was in essence a private venture, for he left Sparta because his half-brother Kleomenes was
made king (doc. 2.22). Later colonies, such as Herakleia in Trachis, settled by Sparta in the fifth century, could have a partial political and strategic motive, for Herakleia was ideally suited as a base from which to attack Euboea (doc. 2.24). Nevertheless, it is important to realise how significant population size could be in Greek cities throughout this period: the people of Thera, when due to severe drought they drafted their colonists to settle Cyrene, cursed any of those who might attempt to return, and when they later did so attacked them and drove them away (docs 2.28–29).

The Greeks, naturally, took their way of life with them, and founded cities which were similar to the cities which they had left. Colonists apparently took with them fire from their mother-city (metropolis) and thus established continuity with their homeland (doc. 2.4). Relationships in general remained strong between mother-cities and colonies, and even a colony of a colony could claim aid from the original mother-city, as Epidamnos did from Corinth, while mother-cities expected that their colonies would maintain links with them. Each city had an oikistes, a ‘founder’ (pl.: oikistai), and sometimes more than one, whose role was to act as leader while the colony was being established. The tie of a colony with its mother-city was so important that when the colonies themselves sent out colonies, the oikistai for these were chosen from the original mother-city, as in the case of Epidamnos (doc. 2.8).

Colonies maintained their Greek way of life, and accounts were written of the establishment of colonies, presumably to preserve a record of their Greek origins (doc. 2.2). Different versions of a colony’s founding could develop, however, as in the case of Cyrene (docs 2.25–26). Maintaining ties with the mother-city was also a way of remaining in touch with their ancestral origins. Colonies in the west tended to be concerned with their own pressing problems, especially with the Carthaginians and Etruscans (docs 7.44–46), but they participated in the pan-Hellenic festivals (doc. 2.30), and the Sicilians especially were several times victorious in the chariot races (docs 7.57–59).

When founding colonies, the Greeks often had to fight the native inhabitants for the land which they desired (docs 2.12, 2.26–27). But it is also clear that on other occasions the Greeks would compete against each other for sites, as the Athenians and Mytileneans did at Sigeion (doc. 2.18). There was often no feeling of mutual solidarity between Greek colonies even in areas where the locals were hostile, as in Sicily, and on the Black Sea coast Greeks dispossessed by later Greek settlers joined Scythian tribes, forming a Hellenic–Scythian culture (docs 2.33–34). Yet in many cases it is apparent that the local peoples became partially hellenised, and that there was interaction between local peoples and Greeks (docs 2.35–36). Thucydides is the most detailed source for the numerous – and prosperous – colonies of Sicily, and indicates that various Greek settlers were dispossessed by those that came later (doc. 2.12).
Socrates’ opinion of the Greek world is a significant one for any understanding of Greek civilisation. He is recorded by Plato as thinking of the Greeks as living around the shores of the Mediterranean and Black Sea like ‘ants or frogs around a pond’ (doc. 2.37). The Greeks inhabited a world which was not restricted to the Greek mainland and coastline of Asia Minor but which reached from Spain to the far end of the Black Sea. Colonisation was an intrinsic part of Greek history from the eighth century, and one that had significant implications for the social, economic and military history of the Greek world.

2.1 Thucydides 1.3.1 – 3: The Greeks before ‘Greekness’
Thucydides here discusses the fact that the term Hellenes, as used by the Greeks to refer to themselves, is relatively late and does not appear in the works of Homer. Terms such as the Argives and Achaeans continued in use to refer to Greeks of Argos and Achaia, both in the Peloponnese.

1.3.1 Before the Trojan War, Hellas (Greece), it seems, undertook no enterprise in common. 2 Indeed I think that as a whole it did not yet even have this name, but that before the time of Hellen, son of Deukalion, the name did not even exist, and that different tribes gave their names to different regions, with the Pelasgians having the most impact. But when Hellen and his sons became powerful in Phthiotis and were invited to come to the assistance of other cities, these one by one began to be called ‘Hellenic’ because of this association, though it was a long time before it replaced all other names. 3 Homer is the best proof of this. Although he lived a long time after the Trojan War, he does not anywhere use this name (Hellene) for all, or even for any of the Greeks except those with Achilles from Phthiotis, who were in fact the original Hellenes, but calls them Danaans and Argives and Achaeans. He did not use the term barbarians either, and I think that this is because the Hellenes were not yet separated off so as to share a common name.

2.2 Xenophanes of Kolophon FA1: Ancient Foundation Stories of Cities
Numerous accounts of the foundation of colonies and other cities were written by ancient authors, and this was a popular genre, with cities keen on having their foundation histories preserved. [Diog. Laert. 9.18, 20.]

9.18 He wrote both poems in epic verse and works in elegiacs and iambics against Hesiod and Homer, censuring the things they say about the gods ... 20 He also composed a poem called The Foundation of Kolophon, and The Settlement of the Colony
of Elea in Italy, comprising two thousand lines.

THE DELPHIC ORACLE

2.3 Lucian Astrology 23: Delphi and Colonisation

It was routine to undertake divination before major enterprises, and Delphi played an important role in Greek colonisation by providing divine approval for colonising ventures.

The men of former times were very much given to divination and considered it by no means incidental, but would not found cities, or surround themselves with walls, or kill anyone, or get married, before they had learned all the details from the diviners.

2.4 Etymologicum Magnum 694.28–31: Prytaneia: The Sacred Fire

There is no explicit evidence from the classical period about the transfer of sacred fire from the mother-city to a colony. The evidence is late, such as this entry from the Etymologicum Magnum. The prytaneion (plural: prytaneia) was the town hall.

Prytaneia: the sacred fire is kept there; and those who are at any time setting out to a colony, from there light a fire from the hearth, that is they 'kindle it'.

THE OIKISTES

The oikistes (pl. oikistai) or founder was the leader of the colonists in their enterprise; there could be more than one oikistes for each colony. In the eighth to sixth centuries the oikistes will presumably have remained in the colony. They were often venerated after death in the colony they had established.

2.5 Homer Odyssey 6.1–12: The Duties of an Oikistes

This passage, despite its mythical setting, describes the main duties of the founder of a colony, the oikistes. Odysseus, after a shipwreck, has arrived at the island of Phaeacia and is going to encounter princess Nausikaa: doc. 4.7.

So the much-enduring godlike Odysseus lay there asleep,
Worn out by sleep and toil; but Athena
Went to the land and city of the Phaeacian people,
Who long ago used to dwell in spacious Hypereia,
Near the Cyclopes an overbearing people,
Who used to plunder them, and were stronger than they.
Godlike Nausithoos removed them from there and led
And settled them in Scheria, far from hard-working men,
And he drew a wall around the city, and built houses,

And made temples to the gods, and divided up the corn-lands.
But already overpowered by fate he had gone to Hades,
And Alkinoos now ruled, who had counsel from the gods.

2.6 Graham 1983, 21–22n.7: A Dedication to an Oikistes
This inscription from Gela in Sicily was scratched on an Athenian cup dating to the fifth century BC, indicating that the cup was dedicated to Antiphamos of Rhodes, who founded Gela in 688 BC. The cult of an oikistes could clearly survive in a colony well after his death.

‘Mnasithales dedicated this to Antiphamos.’

2.7 Thucydides 5.11.1: Oikistai at Amphipolis: Hagnon and Brasidas
The Athenian colony (apoikia) at Amphipolis in Thrace, founded by Hagnon, dated to 437/6 BC, and the advantages of the site included its command of trade routes and an important crossing of the Strymon river; the district was also rich in timber, which Athens needed for its fleet, and in silver. When the Amphipolitans surrendered their city to the Spartan Brasidas, who died in the battle with the Athenians outside the city in 422 BC, the people of the city felt that Hagnon would no longer benefit them as their oikistes.

5.11.1 After this all the allies with their weapons publicly attended and buried Brasidas in the city in front of what is now the agora; henceforward the Amphipolitans, after enclosing his tomb, sacrificed to him as a hero and gave him the honour of games and yearly sacrifices, and attributed the colony to him as founder, pulling down the buildings of Hagnon and getting rid of anything which might still survive as a reminder of his settlement. They considered that Brasidas had been their saviour (at the same time, they were at that point fostering the alliance with the Spartans through fear of the Athenians), and also that, because they were at war with the Athenians, Hagnon could no longer be honoured with similar benefit or contentment.
MOTHER-CITIES AND THEIRColoNES

2.8 Thucydides 1.24.1–26.2: Corinth and her Colony Corcyra

Corinth colonised Corcyra in the late eighth century and Corcyra had in turn colonised Epidamnos in 627 BC, but the oikistes for this had come, as was customary, from Corcyra’s own mother-city, Corinth. The passage clearly exemplifies the normal relationship between mother-city and colonies, and even the colony of a colony could claim aid from the original mother-city. A mother-city could expect specific honours from its colonies.

1.24.1 Epidamnos is a city on the right as one sails into the Ionian gulf; Tauliantian barbarians, an Illyrian race, dwell nearby. 2 The Corcyraeans colonised it, and its founder was Phalios, son of Eratokleides, a Corinthian from the family of the Herakleidai, who had been invited from the mother-city according to ancestral custom. Some Corinthians and others of the Dorian race joined in colonising it. 3 As time passed, the Epidamnians’ power became great and populous; 4 but they were split by factional strife amongst themselves for many years, as it is said, because they had been ruined and deprived of most of their power through a war with the neighbouring barbarians. 5 Finally, before the (Peloponnesian) war, the people expelled those of influence and power, and so these attacked with the barbarians and plundered the inhabitants of the city by both land and sea. 6 Since the people in the city were hard-pressed, as they were Epidamnians they sent envoys to Corcyra, since it was their mother-city, begging that it would not suffer them to be destroyed, but would reconcile them with their exiles and put an end to the war with the barbarians. 7 They sat as suppliants in the Heraion and made this request. But the Corcyraeans did not accept their plea, sending them away unsuccessful. 1.25.1 When the Epidamnians realised that they were going to get no assistance from Corcyra, they were at a loss as to what they could do, and so they sent to Delphi and consulted the god as to whether they should hand over the city to the Corinthians as their founders and try to obtain some assistance from them. He replied that they should hand it over and make the Corinthians their leaders. 2 The Epidamnians went to Corinth and handed over the colony in accordance with the oracle, pointing out that their founder was from Corinth and making known the oracle’s response, and begged that they would not suffer them to be destroyed, but come to their aid. 3 The Corinthians promised their assistance, feeling they had a right to do so, as they considered that the colony was no less theirs than the Corcyraeans’, and motivated at the same time by the fact that they hated the Corcyraeans, inasmuch as they disregarded them though they were their colonists; 4 for they neither gave the Corinthians the customary honours in their common festivals, nor served Corinthians with the first portion of the sacrifices, as the other colonies did. Instead they despised the Corinthians because they themselves were both equal to the richest of the Greeks.
at that time in monetary power and more powerful in military resources, and boasted that they were far superior in their fleet ... 1.26.1 So, having all these complaints against the Corcyraeans, the Corinthians were glad to send help to Epidamnos, bidding anyone who wished to go as a colonist, as well as guards of Ambraciots, Leukadians and their own citizens. 2 And they went by land to Apollonia, a Corinthian colony, for fear that they might be hindered by the Corcyraeans if they crossed by sea.

2.9 Thucydides 1.56.1–57.1: Athenian Interference with Potidaea

There were strong bonds between some mother-cities and their colonies, and the mother-city expected that the colonies would ‘follow its lead’. Potidaea, founded by Corinth c. 625–585 BC, was still receiving annual magistrates from Corinth in 432. The context is, as for doc. 2.8, the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War.

