

CHAPTER FIVE

THE REGIONAL IDENTITY OF THE PELOPONNESE

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Was there a Peloponnesian identity in the classical period? Before trying to answer this question, we should realise the rarity of such a form of identity in classical Greece. Greek identities were of course multifarious.¹ There certainly existed a polis-identity (e.g. Corinthian identity).² There also existed what we can call *ethnos*-identity: *ethnē* were wider groups, which could include a number of poleis or other non-poleis *phylai*, which usually shared a common dialect, customs, sanctuaries and in some cases, but by no means in all, also a form of political unity.³ To look only inside the Peloponnese, the Arcadians and the Achaians each had their own *ethnos*-identity which in certain periods of their history was also accompanied by a federal structure of political unity. There were also those wider forms of identity and kinship which transcended geographical boundaries and linked together people with common ancestors, customs, sanctuaries and also sometimes (but rather rarely) political institutions: Ionians, Dorians, Aeolians etc.⁴ And finally, there was the overarching Greek identity.⁵ The Peloponnesian identity belongs to none of these categories. For it is an identity based on a geographic region; and there are rather few cases in which a geographical region provided the basis for a form of identity in ancient Greece. This statement should be qualified in two ways. There were geographical regions which created a form of identification and identity: the geographical region of Boeotia gave rise to the identity of the Boeotians. But what I have in mind here is different, not only because of size, but more crucially because I am dealing with geographical regions which did not have political, ethnic or cultural unity. In other words, my definition of regional identities excludes cases in which a geographical region formed a unitary or federal state, or was occupied by a single ethnic group; my use of regional identity is closer to terms like Iberian, Scandinavian or European, rather than British.

Such regional identity is rare in mainland Greece; indeed, the Peloponnesian identity is the only regional identity in mainland Greece. But if one looks to the wider Greek world, there emerge a number of regional identities of considerable importance. Two come from the West: the Siceliots⁶ and the Italiots.⁷ Thucydides provides a telling example of what this identity might look like:

There is no disgrace in connections giving way to one another, a *Dorian to a Dorian*, or a *Chalcidian to his brethren*; above and beyond this *we are*

¹ See the multiplicity expressed in Thuc. 7.57. The discussion of Hansen and Nielsen 2004, 50-2, makes little account of the regional identity considered here.

² Hansen and Nielsen 2004, 58-69.

³ Morgan 2003.

⁴ See Alty 1982; Hornblower 1996, 61-80; Hall 2002, 56-89.

⁵ Hall 2002.

⁶ See Antonaccio 2001.

⁷ Thuc., 4.15.2; 6.44; 6.88.7.

neighbours, live in the same country, are girt by the same sea, and go by the same name of Siciliots... By so acting we shall at the present moment *do for Sicily a double service*, ridding her at once of the Athenians, and of civil war, and in future shall live in freedom at home, and be less menaced from abroad.⁸

However, if they should come as is reported, I consider Sicily better able to go through with the war than Peloponnese, as being at all points better prepared.⁹

If we look to the Eastern Mediterranean, one could add four more possible examples: the Greeks from Pontos,¹⁰ the Ionians,¹¹ the Chersonesites,¹² Hellespontines¹³ and the islanders (*nesiōtai*). Ionia could be used to describe those Greeks in Asia Minor which defined themselves as Ionians, and in this case was not a regional identity;¹⁴ but it could also be used to describe the whole region of Asia Minor, encompassing Ionian, Dorian and Aeolian Greeks, and in this case it was certainly a regional identity.¹⁵ The term islanders could be used to describe the communities of the Aegean Sea as a totality, although some of them were Ionians, some Dorians and some Aeolians.

The problem with both cases is that it seems to be an imposed or externally imputed identity. It is an identity attributed to certain people by others, often in a hostile or pejorative way, not an identity claimed by the members of the imputed group.¹⁶ There seem to be no cases in which someone originating from Dorian Cnidos would describe himself as Ionian in the regional sense of the word and we do not have any cases of islanders who describe themselves as such. The formation of the *koinon tōn nesiōtōn* in the Hellenistic period is a different case of course, and characteristically it was created and maintained by outside initiative and interference (Antigonid or Ptolemaic).

Let me provide some examples to prove my case.

The following took part in the war: from the Peloponnese (*ἐκ μὲν Πελοποννήσου*), the Lacedaemonians provided sixteen ships; the Corinthians the same number as at Artemisium; the Sicyonians furnished fifteen ships, the Epidaurians ten, the Troezenians five, the Hermioneans three....These, then, were the Peloponnesians who took part in the war. From the mainland outside the Peloponnese came the following (*οὗτοι μὲν νυν Πελοποννησίων ἐστρατεύοντο, οἷδε δὲ ἐκ τῆς ἑξω ἡπείρου*): the Athenians provided more than all the rest, one

⁸ Thuc., 4.64.2-5.