1.56.1 Immediately after this the following differences also occurred between the Athenians and Peloponnesians which led to war. 2 For since the Corinthians were planning how to revenge themselves on the Athenians, the latter, suspecting their enmity, gave instructions to the Potidaeans, colonists of Corinth and their own tributary allies who live on the isthmus of Pallene, to demolish their wall on the side towards Pallene, give hostages, and expel the magistrates (epidemourgoi) sent them by Corinth and not in future receive those sent every year. For the Athenians were afraid that the Potidaeans might revolt under the persuasion of Perdikkas and the Corinthians, and might draw into the revolt with them Athens’ other allies in Thrace. 1.57.1 The Athenians took these precautions regarding Potidaea immediately after the sea-battle at Corcyra.
Overcoming Environmental Determinism: Introduced Species, Hybrid Plants and Animals, and Transformed Lands in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds
Chapter 3. Overcoming Environmental Determinism: Introduced Species, Hybrid Plants and Animals, and Transformed Lands in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds

Introduction

The possible damage that can be caused by introduced species of animals and plants is a familiar and much-discussed concept in the twenty-first century, but this was not the case in the Hellenistic and Roman worlds.\(^1\) There was nothing in antiquity similar to the furor surrounding the gypsy moth, which has attracted so much attention and withstood so many attempts to eradicate it, ever since it was accidentally introduced to the United States in 1869.\(^2\) The closest ancient equivalent is a disaster of a considerably smaller scale. This was the introduction of hares to the small island of Carpathus, an event that gained proverbial status because of the great damage that they caused to the island’s vegetation (Arist. Rh. 3.11 1413a 17–20; cf. Suda λ 30, o 105, ο 121. Adler; Zen. 4.48).\(^3\) The relative silence of ancient authors compared to their modern counterparts about disasters caused by introduced animals or plants is a reflection not simply of the comparatively limited possibilities in the ancient world for international travel and trade, or even of the difficulties involved in noticing the often subtle and long-term changes that can accompany introduced species. This silence is a reflection also of a substantially different attitude regarding animals and plants in the Hellenistic and Roman worlds. There was little concern about the possibility that an introduced species of animal or plant might have a harmful impact on its new land.\(^4\) And, while there was some recognition of the possibility that entire species of animals or plants might become extinct,\(^5\) there was nonetheless little concern about maintaining the original state of the lands to which foreign plants and animals were introduced. The successful introduction of an animal or a plant to a new region was regarded, overall, as something to be celebrated.

The Hellenistic and Roman willingness to introduce animals and plants to new regions is substantially at odds with suggestions about the importance of indigeneity and purity in the current body of studies on identity in antiquity, especially in classical Greece, which have largely excluded animals and plants from their focus.\(^6\) Benjamin Isaac’s *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity*, for instance, says nothing about plants and very little about animals, and what it does say is mostly in terms of the tendency of ancient authors to liken foreign peoples to them.\(^7\) A distorted view of identity results from the anthropocentric focus of Isaac’s book. As much as “unmixed origin, pure lineage, and autochthony” may have been factors that were often emphasized by Greek and Roman scholars with respect to people,\(^8\) all three factors received very little attention in discussions relating to animals and plants. The relative absence of these three factors in botanical and zoological literature from antiquity becomes all the more significant when one realizes how much ‘purity’ and ‘autochthony’ have been emphasized in works of these same genres of literature written in other
periods of history. Zoological literature from France in the later medieval period, for instance, displayed a major interest in ranking different breeds of dogs and hawks with respect to their ‘nobility,’ and in the process provided fodder for developing ideas about heredity and ‘race,’ a word whose early use in French often came in contexts relating to dogs and hunting. As this example illustrates, concerns for maintaining the purity of various breeds of animals were connected also to the concerns that a group of people had to maintain the purity of their own blood-lines. Much the same can be said also about German botanical literature of the first half of the twentieth century, and the emphasis that it tended to place on using ‘native’ rather than ‘foreign’ or ‘exotic’ plants in gardens. Ancient botanical and zoological literature, in contrast, placed much more emphasis on the benefits of relocating animals and plants to new lands, and of producing new hybrid varieties of both by interbreeding and grafting. To judge from the attitudes that appear in botanical and zoological literature, indigeneity and purity were substantially less important considerations for ancient scholars than has been suggested.

Ancient scholars were instead much more interested in the possibility of reshaping the lands in which they lived, and of exerting substantial control over the animals and plants that lived with them, all for the sake of human benefit. This emphasis on reshaping lands and controlling fauna and flora clashes again with what has been suggested in the current body of scholarship on identity in the ancient world. The clash is especially apparent in relation to what has been suggested about environmentally deterministic theories, which held that there were strong natural links between a land and its inhabitants. In Isaac’s view, proponents of such theories were insistent both that the influence of environmental factors—including climate, water supply, and elevation—on a people’s nature and character was inescapable, and that the relocation of people from one land to another could result only in changes “for the worse.” Such a claim cannot stand in light of the perspective that comes from the authors of ancient botanical and zoological literature, who believed that animals and plants could be successfully introduced to nearly any land and substantially improved by appropriate human control and management. These authors still acknowledged that environmental factors shaped the nature and character of a land’s inhabitants, but they sought as much as possible to overcome unfavorable conditions and exploit favorable conditions in order to produce plants and animals of the desired type in nearly any region of the world. Their perspectives were still shaped by environmentally deterministic theories, but they allowed for the possibility of positive changes to result from the properly managed relocation of animals and plants from one region to another, and from judiciously controlled breeding and training/cultivation. As much as ancient scholars may have shied away from the idea of exerting control over nature, they did not feel bound by seemingly deterministic environmental factors and limitations in matters
relating to plants and animals. They believed instead that the world and its inhabitants could be reshaped and controlled for the benefit of humanity.

As this chapter will demonstrate, the desire to introduce species to new lands and to improve them for the sake of human benefit is a constant and recurring theme in botanical and zoological literature of the Hellenistic and Roman worlds. Hellenistic and Roman authors both were eager to take advantage of the new opportunities for relocating animals and plants that came in the wake of the conquests of Alexander the Great, and the great expansion of the Roman Empire. The first part of this chapter illustrates how the mass relocation of animals and plants in the Hellenistic period encouraged scholars to consider how flora, fauna, and entire lands could be reshaped in ways that were beneficial for people. A case study is then offered concerning the policies of Ptolemaic kings, which demonstrate the great efforts that were expended to make introduced animals and plants flourish in new lands, and to produce improved varieties of them by careful management and experiments in interbreeding. The chapter's second part argues that a similar attitude existed also under the Roman Empire, where the potential for gain from the importation and interbreeding of foreign animals overcame objections that such animals might bring corruption to Rome. The successful relocation of animals and plants to new lands across the entire empire was a powerful demonstration to many observers that humanity could overcome environmental factors and produce animals and plants of desired characteristics under nearly any circumstances.

Environmental determinism and the relocation of animals and plants in the Hellenistic world

There was a widespread belief in antiquity that people, animals, and plants were shaped by the lands in which they lived. Animals and plants were accordingly included alongside people as evidence to support environmentally deterministic theories that posited the existence of strong natural links between a land and the character of its inhabitants. But the successful introduction of animals and plants to new lands in the Hellenistic period called into question how rigidly such theories could be applied, and encouraged scholars to acknowledge that human influence could overcome environmental factors. Such an acknowledgment even led Theophrastus, writing in the first decades after Alexander's conquests, to believe that people could simulate and reproduce ideal conditions that would make plants thrive outside of their indigenous regions.

The environmentally deterministic theories with which Hellenistic scholars engaged were a legacy passed down by their classical predecessors, whose deterministic
perspectives were in large part a consequence of their having to concern themselves little with the relocation of animals, people, and plants. Authors of the classical period were certainly familiar with large-scale migrations of people, as is apparent, for instance, from Herodotus' treatment of the wanderings of the Pelasgians (1.57–8), but such migrations belonged to the distant and dimly remembered past, not to the present day.13 Herodotus similarly had little to say about the relocation of animals, and he could take for granted that no one in his audience had ever encountered the fantastic peoples and animals that he had heard inhabited the edges of the earth (e.g. 3.115–16). Greeks knew what camels looked like, Herodotus granted (3.103), but surely none of them had encountered a griffin, flying snake, or gold-digging ant, though he claimed to have himself seen the bones of flying snakes in Egypt (2.75; 3.102, 107–9, 116; 4.13). The prospect of these remarkable creatures coming to Greece seemed quite remote to Herodotus, and he suggested, moreover, that there was a link between them and the places where they were born: “The extreme edges of the inhabited world were somehow allotted the most beautiful things” (3.106; cf. 3.116).14 Presumably, such creatures could not exist elsewhere. A similarly deterministic perspective appears also in the Hippocratic Airs, Waters, and Places, a text roughly contemporary with Herodotus.15 This work acknowledged the Greek colonization of Asia Minor, and emphasized that the land’s new and old residents would inevitably be shaped by the relative gentleness of its features and climate: “manliness, endurance, tolerance for work, and spirit could not occur in the nature . . . of either a native- or foreign-born person (mête homophulou mête allophulou)” (Hippoc. Aer. 12.6–7).16 To judge from this lone example, the movement of people from place to place presented no real challenge to the author’s deterministic perspective: a process of acclimatization would result from relocation, and the one example of this process that he treated involved a change “for the worse,” which is in line with the arguments of Isaac.17 But an exception to the author’s determinism comes in his discussion of the wild plants of Asia Minor, which he suggested that men would “cultivate from their wild [state] (hêmerountes ex agriôn), and transplant (metaphuteontes) to suitable [land]” (Hippoc. Aer. 12.5).18 Even in this instance, though, the text still subordinates human ingenuity to the natural characteristics and climate of a land: the wild plants are cultivated by people, but their seeds need to be planted in land that will allow them to thrive. Both Herodotus and the Hippocratic author acknowledged the possibility and the potential impact of relocation briefly, but neither made much allowance in their perspectives for the wholesale movement of people, animals, and plants from one region to another that characterized the Hellenistic period.

Even Aristotle, on the cusp of the Hellenistic period, engaged very little with the idea of mass relocations of people, animals, and plants in the formulation of his own environmentally deterministic perspective, which again made no allowance for positive
changes to result from relocation. Aristotle's zoological works do display a significant interest in foreign animals, especially the elephant, and they also refer almost incidentally to foreign birds that had been imported to Greece and were being bred there, such as the peafowl and guinea fowl (e.g. Hist. an. 6.9 564a 25–b9; 6.2 559a 25–6). But the zoological works provide no confirmation to the claim made by several ancient sources that his researches were lavishly supported by his former pupil Alexander (Plin. HN 8.44; Ath. 9.398e; cf. Ael. VH 4.19), much less that the great Macedonian conqueror made efforts on his campaign to send back animal specimens, including an elephant, to his teacher, as has been suggested by some scholars. The only potential sign that Aristotle had access to new information about foreign animals as a result of Alexander's expedition comes from a brief reference to the large quantities that elephants could eat and drink, which is expressed in Macedonian units of measure (Hist. an. 7[8].9 596a 3–9). However Aristotle may have gained access to this information, the overall perspective of his zoological works was that of the classical rather than the Hellenistic period, and he depended heavily on older written sources, such as Herodotus, for his information about foreign animals. Aristotle nonetheless did address the relocation of animals on a smaller scale, and he was clearly interested in what might happen when an animal was introduced to a new land. But his scattered comments relating to the introduction of animals to new lands offer no systematic theory to explain successes or failures. Aristotle was clearly baffled, for instance, about why hares introduced to Ithaca were unable to survive on the island, and why all of them were found “dead by the sea, pointing in the direction from which they had been brought” (Hist. an. 7[8].28 606a 3–5). He similarly had no answer to explain why there were no moles in the region of Lebadia in Boeotia, and why members of the species brought there were “unwilling to dig,” despite their thriving population in nearby Orchomenus (Hist. an. 7[8].28. 605b 32–606a 3). Such examples spoke only to the great disparities between regions frequently acknowledged by Aristotle, in spite of his belief that the general differences between animals on the three continents could be explained with a wide-ranging environmental theory: “Overall, wild animals are wilder in Asia, but all of them in Europe are more courageous, and those in Libya are most varied in form” (Hist. an. 7[8].28 606b 17–19). Similar determinism was present also in Aristotle's statement about the broad differences between the people of Europe and Asia: the cold climate of the former gave its residents more spirit, but the warm climate of the latter gave its residents more skill and intelligence (Pol. 7.7 1327b 23–9). Local variation was still possible in Aristotle's broad vision, and he was accordingly able to explain that Greece possessed the best traits of both Europe and Asia because of its intermediate location between the two continents, though even in Greece there was still variety among different peoples (Pol. 7.7 1327b 29–36). But pessimistic determinism carried the day, as is apparent from Aristotle's brief treatment of the
Achaeans, a barbarous people whose name led Greek scholars to believe that they were the descendants of the Achaeans who fought at Troy. These once-Greek Achaeans, Aristotle believed, “became savage (ἀπεγειρόμενοι)” and delighted “in raw meat or in human flesh,” after they settled in the region north of the Black Sea (Eth. Nic. 7.5 1148b 21–4; Pol. 8.4 1338b 19–24). Aristotelian's treatment of the spurious case of the Achaeans is suggestive of his belief in a rigidly deterministic link between a land and its inhabitants that was capable even of transforming civilized Greeks into savage cannibals. And, once again, this example dealt only with the possibility of a change “for the worse.” The formation of Aristotle's environmentally deterministic perspective had to grapple very little with the possibility of mass relocation of animals or people, even as such relocations were beginning to take place in the final years of his life.

Whereas Aristotle's works showed little awareness of the changes brought about by Alexander's expedition, the works of his pupil Theophrastus demonstrate that he was engaging closely with the realities of the new Hellenistic world, and especially with the great movement of plants that came with it. Theophrastus' extant botanical works were products of the early third century, and they display specific knowledge of many foreign varieties of plants encountered by members of Alexander's expedition. His treatment of plants included extensive discussion of why introduced flora would thrive (or not) in the different conditions of their new lands, and how wild plants might be tamed and changed by human influence, in spite of environmental factors. On this subject, Theophrastus drew from his own hands-on experience with plants: he owned a garden at Athens (Diog. Laert. 5.39), and the efforts he expended in it may well be detected by his practical advice about the use of urine and manure as fertilizers (e.g. Caus. Pl. 3.9.3, 17.5). His father's reputed profession as a fuller (e.g. Diog. Laert. 5.36), in turn, may have accustomed him more than most scholars to dirtying his hands. Theophrastus was therefore in an excellent position both to chronicle the changes that were taking place in the world around him, and to celebrate the successes that he and other gardeners had in making introduced plants flourish in new lands.

Unsurprisingly, therefore, the botanical works of Theophrastus offer a positive and optimistic perspective on the idea of relocating plants and cultivating them in new regions: such attempts might often fail to succeed because of environmental and other factors outside of human control, but any success that they did achieve was completely in line with nature. Failed attempts to cultivate wild plants or to introduce plants to new regions were common enough, Theophrastus emphasized, and these failures were the result of the plant or the land itself. Some plants, Theophrastus acknowledged, were simply "wild by nature (ἀγριόν τὴν φύσει)," and would never respond to cultivation (Hist. pl. 3.2.2; cf. 1.3.6). Other plants introduced to new regions might be unable to thrive because of the "nature of the land (τὴν τῆς καὶ τῶν φυλλῶν);" "the strength or weakness of their seeds;" or the "mixture of the air (τῆς τού αέρος κρασι)" (Caus. pl.
3.21.5). A notable example of the last type of failure came, Theophrastus reported, when Harpalus, the treasurer of Alexander the Great, tried again and again in Babylon to grow ivy, a plant that was closely associated with Dionysus, and that held much interest for Alexander on his expedition (e.g. Arr. Anab. 5.2.5, Indica 5.9). As Theophrastus explained, “the land does not receive [the ivy] because of the mixture of the air (tēn tou aerōs krasin)” (Hist. pl. 4.4.1; cf. Plut. Alex. 35.15, Quaest. conv. 3.2 648c–d; Plin. HN 16.144). Notwithstanding the repeated failures of Harpalus with the ivy, Theophrastus often displayed confidence in the ability of people to introduce plants to new regions and make them grow there, even if they needed to expend considerable effort in the process (e.g. Hist. pl. 4.4.1, 4.5.7). Surprising and welcome changes might even happen, such as when pomegranate trees were brought to Egypt and to the river Pinarus in Cilicia: the fruit of the Egyptian trees became sweet and wine-like in their flavor, while the Cilician trees grew fruit without stones (Hist. pl. 2.2.7; Caus. pl. 1.9.2). Changes of this sort were the result of bringing a plant to a region that suited it well (Hist. pl. 2.2.10), and Theophrastus’ perspective on such cases was in essence the same as that voiced already by the Hippocratic author regarding the transplantation of wild plants in Asia Minor to suitable lands. But Theophrastus also suggested that human attention was capable on its own of taming wild plants to produce cultivated forms. “Husbandry (geōg gia),” Theophrastus suggested, “simply causes a change, taming (exēmerousa) trees and fruit” (Caus. pl. 2.14.2). A “lack of husbandry (ageōgresia),” contrarily, can lead to changes for the worse, “for then all things, so to speak, become wild (apagrioutai)” (Caus. pl. 2.15.1; cf. Hist. pl. 2.2.9).Significantly, Theophrastus used the same verb—apagioomai—to describe a cultivated plant’s transition into wildness that Aristotle had used to describe the transformation of the Achaeans from Greeks into barbarians. But Theophrastus’ perspective, unlike those of the Hippocratic author and Aristotle, gave more credit to the ability of humans to take control over environmental factors, and not simply to be at their mercy. Theophrastus even argued that the efforts of people to cultivate and improve plants qualified as natural: “cultivation (therapeia)” aimed for the best results in plants, just as nature did. As Theophrastus explained, “the fulfillment of [a plant’s] nature also comes about when whatever it happens to lack is added through art (dia technēs), such as appropriate and abundant nourishment, and the removal of things that would hinder and harm it.” The human cultivation of plants, Theophrastus believed, was simply providing to them everything that “suitable places (oikeioi topos)” would naturally provide (Caus. pl. 1.16.11). Theophrastus did hedge his claim about the impact of cultivation, and note that some plants, particularly of medicinal varieties, always did better without human involvement, while others were better off with the aid of “cultivation and husbandry (tēs therapeias kai geōg gia)” (Caus. pl. 1.16.13). Without question, Theophrastus did emphasize that even dedicated human care would often be frustrated by the nature of
a plant or a land. But he also recognized that human ingenuity could artificially reproduce ideal conditions for some plants to thrive, and that such successful reproductions, for all their artificiality, were still natural. For all his caution, Theophrastus still allowed himself to acknowledge and even to celebrate the great potential of human ingenuity to transform plants by cultivation, and to make them thrive in new lands.

**Introducing animals and plants to Ptolemaic Egypt**

Theophrastus’ celebration of the possibilities that could come from the relocation of animals or plants was very much in the same spirit as the policies of the Ptolemaic kings of Egypt, who had purchased his works for the new library they established in Alexandria (Ath. 1.3b; cf. Diog. Laert. 5.37). The Ptolemies reveled in foreign animals and plants, and they made great efforts to import and establish breeding populations of them in Egypt. Their efforts were decidedly imperialistic in character, and they seemed to delight especially in the possibilities of taming animals that had a particular reputation for savagery. But, amidst their desire to tame animals and reshape their kingdom, the Ptolemies displayed little concern about maintaining the purity of imported or native species. The categories of ‘native’ and ‘foreign’ broke down under Ptolemaic rule, even as their efforts to tame savage creatures were calling into question the distinction between ‘human’ and ‘animal.’ Their great successes in making foreign animals act as if they were civilized people even raised the possibility that the dichotomy between Greeks and barbarians might be broken down.

The Ptolemaic effort to import animals and plants to Egypt and to make them thrive was the embodiment of an optimistic belief that a land could undergo a major transformation with proper human care and management. Like Theophrastus, the Ptolemies and their subjects must have recognized that human effort could only go so far in overcoming the prevailing environmental conditions in Egypt. Pleasant and welcome surprises could result, such as the discovery mentioned already that pomegranate trees imported to Egypt produced sweet fruit that tasted like wine. But there were also frustrating reminders that some imported varieties of plants would revert to their Egyptian type with sufficient time. Egyptian cabbage, for instance, was characterized by its bitter taste, so seeds were imported from Rhodes, which was known for its sweet cabbage. Diphilus of Siphnos, a physician of the early third century, reported as much, along with the disappointing results of the experiment: cabbage seed “brought from Rhodes to Alexandria produces sweet cabbage for a year, but after that time acquires the local character” (Ath. 9.369f). Efforts to establish olive crops also seem to have met with limited success. But such failures should not distract us from the great labors exerted by the Ptolemies to transform Egypt by undertaking
major projects of drainage, irrigation, and reclamation, especially in the Fayyum. A telling sign of Ptolemaic success is the renaming of the Fayyum early in the third century: its old name of ‘Marsh’ was no longer appropriate. New crops were introduced along with new settlers to the Fayyum, and these included Lycian garlic, Byzantine chickpeas, and Chian and Syrian figs. Not all of these crops gained much acceptance from the native Egyptian population, but the Ptolemies were successful in encouraging farmers to grow a new variety of durum wheat which eventually replaced the variety of emmer wheat that had previously been grown (Hdt. 2.77.3–5). Many foreign varieties of animals were imported also, with the goal of improving the breeding stock of the varieties that were native to Egypt. Sheep from all over the world were brought to Egypt (e.g. Ath. 5.201b–c), and great effort was devoted to their care. Imported Milesian sheep, for instance, were clad in leather coats to protect their fleeces, and their wool was plucked by hand (P. Cairo Zeno 3.59430; cf. Varro, Rust. 2.11.7, Plin. HN 8.190). There was clearly no shortage of effort and optimism supporting the Ptolemaic effort to transform Egypt, even if not all of their experiments and policies succeeded.

A similarly optimistic spirit underlay the Ptolemaic effort to import and tame wild animals, which produced many notable successes. Even Agatharchides of Cnidus, a highly critical observer of the second century, had to acknowledge how impressive the Ptolemaic effort was. Agatharchides was bothered that the collecting expeditions of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (r. 283–246) were taking “creatures that had been separated by nature (tēi phusei)” and gathering them together “deliberately into a single home” (Phot. Bibl. 250.1 441b = Agatharchides, De mari Erythraeo, 1.1). But he nonetheless provided ample testimony to the great ingenuity and energy devoted to building the Ptolemaic collection. He referred, for instance, to the ships used to transport elephants up the Red Sea from southern Ptolemaic settlements to Berenice (Phot. Bibl. 250.85 456b–457a = 5.85a; Diod. Sic. 3.40.4 = 5.85b), where they would then be led across the desert and finally ferried down the Nile to Memphis. He recorded also how the interests of Ptolemy II in foreign animals encouraged a group of hunters to capture an African rock python of massive size and transport it from Ethiopia to Alexandria (Diod. Sic. 3.36–37.9 = 5.80b; cf. Ael. NA 16.39). The snake’s keepers in Alexandria tamed it gradually by controlling its food supply, and the result was an “incredible sight”: “its tameness (exēmerōsin) was remarkable” (Diod. Sic. 3.37.7 = 5.80b; cf. Phot. Bibl. 250.78 456a = 5.80a). Giant ships transporting elephants and a tamed snake of massive size provided powerful demonstrations even to a critical observer of how much control the Ptolemies were exerting over the natural world.

Amidst such public and spectacular efforts and displays, basic categories of ‘human’ and ‘animal’ and ‘foreign’ and ‘native’ were breaking down under Ptolemaic rule, as a consequence of their efforts to tame savage animals and to produce new hybrid
animals by interbreeding. Under the Ptolemites, it became apparent that animals might be trained to behave like humans, as was demonstrated by a lion that was the close companion of Berenice, the wife, perhaps, of Ptolemy I or III.43 This lion, Aelian reported, "was no different from [Berenice's] chamber-maids. It used to cleanse her face with its tongue, and smooth away her wrinkles. And it was her table-mate, eating gently and orderly like a human being (anthrōpikōs)" (Ael. NA 5.39). Berenice's lion demonstrated, even more powerfully than the tamed rock python, just how transformative the efforts to train an animal might be. Countless more such examples were no doubt furnished especially under the rule of Ptolemy II, who organized a spectacular religious procession featuring thousands of animals of many different species, all of whom were pointedly under human control (Callixeinus of Rhodes FGrH 627 F 2 = Ath. 5.196a–203b).44 The Ptolemites also engaged in efforts to provide hybrid varieties of animals by interbreeding, including at their palace in Alexandria, where they kept pheasants. Ptolemy VIII (182–116 BCE) mentioned as much, referring to Ptolemy II or his own brother Ptolemy VI, and noting that one or the other of these kings imported pheasants from Media and bred them with a Numidian variety, producing from this union a great number of birds to be eaten (Ptolemy VIII BN 234 F 2a = Ath. 14.654b–d; F 2b = Ath. 9.387e).45 Ptolemy II was also receiving hybrid animals as gifts from allies and client-kings, who surely knew of his interest in them. Toubias, a Jewish "sheikh" in the southern region of Syria, sent to Ptolemy II the following animals, which he listed in a brief letter that accompanied them: "two horses, six dogs, one wild-mule from an ass (hēmion[grion] ex onou hen), two white Arabian donkeys, two foals from a wild-mule (pō[rous] ex hēmionag[riou duo]), one foal from an ass (pōlon ex ovagriou hena). And all of these are tame" (P. Cairo Zeno 1.59075.3–5).46 Exactly what these hybrid animals mentioned by Toubias were remains in doubt, and one suggested possibility is that the "two foals from a wild-mule" may even have been the offspring of an extremely rare fertile mule.47 Whatever they and the other creatures mentioned were, their status as a gift to Ptolemy II speaks to his willingness to experiment with breeding animals of different varieties from different regions, and to his desire to collect rare specimens that resulted from such unions. Keeping animals in their pure and untrained states was of little concern to the Ptolemites, whose seemingly limitless resources allowed them great latitude to import, train, and interbreed animals.