⁹ Thuc., 6.37.

¹⁰ Hdt., 4.8.1; *IG* II² 10108; *CEG* II 528; *AM* 66, 1941, 53-4; *IG* I³ 71.iv. 126; Hansen and Nielsen 2004, 924-8.

¹¹ Hansen and Nielsen 2004, 1053-8.

¹² Hdt., 4.137.1, 6.39; Dem., 5.25; Hansen and Nielsen 2004, 900-2.

¹³ Thuc., 6.77.1; Hansen and Nielsen 2004, 974-6.

¹⁴ See e.g. Hdt., 1.6.2, 3.1.1; Thuc., 3.104.3.

¹⁵ Aesch. *Pers.*, 178; Hdt., 4.97.

¹⁶ See Thuc., 6.82.3.

hundred and eighty ships...The Megarians provided the same number as at Artemisium. The Ampraciots came to help with seven ships, and the Leucadians, who are Dorians from Corinth, with three. Of the islanders (νησιωτέων), the Aeginetans provided thirty ships... After the Aeginetans came the Chalcidians with their twenty ships from Artemisium, and the Eretrians with the same seven; these are Ionians. Next were the Ceans, Ionians from Athens, with the same ships as before. The Naxians provided four ships... The Naxians are Ionians descended from Athens. The Styrians provided the same number of ships as at Artemisium, and the Cythnians one trireme and a fifty-oared boat; these are both Dryopians. The Seriphians, Siphnians, and Melians also took part, since they were the only islanders who had not given earth and water to the barbarian. All these people who live this side of Thesprotia and the Acheron River took part in the war (οὔτοι μὲν ἅπαντες ἐντὸς οἰκημένοι Θεσπρωτῶν καὶ Ἀχέροντος ποταμοῦ). The Thesprotians border on the Ampraciots and Leucadians, who were the ones who came from the most distant countries to take part in the war. The only ones living beyond these to help Hellas in its danger were the Crotonians, with one ship.¹⁷

It is I believe clear from this example that Herodotus has no geographical term for mainland Greece outside the Peloponnese. A second example from Herodotus, describing the origins of the suitors of Agariste, the daughter of Cleisthenes of Sicyon, is equally telling:

From Italy came Smindyrides of Sybaris, son of Hippocrates...and Damasus of Siris...*From the Ionian Gulf*, Amphimnestus son of Epistrophus, an Epidamnian... *From Aetolia* came Males... *From the Peloponnese* came Leocedes, son of Phidon...and Amiantus, an Arcadian from Trapezus, son of Lycurgus; and an Azenian from the town of Paeus, Laphanes, son of that Euphorion... and Onomastus from Elis, son of Agaeus. *From Athens* Megacles, son of that Alcmeon who visited Croesus, and also Hippocleides son of Tisandrus... *From Eretria*...came Lysanias... he was the only man *from Euboea*. *From Thessaly* came a Scopad, Diactorides of Crannon; and *from the Molossians*, Alcon.¹⁸

Italy and the Peloponnese are the only regional terms in this list; otherwise, Herodotus has recourse to specific poleis, *ethnē* and *koina*. Thucydides provides another interesting example:

The allies of the two belligerents were the following. These were the allies of the Lacedaemonians: all the Peloponnesians within the Isthmus (Πελοποννήσιοι μὲν οἱ ἐντὸς Ἰσθμοῦ) except the Argives and Achaeans, who were neutral... Outside Peloponnese (ἔξω δὲ Πελοποννήσου) the

¹⁷ Hdt., 8.43-8.

¹⁸ Thuc., 6.127.

Megarians, Locrians, Boeotians, Phocians, Ambraciots, Leucadians, and Anactorians... That of the Athenians comprised the Chians, Lesbians, Plateans, the Messenians in Naupactus, most of the Acarnanians, the Corcyraeans, Zacynthians, and some tributary cities in the following countries, viz., Caria upon the sea with her Dorian neighbors, Ionia, the Hellespont, the Thracian towns, the islands lying between Peloponnese and Crete towards the east, and all the Cyclades except Melos and Thera.¹⁹

Again, it is telling that there is no regional term to describe the area of mainland Greece outside the Peloponnese.²⁰

I hope that I have established how unique the case of Peloponnesian identity was in classical Greece. Let me now move to examine the nature of Peloponnesian identity. I shall have recourse to three different levels of analysis and forms of identity. The first is Peloponnese itself: to what extent is it anything apart from a geographical term? Does it have a character, aspects, interests of its own? The second level is that of the Peloponnesians as a collective identity, as a way a group of people would describe themselves; the third is that of the Peloponnesian as an individual identity, as a way that an individual would describe himself.

PELOPONNESIOS: INDIVIDUAL IDENTITIES

I want to start from the individual level, because it provides us with a good indication of what Peloponnesian identity was not. To put it succinctly: the cases in which an individual would describe himself as Peloponnesian are extremely rare. The inscribed gravestones in which an individual records his origin are one of the best sources to approach this aspect. I hope that an Athenocentric perspective will be forgiven, given the fact that the vast majority of classical gravestones have been found in Athens. There are quite a number of gravestones from people who describe themselves as Siceliots or Italiots dating from the classical period.

Δημητρία Ἀρίστωνος Ἰταλιώτις²¹
 Ἀπολλωνίδης Εὐαινέτο Σικελιώτης²²
 Διονύσιος Δημοστράτο Σικελιώτης²³
 Ξενικός Σικελιώτης²⁴
 Σώτηρις Σικελιώτις²⁵

Those from Hellenistic or Roman times also give in addition the name of the city of origin.

¹⁹ 2.9.

²⁰ For the interpretation of *Πελοποννήσιοι μὲν οἱ ἐντὸς Ἰσθμοῦ* see Hornblower (1991), 248.

²¹ *IG* II² 8942.

²² *IG* II² 10287.

²³ *IG* II² 10288.

²⁴ *IG* II² 10290.

²⁵ *SEG*, 44.198.

*Νουμηνίς Σικελή*²⁶
*Αισχύλος Απολλοδώρου Σικελός από Καλῆς ἀκτῆς*²⁷
*Ξένων Νεμηνίου Σικελός από Νεαίτου*²⁸
*Ἑρμῶν Αθανίππου Σικελός από Τυνδαρίδος*²⁹
*Σύμμαχος Τιττάλου Σικελός Ζώπυρος Ἄντα... Σικελός*³⁰
*[Χρησίμου Ἰταλιώτα]*³¹
*[Κυμαίωι ἀπ' Ἰταλίας]*³²
*Πλάτωνος Σικελιώτας Απολλωνιεύς ἐποίησε*³³
*Ζώπυρος Ἑρμογένου Σικελός από Κατάνης*³⁴
*Ἑμμενίδας Βεβαίου Σικελός από Κατάνης*³⁵

Compared to this, the use of Peloponnesian to describe individual identity is almost non-existent. This is even more important given that there were many more Peloponnesians in Athens than there were Siceliots or Italiots.³⁶ A Peloponnesian would record on his tombstone the name of his city, not his regional identity. I have found only one example, and this is rather strange in a number of ways:

*<ἐ>νθάδε<ε> γῆ κατέχει τίτθην παίδων Διογείτο ἐκ Πελοποννήσο τήνδε διακιστάτην Μαλίχα Κυθηρία*³⁷

It is not totally clear if the phrase ‘from Peloponnese’ refers to Diogeiton or Malicha; it certainly is very interesting, given that the name Malicha is Phoenician, though she is described as being from Cythera. But I shall not explore this issue here.

Is this the effect of distance? Given that Sicily and Italy are distant, while the Peloponnese is close by, should we not expect that the regional identity would be more pronounced the farther one goes from his place of origin? This is a reasonable assumption, but it does not seem to be corroborated by the available evidence. The inscriptions from the Black Sea provide us without a good testing case. Despite the existence of a number of Peloponnesians in the area, nobody ever describes himself as such: they always record the name of their polis or the name of their ethnos. The single exception from the early fifth century is

*Φιλόξενος Κέωνος ἐ Πελοποννάσο ἐξ Ἑλίκης*³⁸

²⁶ *IG* II² 10289.

²⁷ *IG* II² 10291.

²⁸ *IG* II² 10292.

²⁹ *IG* II² 10293.

³⁰ *SEG*, 33.455.

³¹ *SEG* 37.430 = 32.562.

³² *FD* 3.4.388 = *SEG* 27.85.

³³ *SEG* 51.1452.

³⁴ *IG* VII 416 col 1 40.

³⁵ *IG* VII 420 46.

³⁶ A count through Osborne and Byrne 1996 gives 249 Peloponnesians as opposed to 57 Siceliots and Italiots combined.