Ptolemaic efforts to train foreign animals even called into question the basic dichotomy of 'Greek' and 'barbarian' that was meant to divide up all of humanity. Foreign animals were strongly associated in the eyes of Greeks with their native regions, even in matters relating to human languages.48 'Barbarian' languages were consequently compared to the noises that animals made (e.g. Hdt. 4.183). A significant transformation to this belief occurred in the reign of Ptolemy II, when he was given a baby elephant as a gift. The elephant, Aelian reported, "was brought up with the Greek
language, and understood those speaking it. Before this animal it had been believed that elephants understood only the language of the Indians” (Ael. NA 11.25). As much as the early Hellenistic kings made great efforts to acquire elephants, the animal was still associated strongly in the eyes of Greek with India, which was undoubtedly a barbarian land, despite the many connections drawn between it and Greece by authors in the early Hellenistic period. The discovery that an elephant could understand Greek provided reason to question this old association, and the larger idea that foreign animals were linked closely not just to their native regions, but also to the non-Greek languages that were spoken in them. Ptolemy II’s baby elephant therefore provided a powerful symbol of hybridity, joining many other similar symbols that characterized the Hellenistic period. One such symbol was Alexandria itself, as viewed by Polybius, who visited the city sometime after 146 BCE. He observed that the Alexandrians were a “mixed (migades)” people, though they “were Greeks by origin, and remembered the common custom of Greeks” (Polyb. 34.14.5 = Strabo 17.1.12 C 797). The persistence of Greekness at Alexandria, despite the ‘mixing’ that had taken place between Greeks and Egyptians, provides another sign that ancient scholars were more optimistic in their outlooks about the relocation of people than has been suggested. Ptolemy II’s elephant, too, was an example of a positive change resulting from a relocation. If elephants could learn to understand Greek, despite their foreign origins, then perhaps people of foreign origins might also be able to become like Greeks.

Overall, the successful relocation and taming of wild animals and plants in the Hellenistic period encouraged scholars to have less rigidly deterministic views about the natural links between a land and its inhabitants. Some animals, plants, and lands were less responsive to human influence than others, but the mass relocations of plants and animals to new lands had many notable successes. No one would have denied the significant influence that a land had on its inhabitants, but the efforts of the Ptolemy demonstrated the possibility that a land itself might be reshaped by human influence, and populated with introduced plants and animals that were interbred with native varieties. As the second part of this chapter shall demonstrate, such a possibility increasingly became a reality under the Roman Empire.

**Reshaping animals, plants, and lands under the Roman Empire**

As was the case with the Hellenistic world in the wake of Alexander’s conquests, Rome also was exposed to many new varieties of animals and plants as its empire expanded. In spite of this great influx of animals and plants, environmentally deterministic theories still persisted under the Roman Empire, and there were doubts expressed about the ability of foreign animals to live and breed outside of their native ranges. Some foreign animals, such as the peahen, were even regarded as potential sources of
corruption to traditional Roman customs because of the high prices that they could command from both collectors and gourmands. In the face of such lingering doubts and hostility about the influx of foreign imports to Rome (e.g. Plin. *HN* 29.24), a pragmatic desire for profit led many to import animals and plants with considerable enthusiasm, and to attempt to improve them by experiments in grafting and interbreeding. Concerns about maintaining purity and protecting indigenous species under the Roman Empire were trumped by the possibilities of introducing animals and plants to new lands and transforming them for human benefit.

The Roman eagerness to relocate animals and plants represented a direct continuity with the attitudes of Hellenistic kings and scholars. As in so many other respects, Pompey and Caesar acted like Hellenistic kings when they introduced new and exotic animals to their people, such as a giraffe, which Caesar had brought with him to Rome from Alexandria (Plin. *HN* 8.69; Cass. Dio. 43.23.1–2). Other elite Romans of the period had their own interests in animals, as is apparent, for instance, from the fashionable status attained by eels, and the major efforts that were devoted to building fishponds in which they could be bred. Roman scholars, too, learned much from their Hellenistic forebears in matters relating to botany and zoology. Their interest in previous agricultural literature is apparent especially from the translation, commissioned early in the first century BCE, of an encyclopedic work on agriculture by Mago of Carthage, to which was added substantial excerpts from Greek agricultural authors. This translation was cited as a source, alongside dozens of authorities from the Hellenistic period, by the polymath Varro (116–27 BCE) at the beginning of his work on agriculture (*Rust.* 1.1.8–10). As this work reveals, Varro was himself actively involved in agriculture: he owned flocks of sheep (*Rust.* 2.2.9), and he identified his own experiences as a major source for the advice that he offered (*Rust.* 1.1.11). Like Theophrastus, whose botanical works he cited frequently (e.g. *Rust.* 1.1.8, 5.1), Varro was quite willing to get his hands dirty, and to celebrate the successes of farmers, gardeners, and others in making animals and plants flourish and lands more fertile. In the first century CE, the spirit displayed in Varro’s works continued to be found in technical and agricultural works written by ‘new men’ and members of the equestrian order. The Roman political and scholarly elite kept alive the triumphant attitudes of the Hellenistic world in matters relating to plants and animals.

Roman versions of environmentally deterministic theories consequently made major allowances for the possibility that human influence could reduce the harmful impact of adverse environmental factors, and help to make a land more fertile than it naturally was. The impact of environmental factors was still acknowledged, and wide-ranging differences between lands were still held to exist, as is clear from Varro’s suggestion that the northern part of the world was “more healthful (salubria) and “fruitful (fructuosiora)” than the south (*Rust.* 1.2.4). Like many others, Varro also singled out the
temperate climate of Italy for praise, and noted that it allowed crops of all sorts to flourish (Rust. 1.2.4–7; cf. Dion. Hal. Ant. Rom. 1.36.2–37.5, Strabo 6.4.1 C 285–6, Vitr. De arch. 6.1.11). But Varro shared with Theophrastus the view that humanity could mitigate harmful environmental factors and reproduce or simulate ideal conditions.

“Healthfulness (salubritas),” Varro suggested, is a product of the “climate and the land, and is in nature's power rather than ours, but it nevertheless depends much on us, because we can, with care, make [conditions] that are harmful more gentle.” Whether the soil or water of a land were unfavorable, or if was too hot or had ill winds, all of these problems could be “improved” by the application of human knowledge (Rust. 1.4.4). A similar perspective was offered nearly a century later by Columella,56 who also praised the great fertility of Italy, but who emphasized the help given to it by humanity: “Italy is the most compliant to human attention. It has learned to produce crops of almost the entire world thanks to the devotion applied by its inhabitants” (Rust. 3.8.5). Columella dismissed contemporary suggestions also that the earth was becoming less fertile with its increasing age (Rust. 1. praef. 1–2). He claimed instead that any lack of fertility was simply the result of human failings: “It is not therefore from weariness, as many have believed, nor from old age, but rather from our own laziness that the cultivated lands respond less generously to us” (Rust. 2.1.7). Wild plants still of course could produce “fruits and seeds” without any human assistance, Columella noted, but those plants “on which effort is applied are better suited for [producing] crops” (Rust. 3.1.2). Neither Varro nor Columella felt limited by seemingly deterministic environmental factors, and both of them eagerly explored the ways in which human attention could reshape a land, and make it more healthful and fertile.57

The optimistic attitudes of Varro and Columella were justified by the many new animals and plants that were being successfully introduced to Italy, in the face of doubts that they would be able to survive and breed outside of their native regions. A clear statement of such doubts is found in the work of Manilius, an astrological poet active in the reign of Augustus and perhaps also of Tiberius, who offered an environmentally deterministic review of the different regions of the world that concluded with a statement of their great and inevitable diversity (Astronomica 4.711–43).58 Manilius noted that different lands enjoyed unequal (nec paribus) levels of harvests, and he offered cinnamon as an example of a crop that fails to grow in “every field” (Astronomica 4.738). The range of elephants, similarly, was restricted to two regions of the earth, evidently Libya and India (Astronomica 4.740). Manilius' astrological perspective was answered, at least indirectly, a few decades later by Columella, who was the author of a lost work Against the Astrologers (Rust. 11.1.31). Columella declared that nature had “pronounced an equal law (parem legem) of fertility for plants, people, and the other animals. Nor had [nature] bestowed particular qualities to some nations and peoples in such a way that she would deny similar gifts altogether to others” (Rust. 3.8.1). Africa
was thus not the only region where women could give birth to multiple offspring, and tall men could be found outside of Germany (Rust. 3.8.1–2). Plants associated closely with Judea and Arabia could also grow in Rome: "In many places of the city we see on one occasion that a cinnamomum tree [casiam] is putting forth leaves, and on another that it has grown quickly [mature ampliatam], and gardens blooming with myrrh and saffron" (Rust. 3.8.4). Columella even offered proof that Italy could rear animals of massive size that were more closely associated with India: "We see elephants born within our walls" (Rust. 3.8.3). More evidence demonstrating the ability of foreign animals and plants to survive in Italy was presented by the Elder Pliny, who referred in general terms to the great numbers of animals being imported to it from all over the world (HN 8.38). Pliny offered one particularly telling example of this trend, which he suggested should make no one surprised about the ability of foreign birds to breed at Rome (HN 9.63). This example concerned the successful introduction of a prized species of fish, the parrot-wrasse (skaros/scaurus), to the waters off the western coast of Italy by Optatus, a freedman of the emperor Tiberius. As Pliny explained, "for a nearly five-year period, care was employed so that [any parrot-wrasse] caught should be returned to the sea. Since then, they are frequently found on the coast of Italy, where they were not previously caught" (HN 9.63). The case of the parrot-wrasse, together with that of the elephant and numerous foreign plants, provided tangible proof that introduced flora and fauna could breed and even thrive in Italy, even if there was still recognition that some plants might be unable to flourish or even to grow outside of their native regions (e.g. Dioscorides 1. praef. 6; Plin. HN 14.1). Notwithstanding this recognition, and the skeptical attitude of Manilius, there was no reason for anyone to doubt that Italy could become the new home of many foreign animal and plants.

Besides skepticism about the ability of foreign animals and plants to live in Italy, people also produced questions about how much they might corrupt traditional Roman virtues. But a desire for profit and a fascination with spectacular foreign animals helped to overcome the more xenophobic responses that they inspired. The example of the peacock illustrates particularly well the complexity of Roman attitudes towards animals that were obviously foreign, but just as obviously profitable to their owners. A peacock was a quintessentially foreign animal: some Greek authors referred to it as the "Persian" or "Median" bird (e.g. Ar. Av. 485, 707; Suda μ 884, τ 99 Adler). Aelian noted also that it "was brought to the Greeks from barbarian lands," and described it as a "pompous" bird that was well aware of its own beauty (NA 5.21). Roman observers responded to peacocks in a similarly ambivalent fashion when they were first introduced to Italy in the first century BCE. As in the Greek world, peacocks became associated with "conspicuous consumption," and were valued "for their cost more than for their flavour." Varro noted that the fashion for keeping flocks of peafowl was a recent development (Rust. 3.6.1), and he credited the orator Q. Hortensius Hortalus as
the first to serve them at banquets, a development that received more praise from “the luxurious than the strict and good” (Rust. 3.6.6; cf. Ael. NA 5.21). Varro noted also the extremely high prices commanded by peafowls and their eggs: a certain M. Auffidius Lureo was said to make an annual income of more than 60,000 HS from breeding them (Rust. 3.6.1, 6). The fashion for serving the birds at banquets persisted in the first century CE (e.g. Suet. Vit. 13.2), and was the target of satirical responses (e.g. Juv. 1.143). But the bird’s remarkable appearance and its association with Hera/Juno helped to secure it a more respectable place in the Roman world, and it commonly appeared on coinage as “the badge of empresses.”62 This beautiful, expensive, and unquestionably foreign bird still managed to be accepted in the Roman world, in spite of xenophobic reactions and concerns about its corrupting influences.