³⁷ *IG* II² 9112.

³⁸ *SEG* 36.718.

Another unique example comes from the records of the Delphic amphictyony:

*Ἀριστομήδης Πελοποννάσιος*³⁹

Here Aristomedes together with the Lacedaemonian Euthippos are the representatives of the Dorians among the *naopoioi*; it is thus not a description of personal identity, and Aristomedes was indeed a citizen of Sicyon.⁴⁰ In total, there are four more cases of an individual describing oneself as a Peloponnesian, all from Hellenistic or Roman times.⁴¹ So we can reach our first tentative conclusion: the Peloponnesian identity does not seem to be particularly significant or stressed on the individual level.

PELOPONNESOS

The Peloponnese is not simply a geographical entity. It is also seen as an entity with interests, characteristics, divisions and can even have its own leadership. In other words, although the Peloponnese did not comprise a single state, and did not have ethnic or cultural unity, it could be seen as a country in its own.

To start with, the Peloponnese has its own interests:

When these things had been said, the Lacedaemonians gave their allies permission to speak and bade them advise whatever course anyone of them deemed best both for Peloponnesos and for the allies (*ὅ τι γιγνώσκει τις ἄριστον τῇ Πελοποννήσῳ τε καὶ τοῖς συμμάχοις*).⁴²

This should not be seen merely as a reference to the Peloponnesian League; the Peloponnese had interests of her own, as other examples from the 360s show:

The Thebans accordingly prepared to take the field; but those who sought the best interests of Peloponnesos (*οἱ δὲ τὰ κράτιστα τῇ Πελοποννήσῳ βουλευόμενοι*) persuaded the general assembly of the Arcadians to send ambassadors and tell the Thebans not to come under arms to Arcadia unless they sent them a summons.⁴³

When these things were reported back to the general assembly of the Arcadians and to the several cities, the Mantineans and such of the other Arcadians as were concerned for Peloponnesos (*οἱ κηδόμενοι τῆς Πελοποννήσου*) inferred there from, as did likewise the Eleans and the Achaeans, that the Thebans manifestly wanted Peloponnesos to be as weak

³⁹ *FD* III, 5, 20.44 = *CID* 32.

⁴⁰ Hansen and Nielsen 2004, 60 n.30.

⁴¹ Rome: *IGUR* IV 1495; Thessaly: *SEG* 35:602.

⁴² Xen. *Hell.*, 5.2.20. See also Thuc., 5.27.2: *ὅπως σωθήσεται ἡ Πελοπόννησος*.

⁴³ Xen. *Hell.*, 7.4.35.

as possible (*ὡς ἀσθενεστάτην τὴν Πελοποννήσον εἶναι*) so that they might as easily as possible reduce it to slavery.⁴⁴

On the contrary, those who do not care for the interests of the Peloponnese are ready to wrong and injure it:

But the siege of Potidaea put an end to her inaction; she had men inside it: besides, she feared for the place. Immediately summoning the allies to Lacedaemon, she came and loudly accused the Athenians of breach of the treaty and *injuring the Peloponnese* (*ἀδικοῖεν τὴν Πελοπόννησον*).⁴⁵

Because of the valour of its inhabitants nobody dares to invade the Peloponnese and thus it is a safer and more stable country:

There came to Sparta a certain man of Miletus, who desired to have a talk with Glaucus and made him this offer: 'I am a Milesian, and I have come to have the benefit of your justice, Glaucus. Since there is much talk about your justice throughout all the rest of Hellas, and even in Ionia, I considered the fact that Ionia is always in danger *while the Peloponnese is securely established*, and nowhere in Ionia are the same men seen continuing in possession of wealth.'⁴⁶

The second thing to notice is that the Peloponnese has its own leadership and various powers vie for it.

Argos came in to the plan the more readily because she saw that war with Lacedaemon was inevitable, the truce being on the point of expiring; and also because she hoped *to gain the supremacy of Peloponnese* (*ἐλπίσαντες τῆς Πελοποννήσου ἡγήσεσθαι*). For at this time Lacedaemon had sunk very low in public estimation because of her disasters, while the Argives were in a most flourishing condition, having taken no part in the Attic war, but having on the contrary profited largely by their neutrality.⁴⁷

The Argives would contend *for their ancient supremacy, to regain their once equal share of Peloponnese of which they had been so long deprived* (*τῆς τε παλαιᾶς ἡγεμονίας καὶ τῆς ἐν Πελοποννήσῳ ποτὲ ἰσομοιρίας*), and to punish an enemy and a neighbour for a thousand wrongs.⁴⁸

The Peloponnese is seen as a space restricted to the Peloponnesians. The Peloponnesian cities can make treaties applying only to polities within the Peloponnese:

⁴⁴ Xen. *Hell.*, 7.5.1.

⁴⁵ Thuc., 1.67.1; see also 1.86.1.

⁴⁶ Hdt., 6.87.3-4.

⁴⁷ Thuc., 5.28.2.

⁴⁸ Thuc., 5.69.1.

5. *All the cities in Peloponnese, both small and great, shall be independent according to the customs of their country.*

6. *If any of the powers outside Peloponnese invade Peloponnesian territory, the parties contracting shall unite to repel them, on such terms as they may agree upon, as being most fair for the Peloponnesians.*

7. *All allies of the Lacedaemonians outside Peloponnese shall be on the same footing as the Lacedaemonians, and the allies of the Argives shall be on the same footing as the Argives, being left in enjoyment of their own possessions.*⁴⁹

Finally, the strong sense of cohesion among Peloponnesian communities means that in cases of dispute involving Peloponnesian polities other Peloponnesian polities can act as arbitrators.

When the Corcyraeans heard of their preparations they came to Corinth with envoys from Lacedaemon and Sicyon, whom they persuaded to accompany them, and bade her recall the garrison and settlers, as she had nothing to do with Epidamnus. If, however, she had any claims to make, they were willing to submit the matter to the arbitration of *such of the cities in Peloponnese* as should be chosen by mutual agreement, and that the colony should remain with the city to whom the arbitrators might assign it.⁵⁰

PELOPONNESIOI: COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES

If then the Peloponnese is conceived as a country in its own right, what are its features and characteristics? Here we have to move from talking about the Peloponnese to talking about the Peloponnesians. The Peloponnesian identity has a very peculiar nature. For the historians attribute to the Peloponnesians a number of features, which, based on their constant repetition in different sources and contexts, seem to have been widely recognised as fundamental features of the Peloponnesians; even more, they seem to differentiate them from other Greeks. Yet, on reflection, almost all of the features and characteristics attributed to the Peloponnesians are disputed or contested; even more, they always fail to describe accurately all Peloponnesians, since there are always significant exceptions to these generalisations.

The first feature attributed to Peloponnesians is bravery and military vigour:

Peloponnesians, if I did not suspect you of being dismayed at being left alone to sustain the attack of a numerous and barbarian enemy, I should just have said a few words to you as usual without further explanation. As it is, in the face of the desertion of our friends and the numbers of the enemy, I have some advice and information to offer, which, brief as they must be, will, I hope, suffice for the more important points. *The bravery*

⁴⁹ Thuc., 5.77.5-7.

⁵⁰ Thuc., 1.28.1-2.

*that you habitually display in war does not depend on your having allies at your side in this or that encounter, but on your native courage (δι' οἰκείαν ἀρετήν); nor have numbers any terrors for citizens of states like yours, in which the many do not rule the few, but rather the few the many, owing their position to nothing else than to superiority in the field.*⁵¹

*Peloponnesians, the character of the country from which we have come, one which has always owed its freedom to valour (τὸ εὐψυχον), and the fact that you are Dorians and the enemy you are about to fight Ionians, whom you are accustomed to beat, are things that do not need further comment.*⁵²

Now all *that part of the army which was from Peloponnesos* kept quiet and prepared for battle; but as for the men from Priene and Achilleium, from the islands and the Ionian cities, some of them left their arms in the standing grain (for the grain was tall in the plain of the Maeander) and ran away, while all those who did stand showed clearly that they would not stand very long.⁵³

This valour makes it impossible for the Peloponnesians to bear the ignominy of subjugation to a foreign power:

Let us also reflect that if it was merely a number of disputes of territory between rival neighbours, it might be borne; but here we have an enemy in Athens, that is a match for our whole coalition, and more than a match for any of its members; *so that unless as a body and as individual ethnē and individual cities* we make an unanimous stand against her, she will easily conquer us divided and in detail. That conquest, terrible as it may sound, would, it must be known, have no other end than slavery pure and simple; *a word which Peloponnese cannot even hear whispered without disgrace, or without disgrace see so many states abused by one.*⁵⁴

The second main attribute of the Peloponnesians is that they are agricultural, landlocked communities without much involvement in trade and the sea.

If you who have been practising at it ever since the Median invasion have not yet brought it to perfection, is there any chance of anything considerable being *effected by an agricultural, unseafaring population*, who will besides be prevented from practising by the constant presence of strong squadrons of observation from Athens?⁵⁵

⁵¹ Thuc., 4.126.1-2. See Hornblower 1996, 395-7.