The elephant provides an even better example of the extent to which a foreign animal could overcome xenophobic responses and come to be accepted as if it were native to Italy. As in Ptolemaic Egypt, where a baby elephant proved that it could understand Greek, the intelligence of elephants and their remarkable ability to be trained contributed greatly to the acceptance that they received. Romans had long familiarity with elephants in military contexts, dating back to their wars with Pyrrhus and the Carthaginians in the third century BCE (e.g. Plin. HN 8.16; Polyb. 1.19.2), but they gained increased exposure to them in the first century BCE, when it seems that there existed in Italy a herd owned by the state.63 Elephants in this period played a notable part in games and spectacles, and they proved themselves capable of creating memorable occasions for their audiences. The killing of roughly twenty elephants in a spectacle put on by Pompey in 55 even inspired a protest from the Roman audience that witnessed it, as reported by multiple sources.64 The elephants on this occasion “sought the crowd’s pity” (Plin. HN 8.21) and “raised their trunks to the sky” (Cass. Dio. 39.38.3) to lament what was happening to them. Cicero noted that there was “no pleasure” in the spectacle for the audience, who pitied the elephants and came away with the feeling that there existed “a certain connection between the beasts and the human race” (Fam. 7.1.3). A happier outcome resulted from another display involving elephants put on by Germanicus in 12 BCE (Cass. Dio. 56.27.5), which again was mentioned by multiple sources. According to Aelian, these elephants had been trained by a “dancing-master (orchēstodidaskalos),” who taught them to take on the roles of people attending a banquet, complete with a convincing imitation of the stumbling gait of a tipsy person (Ael. NA 2.11; cf. Plin. HN 8.4, Philo De Animalibus 27, Plut. De soll. an. 968c).65 The performance of these animals helped to prove for Aelian that “[a] tamed elephant is the gentlest [animal]” and “in a certain respect human” (NA 2.11). Besides demonstrating that they could behave like people, elephants also proved that they could act like Greeks or Romans, according to another popular story. Three authors all reported the wonderful phenomenon of an elephant that had learned to write. The Elder Pliny
claimed that the elephant wrote in Greek (HN 8.6; cf. Philo De Animalibus 28), while Aelian claimed to have himself seen an elephant “writing Roman letters with its trunk on a tablet without hesitation in a straight line” (NA 2.11). Aelian emphasized that the elephant even kept its gaze focused on the tablet as it wrote. “You might say,” he added, “that the creature’s eyes had been educated (pepaideumenous) and that they knew their letters (grammatikous)” (NA 2.11). Despite Aelian’s hyperbole, the story provides an unquestionable sign that elephants were being associated less closely with their native ranges in Libya and India. Aelian even emphasized that the elephants in Germanicus’ display were born in Italy (NA 2.11), recalling Columella’s suggestion, already mentioned, that elephants were born “within our walls” (Rust. 3.8.3). Elephants increasingly were treated as if they were native animals to Italy, and they were helped along in this regard by their frequent appearances on Roman coins, and their close associations with the imperial throne. A surprising sign of an elephant’s imperial associations and its continuing presence in Italy came in the manual of dream-interpretation authored by Artemidorus in the second century CE. As he said, “An elephant appearing outside of Italy and India signifies danger and fear because of its color and size. For the creature is terrifying, and especially to those unaccustomed to it. But in Italy it signifies a master, an emperor, and a great man” (Artem. 2.12). Despite their foreign origins, the intelligent and eminently trainable elephant gained the status of an animal that was indigenous to Italy.

Besides accepting new species of foreign animals, Romans were eager also to explore what benefits could come from interbreeding varieties of animals that came from different regions of the world. Maintaining the supposed purity of a particular variety of animal—it would be anachronistic to use the term ‘breed’—was evidently of little concern to Romans, with a few slight exceptions in the cases of horses and dogs. Columella, for instance, divided up horses into three different classes: the “noble (generosa),” which “provide horses for the circus and the sacred games”; a second type that was used for producing mules (mularis), and finally the “common (vulgaris),” which “produces ordinary (mediocres) male and female horses” (Rust. 6.27.1). The division of horses into the categories of “noble” and “common” recalls similar divisions used in medieval French zoological treatises mentioned already. Yet the existence of the mularis category complicates matters because the offspring of this type of horse were, according to Columella, “equal in price to that of the noble” (Rust. 6.27.1). A mularis horse was just as valuable as a “noble” horse, though the purpose of its existence was to produce mules, an animal that was highly valued because of, and in spite of, its hybridity. Hybridity was valued also in dogs, though again there was emphasis placed by some authors on maintaining the purity of individual varieties. The clearest statement emphasizing purity comes from Ps.-Oppian, a Syrian poet active in the reign of Caracalla, who advised that it was “by far the best to keep the tribes (phula) [of dogs]
of a single tribe (*monaphula*) (Cynegetica 1.398–9). Ps.-Oppian nonetheless provided advice about how dogs from different regions should be “mixed” together by interbreeding (Cynegetica 1.376 – 7, 393 – 8). More advice on this subject came from Grattius, a poet of the Augustan Age, who concluded a review of dogs from different regions of the world with the suggestion that he “shall mix the skill of different types (*variis gentibus*)” (Cynegeticon 193). Specific examples followed this statement: “An Umbrian mother will give to rash Gallic [puppies] nimble thought; [puppies] of a Gelonian [mother] will derive spirit from a Hyrcanian [father]; and an Aetolian with its empty barking will lose the vice if corrected by a Molossian father” (Cynegeticon 194 – 7). From a teleological perspective, Grattius’ advice may provide some hints suggestive of a developing idea of different “breeds” of dogs, and of their increasing specialization under the Roman Empire. But Grattius’ advice speaks just as much to the Roman desire to improve animals by experiments in interbreeding, with no concern for maintaining the purity of their stock. Even in the case of horses and dogs, the value of hybrid varieties was eagerly explored.

The Roman desire to create hybrid and improved varieties of plants and animals extended beyond horses and dogs, and the cumulative impact of this desire was the transformation of the empire. The transformation was effected by the actions of people like Columella’s uncle Marcus, whom he described as the “most learned and diligent farmer” in Spain (Rust. 2.15.4; cf. 5.5.15). Marcus delighted in experimenting with new agricultural methods, and he was joined in this habit by other elite men throughout the empire, including Galen’s father, who undertook experiments in the region of Pergamum with different types of wheat and barley (*Gal. De alimentorum facultatibus* 1.37 [6.552 – 3 Kühn]). Another similar figure was Palladius, an agricultural author of the fourth or fifth century CE whose work reveals the great extent of his travels, and his own experiences as a farmer, especially with fruit trees. Palladius was interested not only in how one might get a citron tree to grow in a cold region (*Opus Agriculturae* 8.3.2), but also how one might produce seedless grapes, which he identified as an example of “nature advancing through art” (*Opus Agriculturae* 3.29.1). He revealed also how information was passing from farmer to farmer, such as a method of grafting that would produce peaches “without stones” that he had learned from a “certain man from Spain” (*Opus Agriculturae* 3.17.8). Columella’s uncle Marcus undertook similar experiments to produce improved varieties of animals, as is apparent especially from a remarkable story told by his nephew. Marcus acquired some “fierce and wild rams of a wonderful color” that had been brought from Africa to Gades for public games, and bred them once they were tamed to “coated” ewes, who were clothed with leather jackets to protect their excellent fleeces (Rust. 7.2.4). The rams produced had coarse fleeces, but they were then bred with Tarentine ewes, a union which resulted in lambs with the soft wool of their mothers, and the desirable colors of their fathers and grandfathers. From
this experience, Marcus “used to say that whatever sort of appearance that the beasts had was reproduced through the generations of their descendants, with their wildness tamed” (*Rust. 7.2.5*). Columella’s story about his uncle brings into vivid detail the types of experimentation with interbreeding that the zoo-archaeological evidence suggests were taking place throughout the Roman Empire.75 Domestic animals everywhere were being “improved” by interbreeding, whether this meant that they were becoming larger, or producing better wool, or being changed in any other way that would be beneficial to their owners.76 The flora and fauna of the empire were being transformed by the experiments of men like Marcus Columella and Palladius, who regarded hybridity as a source of benefits, rather than something to be avoided.

The recognition by elite Romans of the possible benefits of hybridity with respect to animals and plants arguably carried over also to their perspectives on the mix of different peoples that made up the Roman population. There was, as we have already seen, hostility among elite Romans to foreign imports of all sorts, and resistance also to the idea that foreign peoples should be granted Roman citizenship.77 But such hostility and resistance existed alongside the recognition that Roman civilization was a hybrid product, formed from the mixture of many different peoples. Even the Elder Cato (234–149 BCE), who believed that Greek influence would inevitably corrupt Rome (Plin. *HN* 29.14; Plut. *Cat. Mai.* 23.2), admitted that Rome had been settled by a mix of Greek settlers, and that Romulus spoke an Aeolic dialect of Greek (Orig. F 2.22 = Serv. *ad Verg. Aen.* 8.368; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.11.1–4; Lydus, *Mag.* 1.5).78 Varro made much the same acknowledgment, noting the presence of early Greek settlers and visitors in Italy before the foundation of Rome (*Ling.* 5.21, 45, 53, 101; *Rust.* 3.1.6), and pointing also to the influence of the languages of non-Greek peoples, such as the Sabines, on the development of Latin (e.g. *Ling.* 5.66, 68, 73, 74).79 Cato and Varro both took for granted that Rome and the Latin language were hybrid products. Their perspectives on Roman history ultimately looked much like their gardens and farms, which likewise contained a mix of native and non-native plants (e.g. *Cat. Agr.* 8.1; Varro, *Rust.* 1.41.6). In the eyes of Cato and Varro, Italy had for centuries been receiving a mix of foreign peoples, just as it continued to welcome foreign plants and animals. Foreign imports might bring corruption, but it was clear also that they might be integrated almost seamlessly into Italy and Rome, whether they were plants, animals, or people.

The Roman attitude towards animals and plants was characterized most of all by the pragmatic desire for benefit and profit. Romans believed that they could reshape the lands in which they lived, and populate them with introduced animals and plants, even if these animals and plants came from regions that had significantly different environmental features. Obviously, foreign animals were accepted into the Roman world, and were tamed and trained as much as possible. There was little concern for preserving the original state of a land, and this lack of concern extended also to its
indigenous population of animals and plants, which were improved by experiments in grafting and interbreeding. The flora and fauna of the empire, along with the diverse lands that comprised it, were all thought to be under human control.

Conclusion

An optimistic attitude about the great plasticity of plants and animals emerges from the botanical and zoological literature of the Hellenistic and Roman world. Plants and animals could be relocated to new lands, grafted or interbred with other varieties of plants or animals, and cultivated or trained to suit human desires. Lands themselves could even be reshaped to make them more hospitable for all of their inhabitants—people, plants, and animals. Environmentally deterministic theories still persisted in the minds of scholars who emphasized the plasticity of the world and its living creatures, but such theories were neither limiting nor restrictive in their impact. These theories instead functioned as sources of inspiration for kings, emperors, scholars, and others, all of whom could devise plans based on their knowledge that a land shaped the character and nature of its inhabitants. Such knowledge could be exploited for benefit and profit within the expanded horizons of the Hellenistic and Roman worlds: there were endless possibilities for combining the right type of land with the right type of animal or plant. The possibilities for introducing species to new lands, creating hybrid varieties of plants and animals, and transforming entire lands were explored without any concern for preserving purity and indigeneity, at least in terms of animals and plants. How far this lack of concern carried over also to people must be the subject of further research, but such research must take into consideration animals and plants alongside people.80

Notes

1 For an overview of invasive species in the modern world, see Simberloff 2013. For the ancient world, note the brief treatment of introduced species in Hughes 2014, 101–2.
3 The text of Zenobius is cited from the edition of Schneidewin and von Leutsch 1839–51, 1.98. Additional references to the event and its proverbial status are collected in Bodson 1978, 70.
4 For one exception to this rule, note Plin. *HN* 11.88–9, which concerns the failed introduction of poisonous scorpions to Italy.
5 See Hughes 2014, 102–5 for discussion of ancient awareness of extinction, with further references.
6 For example, Kennedy, this volume, whose focus is on pre-Hellenistic Greece. For one partial
exception, note the short selection of passages relating to the topic of "Animals and Cultural Identity" in Harden 2013, 103–9. The passages collected, however, come only from historical and geographical texts, and not from zoological or botanical texts.

7 Isaac 2004, esp. 194–207. Note also the complete absence of animals and plants in McCoskey 2012.


9 See de Miramon 2009, 200–216.


11 Isaac 2004, 45 and 79, restated in Isaac 2009, 43: "I challenge anyone to show me an ancient text which claims that a people gained strength through a transformation such as moving from south to north." Contrast McCoskey 2012, 48 on the "possibility for change" acknowledged by Roman authors. Thomas 2000, 70 also questions the primacy of environmental determinism in Herodotus.

12 See Beagon 1992, 42–50 and 79–91, respectively, for discussion of ancient ideas about controlling Nature, and of the Elder Pliny’s approving attitude of gardens, which he believed were "not necessarily artificial in a bad sense" (84). See also Healy 1999, 371–9 for discussion of Pliny’s attitude to mining, an activity that he believed to be "the worst example of the exploitation of our planet’s resources" (372).