⁵² Thuc., 5.9.1.

⁵³ Xen. *Hell.*, 3.2.17.

⁵⁴ Thuc., 1.122.2-3.

⁵⁵ Thuc., 1.142.7.

As to the war and the resources of either party, a detailed comparison will not show you the inferiority of Athens. *Personally engaged in the cultivation of their land (αὐτουργοί), without funds either private or public, the Peloponnesians are also without experience in long wars across sea, from the strict limit which poverty imposes on their attacks upon each other.*⁵⁶

This seems to be a valid description of the Peloponnesians, and yet it certainly does not describe all of them. For once the Corinthians, one of the most important Peloponnesian poleis, were willing to point out the difference between landlocked and maritime Peloponnesians:⁵⁷

For ourselves, all who have already had dealings with the Athenians require no warning to be on their guard against them. *The states more inland and out of the highway of communication should understand that if they omit to support the coast powers (τοὺς δὲ τὴν μεσόγειαν μάλλον καὶ μὴ ἐν πόρῳ κατῳκημένους εἰδέναι χρὴ ὅτι, τοῖς κάτω ἢν μὴ ἀμύνωσι),* the result will be to injure the transit of their produce for exportation and the reception in exchange of their imports from the sea; and they must not be careless judges of what is now said, as if it had nothing to do with them, but must expect that the sacrifice of the powers on the coast will one day be followed by the extension of the danger to the interior, and must recognize that their own interests are deeply involved in this discussion.⁵⁸

The last feature of Peloponnesian identity is the most contested one. In some passages speakers conflate the Peloponnesian and the Dorian identity.⁵⁹

*Peloponnesians, the character of the country from which we have come, one which has always owed its freedom to valour (τὸ εὐψυχον), and the fact that you are Dorians and the enemy you are about to fight Ionians, whom you are accustomed to beat, are things that do not need further comment.*⁶⁰

Twenty years later the *Dorians and the Heraclids became masters of Peloponnese*; so that much had to be done and many years had to elapse before Hellas could attain to a durable tranquillity undisturbed by removals, and could begin to send out colonies, as Athens did to Ionia and most of the islands, and *the Peloponnesians to most of Italy and Sicily* and some places in the rest of Hellas.⁶¹

⁵⁶ Thuc., 1.141.2-3.

⁵⁷ See Salmon 1984.

⁵⁸ Thuc., 1.120.2

⁵⁹ On Dorians and Ionians, see Alty 1982.

⁶⁰ Thuc., 5.9.1. See Hornblower 1996, 442-3.

⁶¹ Thuc., 1.12.3-4.

But we are not now come to declare to an audience familiar with them the misdeeds of a state so open to accusation as is the Athenian, but much rather to blame ourselves, who, with the warnings we possess in the Hellenes in those parts that have been enslaved through not supporting each other, and seeing the same sophisms being now tried upon ourselves--such as restorations of Leontine kinsfolk and support of Egestaeans allies--do not stand together and resolutely show them that here are no Ionians, or Hellespontines, or islanders, who change continually, but always serve a master, sometimes the Mede and sometimes some other, *but free Dorians from independent Peloponnesians, dwelling in Sicily*.⁶²

Your position, therefore, from whatever quarter you may view it, will amply justify you in going to war; and this step we recommend in the interests of all, bearing in mind that identity of interests is the surest of bonds whether between states or individuals. Delay not, therefore, to assist Potidaea, *a Dorian city besieged by Ionians, which is quite a reversal of the order of things*; nor to assert the freedom of the rest.⁶³

It is of course the case that many Peloponnesians belonged to the Dorian *genos*; the connection between the two was strong and the conflation could be easy. But on the other hand the Peloponnese was inhabited by many non-Dorian groups.

Seven nations (*ἔθνεα*) inhabit the Peloponnese. Two of these are aboriginal and are now settled in the land where they lived in the old days, the Arcadians and Cynurians. One nation, the Achaean, has never left the Peloponnese, but it has left its own country and inhabits another nation's land. The four remaining nations of the seven are immigrants, the Dorians and Aetolians and Dryopians and Lemnians. The Dorians have many famous cities, the Aetolians only Elis, the Dryopians Hermione and Asine near Laconian Cardamyle, the Lemnians all the Paroreatae. The Cynurians are aboriginal and seem to be the only Ionians, but they have been Dorianized (*ἐκδεδαρῖωνται*) by time and by Argive rule. They are the Orneatae and the perioikoi.⁶⁴

The results of the division of the Peloponnese in different races is sometimes emphasised:

In a single battle the Peloponnesians and their allies may be able to defy all Hellas, but they are incapacitated from carrying on a war against a power different in character from their own, since they do not have a single council-chamber requisite to prompt and vigorous action, *they are not of the same race*, (*οὐκ ὁμόφυλοι*) and every state possesses an equal vote, and

⁶² Thuc., 6.77.1.

⁶³ Thuc., 1.124.1

⁶⁴ Hdt., 8.73.

each presses its own ends, a condition of things which generally results in no action at all.⁶⁵

Moreover, there existed other, non-Dorian, or even anti-Dorian conceptions of the Peloponnese and the Peloponnesian identity. When before the battle of Plataea there arises a dispute among the Greek states over which one will hold the left wing of the Greek army, the Arcadian Tegeans justify their claim in the following terms:

We, among all the allies, have always had the right to hold this position in all campaigns of the united Peloponnesian armies (*ὅσαι ἤδη ἔξοδοι κοινὰ ἐγένοντο Πελοποννησίοισι*), both ancient and recent, ever since that time when the Heraclidae after Eurystheus' death attempted to return to the Peloponnese. We gained because of the achievement which we will relate. When we marched out at the Isthmus for war, along with the Achaeans and Ionians who then dwelt in the Peloponnese, and encamped opposite the returning exiles, then (it is said) Hyllus announced that army should not be risked against army in battle, but that that champion in the host of the Peloponnesians whom they chose as their best should fight with him in single combat on agreed conditions. The Peloponnesians, resolving that this should be so, swore a compact that if Hyllus should overcome the Peloponnesian champion, the Heraclidae should return to the land of their fathers, but if he were himself beaten, then the Heraclidae should depart and lead their army away, not attempting to return to the Peloponnese until a hundred years had passed. Then our general and king Echemus, son of Phegeus' son Eeropus, volunteered and was chosen out of all the allied host; he fought that duel and killed Hyllus. It was for that feat of arms that the Peloponnesians granted us this in addition to other great privileges which we have never ceased to possess, namely that in all united campaigns we should always lead the army's second wing.⁶⁶

Although they are careful not to mention the Dorians explicitly, the conception of and the pride in a non-Dorian Peloponnesian identity is highly stressed in the passage. Indeed, when in the 360s the power of the Dorian Spartans will be crushed decisively, the Arcadians express an even more determined version of their form of Peloponnesian identity:

Now, however, there appeared a certain Lycomedes of Mantinea, a man inferior to none in birth, foremost in wealth, and ambitious besides, and filled the Arcadians with self-confidence, saying that *it was to them alone that Peloponnesos was a fatherland*, since they were the only autochthonous stock that dwelt therein, and that the Arcadian people was the most numerous of all the Greek peoples and had the strongest bodies. He also declared that they were the bravest, offering as evidence the fact

⁶⁵ Thuc., 1.141.6. For the application of the same argument to Sicily, see 6.17.

⁶⁶ Hdt., 9.26.

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that whenever men needed mercenaries, there were none whom they chose in preference to Arcadians.⁶⁷

The features of bravery and military vigour, which we already saw as being general features of the Peloponnesians, have here found their utmost expression in the Arcadians. Xenophon's *Anabasis* provides another case of a non-Dorian Peloponnesian identity:

Thereupon those who had brought about this agitation accused the generals of spoiling their undertaking; and the Arcadians and Achaeans proceeded to band themselves together, under the leadership particularly of Callimachus the Parrhasian and Lycon the Achaean. Their words were to this effect, that *it was shameful that Peloponnesians should be under the command of an Athenian and a Lacedaemonian* who contributed no troops to the army, and that the hardships should fall to themselves and the gains to others, all despite the fact that the preservation of the army was their achievement; for it was, they said, the Arcadians and Achaeans who had achieved this result, and the rest of the army amounted to nothing (in truth more than half the army did consist of Arcadians and Achaeans).⁶⁸