13 See also Munson 2005, 23 on Herodotus’ focus on the recent rather than distant past in his ethnographies.

14 See Romm 1992 for discussion of Greek and Roman attitudes on the "edges of the earth."

15 See Kennedy and Irby, this volume. On the authorship and date of this text, see Jouanna 1996, 79–82.

16 There are difficulties in this section of the text, and a lacuna. I follow the text given by Jouanna 1996, 222.


18 See Jouanna 1996, 298 n. 4, for commentary on this passage, and on the word metaphuteontes, which is a hapax.

19 Scullard 1974, 37–52, collects and discusses the main passages from Aristotle’s zoological works concerning the elephant.


22 See Byl 1980, 1–135, for an extensive review of the written sources used in the zoological works.

23 See also Asheri 1998, 269–70.

24 See Einarson and Link 1976–90, 1.viii–ix, and Fraser 1994, 172 for the dates of the works. Note also the essay of Amigues 2002, which offers a thorough introduction to Theophrastus’ botanical works.

25 See Amigues 2002, 20. On Theophrastus’ ability to own a garden, despite his status as a metic at Athens, see Millett 2007, 23–4.


27 Note the comments of Fraser 1994, 187–8.

28 I cite the Hist. pl. from the edition of Amigues 1988–2006; the Loeb of Hort 1916–26 should be used only with caution.

29 I cite the Caus. pl. from the edition of Einarson and Link 1976–90.

30 For interpretation of the former passage, and the locations mentioned, see Amigues 1988–2006, 1.123 n. 15.

31 See also the discussion of French 1994, 97.

32 For Diphilus, see Manetti 2008, 273.

33 See Thompson 1999b, 133.


35 See Thompson 1999b, 125.

36 Full references in Thompson 1984, 367. See also Crawford 1973, 350–63 for more on garlic.

37 See Thompson 1984, 368–9.


39 The testimonia and historical fragments of Agatharchides are collected by S.M. Burstein in BNI 86, which also includes discussion of his life. See also Burstein 1989, 12–18 and Ameling 2008, 16–19.


41 For the ships, see Burstein 1989, 141 n. 3. For the elephants’ route, see Trinquier 2002, 893 and Burstein 2008, 141–3.
42 On the identification of the snake and its range, see Burstein 1989, 125 n. 2 and 127 n. 1.
43 See Trinquier 2002, 894 n. 153 on the possible identities of this Berenice.
44 For extensive discussion of the procession, see Rice 1983.
45 Olson 2006–12, 7.325 n. 399 suggests Ptolemy VI, and Roller, in his commentary to BN 234
2a–b, suggests Ptolemy II.
See also
Orrieux 1985, 158–62 for discussion of Toubias and his relationship with Ptolemy II.
47 See Hauben 1984–86, 109–11 for this suggestion, which is treated skeptically by Trinquier
49 See Kosmin 2013, 97–115 for discussion both of the Seleucid effort to acquire elephants, and
of Greek ethnographic treatments of India in the early Hellenistic period.
50 For the date, see Walbank 1957–79, 3.629.
51 See Rawson 1985, e.g. 14–15, 47–8, and 81 for the similarities between Hellenistic kings and
the great Roman commanders of the first century BCE. See Jennison 2005 [1937], 4 for the
significance of the animal shows put on by Pompey and Caesar.
52 Discussion and references in Higginbotham 1997, 45.
54 See Thibodeau 2008, 265.
55 See Beagon 1992, 5–6 with further references.
56 For his life, see Martin 1985, 1960–62.
57 For a specific case study, compare the arguments of Kron 2004, 119–34, which challenge
pessimistic suggestions about the environmental limitations of southern Italy for Roman
livestock farming.
58 For Manilius’ date, see Volk 2009, esp. 160–61.
59 I follow the text of Rodgers 2010, 106, which accepts *iam mature ampliatam* in place of *iam
tuream plantam*.
60 See Bodson 2005, 455 on the tendency for foreign birds to be named after their places of
origin.
63 See Toynbee 1973, 37 and 47.
64 See Toynbee 1973, 22–3. As she notes, this was “the first and the last public protest” of a Roman audience to the sight of seeing animals killed in the arena.

65 Philo’s *De Animalibus* survives only in an Armenian translation. I cite it from the edition of Terian 1981, which includes an English translation and an extensive commentary.

66 See Toynbee 1973, 42–5. Note also French 1994, 217, for the suggestion that the Elder Pliny presented the elephant as “almost a model Roman.”

67 See, for instance, the discussion in Brewer, Clark and Phillips 2001, 25 and 83.

68 The suggestion of Hull 1964, 22 that ancient breeders of dogs “paid attention to the breeding of their hounds with every bit as much care as the modern hound-breeder” is an overstatement, and largely the consequence of Hull’s own experience as a “modern hound-breeder.”

69 For this poet and his work, see Whitby 2007, 125–34.

70 On the poet, see Meliadò 2008, 351.


72 There is a translation of this text, with accompanying commentary, by Powell 2003.

73 For the author and his work, see Rodgers 2008, 35–6. There is also a recent English translation of his work by Fitch 2013.

74 See the discussion of the story in White 1970, 302–3, who notes that the “actual colour of these wild rams is never mentioned, which seems an unfortunate omission!”

75 For a valuable survey of the evidence and its significance, see especially MacKinnon 2004.

76 For some examples from Eastern Europe, note the summary remarks of Bökönyi 1984, 116–18.

77 For one example, note Cic. *Ad Att.* 14.12.1 on the grant of citizenship to Sicily by Marcus Antonius.

78 See Stevens 2006, 123 for discussion of Cato’s views on the relationship between Latin and Greek.

79 See also Maltby 1993, 47–60.

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**Bibliography**


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CHAPTER 4

Animals as Moral Beings
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1. Justice toward Animals

The preoccupation of ancient philosophers and naturalists with the question of whether non-human animals possess reason was no matter of idle speculation but had enormous practical implications for the lives of humans, not to mention those of non-human animals. Since antiquity, claims that humans stand alone in possessing reason have been used as the basis for an assertion of human moral superiority and as a justification for excluding other animal species from human moral concern. The underlying assumption of much speculation on animal intellect was that rationality in itself conferred moral considerability upon those who possessed it. The Stoics took up Aristotle’s denial of reason (*logos, logismos*) to animals and gave his essentially biological view of animal intellect a distinctly moral dimension. This is observable in the Stoic doctrine of *oikeiōsis,* “kinship, relationship, belonging,” examined in Part I of this volume. Stoicism, in particular among ancient schools, sought to emphasize the “differentness” of irrational animals vis-à-vis their rational human counterparts, while figures such as Plutarch and Porphyry attempted to demonstrate that rationality in animals was not a matter of “all or nothing,” but rather one of degree. If, as the Stoics argued, animals are utterly unlike human beings, humans can have no obligation to refrain from using them in any manner that benefits humans.

If it emerged, on the other hand, that animals are, as Plutarch and Porphyry argued, possessed of some degree of rationality, and if reason-possession was the criterion that granted moral considerability to animals, as the Stoics demanded, one is then compelled to ask: are animals the sorts of beings that can stand in a relationship with human beings that would be called “justice,” and what would that term mean when applied to interspecies relations? As the passages excerpted below make clear, this issue was debated as hotly as that of whether animals are rational. Some thinkers even asked whether animals might themselves have a conception of justice that they applied in their own relations with other animals and even with human beings.

In the passage below, Diogenes Laertius illustrates the Stoic denial of justice toward animals based on their lack of rationality and their consequent differentness from human beings. The doctrine of *oikeiōsis* serves as the basis for Chrysippus’ denial of justice to animals here. Porphyry (*On Abstinence from Animal Flesh* III. 20) reports that Chrysippus also taught that animals were created by the gods specifically for the use of man, and that pigs were born expressly to be slaughtered. Their souls, the Stoic taught, were merely a preservative, like salt, which improves their flavor when humans ate the pigs.
Diogenes Laertius

Chrysippus Says Justice toward Animals Is Impossible

Moreover, it is their teaching that no justice exists between humans and other animals because of their dissimilarity. So Chrysippus says in the first book of his On Justice and Posidonius in the first book of his On Duty.

(Lives of the Philosophers VII. 129 [from the life of Zeno the Stoic])

Aristotle

As with Chrysippus, Aristotle's denial in the passage below from his Nicomachean Ethics of the possibility of a relationship of justice between humans and non-human animals rests on an assertion of a lack of anything in common (koinon) between the species. His denial here is in keeping with his claim (Politics 1256b15–23; translated on p. 27), that animals are made for man's use, a view which presupposes the absence of any moral ties between the species, but his formulation of the question of justice is more sweeping in the present passage. Both friendship and justice are declared to be impossible, not only between humans and animals but between persons of unequal social and political station. A ruler is declared unable to share friendship or justice with those he rules, again because they have nothing in common (koinon).

In the Politics, Aristotle links a sense of justice with the possession of language on the principle that those who seek justice must be capable of articulating the concept of the just and the unjust through meaningful speech. Animal utterances are limited to the conveyance of the notions of the painful and the pleasurable (on animal speech, see pp. 59–69). The inability of animals to convey through speech a concept of the just and the unjust prevents them from forming a state, in which appreciation for the nature of justice is fundamental. Aristotle seems to foreshadow here the idea, prominent in Epicurean ethics (see pp. 28–29), that justice arises from a contract or covenant between those who desire justice and those who must possess articulate speech to express that desire.

Justice toward Animals Is Impossible

In perverted [governments], in the same way that justice cannot advance far, so is there no friendship, and least so in the worst sort [of government], for in a tyranny there is no or very little friendship. In situations in which there is nothing in common between ruler and ruled, there is no friendship, nor justice either. So it is for a workman toward his tool, or the soul toward the body or a master toward his slave. All of these things
are benefited by those who use them, but there is no friendship or justice toward inanimate objects. Nor is there toward a horse or an ox or toward a slave as slave, for there is nothing in common between them.

*(Nicomachean Ethics 1161a30–1161b2)*

**Speech Articulates Right and Wrong, and Animals have no Speech**

As we say, nature does nothing to no end, and man alone of the animals has speech. Now, the voice is the indicator of the painful and the pleasurable, because of which it exists in the other animals as well, for their nature is advanced to the point that they have the sensation of pain and pleasure and signal these to one another. Speech, however, exists to indicate the advantageous and the harmful, and thus likewise the just and the unjust: this is one special characteristic of human beings, in contrast to the other animals, that they alone have perception of the good and the bad and the just and the unjust, as of other things as well, and the common possession of these things creates a household and a state.

*(Politics 1253a9–18)*

**Cicero**

In the same manner that Cicero's dialogue *De finibus bonorum et malorum* (*On the Ends of Good and Evil*) set forth the views of the Stoic, Epicurean and Academic schools of philosophy on the nature of the highest good (*sumnum bonum*) in human life (see pp. 41–42), so did his dialogue *De natura deorum* (*On the Nature of the Gods*), composed in 45 BCE, set forth the views of those three schools on the existence of the gods and the nature of the divine. Book II is devoted to an exposition of the Stoic position on these matters, set forth by one Balbus who is otherwise unknown.

In the passage from *On the Nature of the Gods* translated below, Balbus explains how animals fit into the scheme of Stoic theology. His starkly anthropocentric account recalls Aristotle's pronouncement (*Politics* 1256b15–23; see p. 27) that animals exist for the sake of human beings, but, taken as a whole, it is probably more to be interpreted as an elaboration of the Chrysippean view of the place of animals in the scheme of creation, which is detailed in Porphyry (*On Abstinence from Animal Flesh III* 20; see p. 74), with its assumption that animals are in a sense living commodities existing only to be put to use by human beings. Just as Chrysippus had claimed that pigs live only to be slaughtered and eaten by humans, so Cicero's Balbus asserts that the sheep lives only to await its conversion into clothing for humans.
The specifically Stoic justification for the ungenerous views toward animals that Balbus voices is laid out in the opening sentences of his exposition: the world is the common home or city of gods and men, a circumstance due to their common possession of reason. At issue again is the Stoic doctrine of *okeiōsis*: gods and men are akin and related because of their shared rationality, while animals, as irrational entities, are necessarily left out of this community.

The same idea of man’s justification in using animals as needed emerges in the excerpt below from Cicero’s dialogue *On the Ends of Good and Evil*, here specifically linked to the Chrysippean formulation of the idea and expounded in Cicero by Cato the Younger (96–46 BCE), a Roman politician and Stoic adherent of legendary moral rectitude. Here, however, the conversation relates more to the Stoic assertion of a lack of any natural relationship of justice between species based, once again, on the dissimilarity of their intellectual endowments (see also the formulation of this Chrysippean idea in Diogenes Laertius (*Lives of the Philosophers* VII. 129, translated on p. 74).

**Animals Are Intended for Man’s Use**

[BALBUS]: It remains for me to demonstrate (making an end to my exposition) how all things that human beings use in the world were made and furnished for their sake. To begin with, the world itself was created for the sake of the gods and humans, and the things that it contains were provided and produced for the sake of men. For the world is, so to speak, a common home to gods and men, or a city for both. They alone live by the use of reason and law. Just as we must suppose that the cities of Athens and Sparta were established for the sake of the Athenians and the Spartans, and all things that are in these cities are rightly said to belong to those peoples, so whatever things exist in the whole world must be supposed to belong to the gods and to men. Every revolution of the sun and the moon and of every other celestial body, though these also pertain to the cohesion of the universe, nevertheless provides a spectacle for human beings. There is no sight more eternally satisfying, more beautiful or more demonstrative of reason and skill. By measuring out their courses we know the fullness of the seasons and their differences and changes. If these things are known to human beings alone, we must conclude that they were created for the sake of human beings.

Does it seem that the earth, which is fertile with fruits and various sorts of plants, produces these things for the sake of wild beasts or for human beings? What shall I say of vines and olives, whose very abundant fruits are of no use at all to animals? Animals know nothing of sowing and tilling or of reaping and gathering crops in season or of storing them. This is entirely an occupation and employment of human beings. Just as we must say that lyres and flutes were made for the sake of those who use them, so we
must admit that those things which I have mentioned are furnished solely for those who use them. If animals steal away and carry off some of these things, will we say that they were created for the sake of those animals? Nor either do human beings store away grain for the use of mice or ants but rather for their own wives and children and households. Thus, as I have suggested, animals enjoy these products by theft while their masters enjoy them openly and freely. We must therefore acknowledge that this bounty was created for the sake of man, unless perhaps such richness and variety of fruit with its pleasant flavor and appearance causes us to doubt whether nature gave this gift to human beings alone.

However far from the truth it is that such things were produced for the sake of animals too, we must in any case admit that animals themselves were produced for the sake of man. What other uses do sheep have beyond the fact that humans are clothed in their processed and woven wool? They could not have been nourished or raised without the care and tending of human beings, nor have produced anything of value. What do the faithful watchfulness of dogs, and their fawning adulation of their masters and their hostility toward strangers, the incredible keenness of their noses, and their eagerness in the hunt, what do these mean except that they were produced for the convenience of human beings? Why should I mention oxen? Their very backs indicate that they were not shaped for carrying burdens, but their necks were designed to bear the yoke and their powerful and broad shoulders were made for pulling the plough. Since the earth was brought under control with their aid through the breakup of the clods of the soil, no violence was ever shown them in the Golden Age, as the poets say:

Suddenly sprang up a race of men of iron,  
Which first dared forge a deadly sword  
And tasted the ox it yoked and tamed by hand.  
The profit derived from oxen was reckoned so great that it was considered a crime to eat their flesh.


**Humans Can Use Animals as They See Fit without Injustice**

[CATO]: But just as [the Stoics] believe that the bonds of right exist between human and human, so do they believe that a human has no bond of right with beasts. For Chrysippus [has remarked] admirably that other things were born for the sake of men and the gods, and that moreover they were born for their own fellowship and society, so that humans may use beasts for their own advantage without injustice.

*(On the Ends of Good and Evil III. 67)*
Plutarch

In the selection below from Plutarch's dialogue *On the Cleverness of Animals*, a treatise which argues that all animals have at least a share of reason (960A; see pp. 17–18), we can isolate a number of arguments and counterarguments that were regularly marshaled by both sides in the ancient debate on whether non-human species can stand in a relation of justice with human beings. Plutarch's interlocutor Soclarus, who defends the Stoic position in the dialogue, makes it clear early on in his comments that the central issue in the debate is the question of rationality in animals, which the Stoics had of course denied to them. To accord reason to animals would have far-reaching and dire consequences for human life, as Soclarus demonstrates. Justice will itself be confounded and human life turned upside down if humans cease to use animals for their own needs. Humans are left in a quandary: if a relation of justice exists between species, we must either commit injustice in putting them to use for our needs, or we must find human life rendered impossible if we leave them undisturbed. Soclarus reveals his Stoic orientation, and the Stoic flow of his argument, in his observation that human life will be forced to the impasse that he foresees, if animals are after all rational, and akin to humans. Once again, the Stoic doctrine of *oikeiōsis* provides a solution for the Stoics: since humans have no natural kinship with animals, in Stoic teaching, humans are released from any possibility of committing injustice toward them because animals are irrational. Soclarus may have in mind here Chrysippus' declaration that no justice can exist between man and other animals because of their "unlikeness" to humans (Diogenes Laertius VII. 129).

At the end of his exposition, Soclarus briefly raises an issue that, while less frequently encountered than the question of human justice toward animals, is not unparalleled: do non-human animals have the capacity to practice justice in their own lives (see pp. 82–86, for this topic). In support of his contention that they do not, Soclarus cites the famous lines of Hesiod (*Works and Days* 277–279) in which the didactic poet maintains that animals were denied a sense of justice (*dikē*) by Zeus, who awarded this solely to human beings.

Autobulus, Plutarch's mouthpiece in *On the Cleverness of Animals*, teases his friend Soclarus that, just as the Epicureans should not be allowed to make assertions that they cannot prove, namely the existence of atoms, so should the Stoics not be allowed to make assertions about the nature of justice without proving them or taking into account the objections of their philosophical opponents. The principal value of Autobulus' rebuttal, however, is its offer of a compromise between the two unpalatable consequences of an admission of the existence of reason in animals that Soclarus has posited. Citing Heraclitus and Empedocles as authorities for the position that humans
cannot act entirely justly in their relations with other animals, Autobulus allows that
man will act as much in accord with reason as is practicable in human life if he kills
only those animals that pose a danger to him while making reasonable use, as in
farming, of those animals that are gentle and harmless to man. He touches in passing
on the concept of the “just war” that some felt humans could wage against natural
predators, a concept discussed by Aristotle (Politics 1256b23–26), who maintains that it
is just for humans to slay both wild animals and other human beings who are intended
by nature to be ruled but who refuse.

Autobulus’ exposition concludes with an aspect of the question of justice toward
animals that is only infrequently encountered in classical sources, namely the issue of
kindness toward animals. Having allowed humans to make use of some animals in a
responsible manner, Autobulus sets limits to that use. Not quite demanding a
vegetarian lifestyle on the part of human beings, as he would in his treatise On the
Eating of Flesh (see pp. 105–108), Plutarch here at least allows his mouthpiece to
enjoin his fellow humans to refrain from overt cruelty in their treatment of food
animals and of wild animals that they encounter in daily life. While the use of animals
is not declared to be in itself unjust, the wanton treatment of other species is
condemned as abominable.

**Kindness toward Animals Does Not Overturn Justice**

SOCLARUS: Your conjecture seems correct to me, for the Stoics and the Peripatetics
argue in the opposite direction entirely, maintaining that justice could have no other
origin, but would be altogether formless and insubstantial, if all animals have a share
of reason. For it is then necessarily the case that injustice arises if we do not spare
them, or that life becomes impossible and inconceivable if we do not make use of them.
In a sense we will live the lives of beasts if we give up the use of beasts. I pass over the
innumerable hordes of Nomads and Troglodytes who know no other diet than meat, but
it is hard to say what activity on land will be left to us who think that we live in a
civilized and benevolent manner, what pursuit on sea or mountain, what adornment of
lifestyle, if we learn to behave without injury and with circumspection toward all
animals, as we will be obligated to do if they are rational and akin to us.

We have therefore no remedy or cure for this dilemma which deprives us either of life
or of justice, unless we preserve the ancient limit by which, according to Hesiod, [Zeus],
in differentiating the natures of creatures and placing each sort of creature into its own
species:

Let fish and beasts and flying birds
Devour each other, since they have no justice in them,
But he gave justice to humans,
so that humans could exercise it toward each other.

It is impossible for us to act unjustly toward those who do not have the capacity to behave justly toward us. Truly, those who have tossed aside this line of reasoning have left no other path, wide or narrow, for justice to enter.

AUTOBULUS: You have spoken this from your heart, my dear friend. We should not allow philosophers, like women in painful childbirth, to hang on themselves a charm for easy delivery, so that they may give birth to justice for us easily and without pain. For they do not allow to Epicurus, in matters of the greatest importance, even the small and trivial phenomenon of a swerve in the atom, to the slightest degree, so that stars and animals and chance could enter in and free will would not perish. But [Epicurus] must demonstrate a thing that is not seen or choose something that is manifest to the senses and not make any arguments concerning justice toward animals unless it is agreed upon by all and unless [the Stoics] make no counterargument. Justice has another path, however, one neither slippery nor steep nor leading through rejected facts, but which, under Plato's guidance, my son and your companion, dear Soclarus, points out to those who do not wish to argue but who are willing to follow and learn. Empedocles and Heraclitus accept as true the proposition that man is not entirely free of injustice when he treats animals thus, lamenting and branding nature as “necessity” and “warfare,” a being that contains nothing unmixed or uncorrupted but one brought to fullness of being filled with many injustices. They maintain that even birth itself happens through acts of injustice since the immortal comes together with the mortal, and the creature born is nurtured, contrary to nature, by limbs torn from the one that gave it birth.

Well, these ideas seem excessively violent and bitter, but there exists another, more agreeable argument, one that does not deprive animals of reason but that preserves justice for those who are willing to employ the argument. When the wise men of old introduced this argument, gluttony rose up and, joined with luxury, cast it out and made it disappear, but Pythagoras reintroduced it, teaching us to benefit without committing injustice. For they do not commit injustice who punish and slay those animals that are savage and quite harmful while taming those that are gentle and well-disposed toward human beings, making them our fellow-workers in the tasks for which each was born.

The offspring of horse and ass and the stock of bulls,
which the Prometheus of Aeschylus says he gave to us,
To be like servants and relieve our tasks.

Likewise we use dogs when we are keeping watch, and we tend herds of goats and sheep that we milk and shear. Life is not taken away or destroyed for men if they do not
have platters of fish or goose liver pâté and do not slaughter cattle and goat kids for their banquets or do not, when lounging at the theater or entertaining themselves at the hunt, force animals to make shows of courage against their will and to put up a fight, and destroy others that do not by their nature defend themselves. I think that the person who engages in happy sport should do so with companions who are likewise at play, and that sport should not be as Bion describes it, saying that children amuse themselves by throwing stones at frogs, but the frogs are not playing but in fact dying. So too in the case of hunting and fishing, men kill animals and enjoy their sufferings, taking from them their whelps and nestlings in a pitiful manner. Thus those persons who make use of animals do not commit injustice, but rather they are unjust who use them in a cruel and contemptuous and savage manner.

(On the Cleverness of Animals 963F–965B)

Porphyry

The third book of Porphyry’s treatise De abstinencia (On Abstinence from Animal Flesh) argues that human beings have a debt of justice toward other species because, despite Stoic denials, animals are endowed with rationality which he terms “incomplete, but not totally absent,” which renders them akin (oikeioi) to human beings. They possess, he maintains, both logos endiathetos and logos prophorikos, the latter contributing to a complex language which humans cannot comprehend, as well as emotions (pathē) and, as he maintains in the excerpt below, a sense of justice arising from their participation in reason. The overall shape of Porphyry’s argument here, that humans owe justice to other creatures that are rational and therefore partake of that kinship and relationship (oikeiōsis) upon which the Stoics predicated inclusion in the sphere of human moral concern, recalls Plutarch’s case for justice toward animals (see pp. 77–80), which is not surprising since substantial portions of Porphyry’s third book (III. 20. 7–III. 24. 5) are copied almost word for word from Plutarch’s treatise On the Cleverness of Animals (959E–963F). Even the rather infrequently encountered argument that animals have themselves a sense of justice which they exercise toward each other (see also pp. 82–86), with which the excerpt opens, suggests Plutarchian influence, for the earlier author had argued that the well-regulated social lives of animals and the love that they bear toward their offspring suggest a sense of justice in them (On the Cleverness of Animals 962A).

The Rational Souls of Animals Demand Animals Be Treated with Justice

Who is unaware that animals living in groups observe justice toward one another? Every ant, every bee does so, as do creatures like these. Who does not know of the
chastity of the wood-pigeon toward her mate? If she has been seduced, she destroys the seducer if he is caught. Who does not know of the justice of storks toward their parents? In each animal there exists some individual virtue to which it is naturally disposed, but neither nature nor the strength of that virtue takes away their reason. This is the fact that one must refute if the acts of virtue are deemed to be not in line with rational ability. If we do not understand how these things are done because we cannot enter into their reasoning process, we shall not therefore accuse them of irrationality. No one is capable either of entering into the mind of god, but based on the actions of the sun we agree with those who pronounce god to be intellectual and rational.

One might be amazed at those who derive justice from reason and say that animals that do not live in the company of humans are wild and unjust, but still they do not extend justice to those animals that do live in our company. Just as life is obliterated for humans if this company is taken away, so too for animals. Birds and dogs and many quadrupeds including goats, horses, sheep, donkeys and mules perish if deprived of human company. Nature that created them made them need humans and humans need them as well, constructing in them an innate justice toward us as in us toward them. If certain animals are savage toward humans, that is not to be wondered at. Aristotle was correct to remark that if all animals had sufficient food to eat, they would not behave savagely toward each other or toward humans, for it is because of food, a necessary and cheap commodity, that hatreds and friendships arise in them, as well as because of territorial disputes. Now if humans were forced into exactly these difficulties, how much more savage would they be than those creatures deemed to be savage? War and famine illustrate this, since humans do not refrain from eating one another. Even without war and famine humans eat tame animals that dwell among them. ...

From these arguments and others that we will mention in turn in reviewing the writings of the ancients, it is clear that animals are rational, their rationality being, in many cases, incomplete, but not totally absent. If then justice exists toward rational beings, as our opponents maintain, why would justice not be owed to animals by us humans?

(On Abstinence from Animal Flesh III. 11–12, 18)

Suggestions for Further Reading

Diogenes Laertius on Chrysippus

Sorabji, Animal Minds and Human Morals 124–126, 142–143. After explicating the Stoic
doctrine of *oikeios*is, including a discussion of Chrysippus' denial of reason to animals (124–126), Sorabji attempts (142–143) to define the Stoic understanding of “justice” as consisting more of a recognition of that which is appropriate than a distribution of that which is due to others.

**Aristotle**

Vegetti, Mario, "Figure dell’ Animale in Aristotele." The author argues that Aristotle’s tendency to regard animals as perpetual babies and as slaves rendered him incapable of conceiving that animals could pursue any avenue of upright conduct that humans pursue.

**Cicero**

Reydams-Schils, Gretchen, "Human Bonding and *Oikeios* in Roman Stoicism." The author demonstrates that the Roman emphasis on human ties with other humans exercised a powerful influence upon the Roman brand of Stoicism, not least in its understanding of Stoic kinship theory.

**Plutarch**

Barigazzi, Adelmo, "Implicanze nella Polemica Plutarchea sulla Psicologia degli Animali." This article contains a detailed analysis of Stoic arguments against according justice to animals and a discussion of Plutarch’s compromise solution that allows limited human use of other species.

Becchi, Francesco, "Istinto e Intelligenza negli Scritti Zoosecologici di Plutarco." Becchi isolates the philosophical schools that contributed to the ancient debate concerning the possibility of according justice to animals, and he demonstrates Plutarch’s use of material from these schools.


**Porphyry**

Pérez-Paoli, Ubaldo, "Porphyrios’ Gedanken zur Gerechtigkeit gegenüber den Tieren." The author traces Theophrastean and Academic elements in Porphyry’s arguments for
justice toward animals.

2. Justice from Animals

Hesiod

The verses below from the didactic poem Works and Days, a loosely organized treatise on farming with observations on practical morality composed by the Boeotian farmer Hesiod (8th century BCE?), constitute the earliest extant Greek attempt to differentiate human beings from other animals on philosophical grounds, and may be considered to be the first Greek example of the “man alone of animals” commonplace. Cited by Plutarch in his discussion of justice toward animals (On the Cleverness of Animals 964B; see pp. 78–80), Hesiod addresses these verses to his dishonest brother Perses who had cheated him of some of their father’s estate, and he argues that humans, unlike animals, have been given an understanding of justice, which the gods denied to other species. One cannot therefore expect animals to behave with restraint in their relations with other animals, as the gods expect humans to do.

Hesiod’s verses are valuable not so much for their insight into early Greek views on man’s debt of justice toward other species as for their early articulation of the view, less frequently encountered in ancient literature, that animals themselves have no conception of justice. This embryonic idea in Hesiod would be developed by later Greek philosophers, including the Stoics, to argue that humans are not obligated to act justly toward creatures that cannot act justly in return.

Zeus Did Not Give Animals a Sense of Justice

Ο Perses, ponder this in your mind: pay heed to justice now and forget violence, for Zeus son of Kronos has established this as a norm for human beings, that fish and wild beasts and winged birds should eat one another since there is no justice in them; but he gave justice to humans, which is the best thing of all by far.

(Works and Days 274–280)

Democritus

Although the Presocratic philosopher Democritus of Abdera in Thrace (c.460–357 BCE) is remembered primarily for championing an atomistic explanation of the universe and for being thus a source for later Epicureanism, extant fragments of his works and testimonia relating to his teachings suggest that he had some intriguing things to say on the possibility of an ethical relationship between humans and other species. In the
fragments below, the philosopher argues that animals may act contrary to justice (para dikēn) in a manner that suggests an intention to do so on the part of the animals (thelonta adikein). Consequently, humans who kill such animals commit no act of injustice (athōios ho kteinōn) toward them. While Democritus does not raise the possibility that animals possess a sense of justice that they apply in their relations with fellow-animals, he does suggest that animals bear responsibility for their actions and are therefore subject to human justice. Nor are animals the only ones to fall under Democritus' view of justice, which calls for the slaying of all creatures that act contrary to human justice.

Although the Stoics would have approved of Democritus’ apparent support of the idea that the interests of humans take precedence over those of non-human species, he argues for the possibility of voluntary action on the part of animals, which the Stoics rejected on the grounds that animals are irrational. In Stoic teaching, animals, because of their intellectual limitations, cannot be held responsible for their actions, a position that Democritus opposes here.

**Animals May Act Contrary to Justice**

With regard to certain animals, the rule on killing them or not is as follows: he who kills those that commit injustice and those that seek to be unjust [should be] free of blame, and doing so contributes more to well-being than not doing so.

One must by all means kill all creatures that cause harm contrary to justice. And he who does so will have a greater share of cheerfulness and justice and bravery and property in every organized society.

("Democritus," DK 257–258)

**Cicero**

Cicero’s treatise *De officiis* (On Duties), the last of the orator’s philosophical works, was published in 44 BCE. In its three books, cast in the form of an extended letter to his son, he offers an analysis of the four cardinal ancient virtues – wisdom, justice, courage and temperance – and attempts to instruct the reader on how honorable behavior can be applied in real-life situations. Conflict between honor and expediency is shown to be merely an illusion. The first two books of the work were based, according to Cicero, on a treatise by the Stoic Panaetius (c.185–109 BCE) called *On Duty*, a work now lost, while the third book was based on the thought of the Stoic Posidonius (c.135–51 BCE). Given his reliance on Stoic sources, it is not surprising that Cicero builds a case against a sense of justice in non-human species that relies heavily on the Stoic denial of reason
and thus of articulate language to animals and that has as its theoretical basis the Stoic doctrine of oikeïdîs, the bond or sense of belonging that humans share with other humans founded on their common possession of reason and speech and their ability to communicate their interests to one another. Cicero’s use of such phrases as “community and human society” (communitas et societas humanae), “universal kinship of the human race” (universi generis humani societate) and “bonding agent” (vinculum), all suggest that Cicero has Stoic kinship theory in mind.

**Animals Have No Sense of Justice**

But it appears that we must first recall what things in nature constitute the foundations of community and human society; the first principle is observable in the universal kinship of the human race. The bonding agent of that kinship is reason and speech, which unites humans in the actions of teaching, learning, communicating, debating and adjudicating, and links them in a certain natural bond. In no respect are we further away from the nature of wild beasts, in which we often say that there is bravery, as in the case of horses and lions, but we do not say that there exist justice, fairness or goodness in them, for they are without reason and speech.

*(De officiis [On Duties] I. 50)*

**Philo of Alexandria**

In paragraphs 61 and 64 from Philo’s dialogue *On Animals*, the author’s nephew Alexander, defender of rationality in animals, cites examples of just behavior in animals that were stereotypic in ancient discussions of animal intellect. Alexander’s claim that storks feed their parents, for example, recurs in Aristotle (*History of Animals* 615b23–24), Aelian (*Nature of Animals* III. 23) and Plutarch (*On the Cleverness of Animals* 962E). Alexander draws the conclusion from this behavior that such apparent evidence of a sense of justice in the birds suggests the presence of a degree of reason. The very propensity of animals to travel in herds or flocks suggests some sense of justice in animals since they are willing to follow the leaders that they have selected. In the final sentence of paragraph 64, Alexander alludes to the ancient belief, discussed as well by Plutarch (*On the Cleverness of Animals* 975A) and Aelian (*Nature of Animals* VII. 7), that the formations of birds have prophetic significance.

Philo’s refutation of Alexander’s arguments shows Stoic inspiration since he maintains that the actions of storks are involuntary and cannot therefore be counted as instances of just behavior any more than of unjust behavior. According to the Stoics, animals cannot give or withhold assent from their own actions, because involuntary actions
require the operation of reason, and animals are, in Stoic teaching, irrational, a Stoic position to which Philo alludes in the final sentence of paragraph 96. In the same way, Philo argues, no one blames a child for its actions because it is still pre-rational, although, unlike non-human animals, the human child will eventually attain rationality.

Do Animals Have a Sense of Justice?

Among the birds the stork exhibits supreme justice by feeding its parents in return. As soon as it begins to fly, it sets no other task above that of reciprocating the favors of those that fostered it. It is possible that some of the terrestrial animals behave like it. But since we cannot tell all of their instincts and can never see nor ascertain them, we ought to believe what the witnesses have revealed about these things we have not seen. For it is right that the universe should be composed not of some only of its parts but of them all. Moreover that part in which justice and injustice are found is preeminently endowed with reason, since both pertain to reason, which, just as it is imparted to men, should likewise be imparted to those animals cited. The storks that feed their parents and give due consideration to the old, also punish. The pinna-guards, noted for sharing their food together with the pinnae, deal fairly with the injurious and the adverse, lest those named should be done away with. As for the bees, swarms of workers consider the drones detrimental to honeycombs so they kill them. For indeed as Hesiod has said, they reap the toil of others into their own bellies.

(On Animals 61)

Animals, no less than men, show great – if not better – demonstrations of equality and justice. The leaders they appoint and the offices to which they designate them are never ignored. They follow with all willingness those whom they choose to be leaders. Eyes ascertain the veracity of what is said. A young bull leads herds of cattle, a he-goat flocks of goats, and a ram flocks of sheep. An extremely large number of animals follow as irregular troops raised by royal commissioners. This sense of following must be divinely imbued.

(On Animals 64)

Furthermore if the stork does not feed its parents in return, it could not be accused of injustice, even though it would appear to be an act of injustice, for it is involuntary. Nor are drones deemed transgressors when they waste the labor of the bees; they do not do this voluntarily but rather are prompted by the desire for food. Have you not noticed that no one ever blames a little child for anything he does, since he has not yet attained to an accountable age? Although an infant is immature, he is a rational man by nature, having newly received the seeds of wisdom, which, though not yet developed, will soon mature. Throughout the duration of his growth, the seminal powers spread
rapidly like sparks in a forest, fanned by a breeze or wind. But the souls of other creatures do not have the fount of wisdom. They are destitute of the reasoning faculty.

*(On Animals 96)*

**Suggestions for Further Reading**

**Hesiod**

Dierauer, *Tier und Mensch* 15–18. Dierauer offers a valuable appreciation of Hesiod's denial of justice to animals as it developed in the course of subsequent classical speculation on animals, emphasizing Hesiod's position as the first Greek to distinguish humans from other animals rather than from gods.

**Democritus**

Cole, Thomas, *Democritus and the Sources of Greek Anthropology* (Cleveland: Press of Western Reserve University, 1967). This classic text provides useful discussion of Democritus' pronouncements on the lack of rational faculties in animals and on man's justly adversarial stance toward hostile animal species.

**Cicero**

Reydams-Schils, "Human Bonding and Oikeiōsis in Roman Stoicism."

**Philo of Alexandria**

Terian, *Philonis Alexandrini de Animalibus* 173–175, 177–178, 201–202. Terian's commentaries on paragraphs 61, 64 and 96 of Philo's *On Animals* supply references to classical texts relating to justice and animals, as well as to discussions of this topic in Philo's other works.