EXPLAINING THE CREATION OF THE PELOPONNESIAN IDENTITY

We have seen therefore a number of contradictory phenomena. We have seen that the Peloponnesian identity seems not to have a significant meaning on the level of personal identification. On the other hand, the Peloponnese is conceived as a separate country in its own right, with her own features, characteristics, interests and leadership. But given the political, economic, social and ethnic diversity among Peloponnesian communities how are we to explain the emergence and formation of this Peloponnesian identity? One could look for externally observable common indicia that could give rise to a common form of identity. But there seem to be very few items in the material culture of the Peloponnese that could be seen as characteristically or specifically Peloponnesian. Whether one thinks of pottery styles, architectural styles, burial customs, letter forms, or coinage and weight standards⁶⁹ there is almost nothing that can be applied to the whole Peloponnese or is specific to the Peloponnese. Moreover, there seem to be no common activities that were restricted to Peloponnesians and thus helped to define a common identity. There were no sanctuaries of the Peloponnesians; the big sanctuaries of the Peloponnese with their festival games (Olympia, Isthmia, Nemea) that could have provided such an opportunity were early on opened to a wider audience and became truly Panhellenic.⁷⁰ I wonder though to what extent they could still be seen as

⁶⁷ Xen. *Hell.*, 7.1.23. See the commentary in Hansen and Nielsen 2004, 51.

⁶⁸ Xen. *Ana.* 6.2.9-10.

⁶⁹ Most of the Peloponnese used the standard of Aegina, an island bordering on the Peloponnese, and Aeginetan coins were very prominent; but Corinth and her colonies used their own standard. See Kraay 1976, 41-9, 78-88, 95-107.

⁷⁰ Morgan 1990.

Peloponnesian in one way or the other. It would be worth exploring in detail the implications of passages like this:

Accordingly, procuring a force from Theagenes and persuading his friends to join him, when the Olympic festival *in Peloponnese* came, he seized the Acropolis, with the intention of making himself tyrant, thinking that this was the grand festival of Zeus, and also an occasion appropriate for a victor at the Olympic Games.⁷¹

The important exception to the lack of common activities is of course what modern scholars have come to call the Peloponnesian League. One could therefore argue that it was the common experience of deliberating and campaigning under the leadership of Sparta that played an important role in the formation of Peloponnesian identity. I do not have the time, nor the necessary expertise, to deal here with the role of the Peloponnesian League in detail.⁷² To what extent passages like the one below portray the results of the Peloponnesian League on the formation of a Peloponnesian identity or portray customary agreements that predate the formation of the Peloponnesian League, will not be my subject here.

Then Cleomenes' plan was this: He had with him some deserters from whom he learned the names, then he sent a herald calling by name the Argives that were shut up in the sacred precinct and inviting them to come out, saying that he had their ransom. *Among the Peloponnesians there is a fixed ransom of two minae to be paid for every prisoner.*⁷³

Instead, I would just like to point out two different issues that emerge from reading the works of Herodotus, Thucydides and Xenophon. The first is the importance of the Peloponnese as a closed space in the Spartan imagination.

Maeandrius made this offer two or three times; Cleomenes showed his great integrity in that he would not accept; but realizing that there were others in Lacedaemon from whom Maeandrius would get help by offering them the cups, he went to the ephors and told them it would be best for Sparta if this Samian stranger *quit the Peloponnese* (*ἀπαλλάσσεσθαι ἐκ τῆς Πελοποννήσου*), lest he persuade Cleomenes himself or some other Spartan to do evil.⁷⁴

Meanwhile the rebels in Ithome, unable to prolong further a ten years' resistance, surrendered to Lacedaemon; the conditions being that *they should depart from Peloponnese* under safe conduct, and should never set foot in it again: any one who might hereafter be found there was to be the slave of his captor.⁷⁵

⁷¹ Thuc., 1.126.5.

⁷² See Ste. Croix 1972, 96-124. See most recently Bolmarcich 2005.

⁷³ Hdt., 6.79.

⁷⁴ Hdt., 3.148.

⁷⁵ Thuc., 1.103.1-2.

The second is a curious story reported by Herodotus that shows an interesting connection between Peloponnesian and Spartan identity.

It is true that I have heard another story told *by the Peloponnesians*; namely, that Anacharsis had been sent by the king of Scythia and had been a student of the ways of Hellas, and after his return told the king who sent him that all Greeks were keen for every kind of learning, except *the Lacedaemonians*; but that these were the only Greeks who spoke and listened with discretion. But this is a tale pointlessly invented by the Greeks themselves; and be this as it may, the man was put to death as I have said.⁷⁶

But I would like to suggest that there is another path that led to the formation of Peloponnesian identity: living abroad. Many Peloponnesians lived outside the Peloponnese in a variety of capacities. I would like to stress two of them: mercenary service and colonisation. Many scholars have pointed out examples where the colonial experience had an effect on perceptions and developments back in mainland Greece.⁷⁷ I would like to argue, without going to a detailed examination of the evidence, that in certain cases the experience of living together in colonial settings contributed to the creation of a Peloponnesian identity. The reforms of Demonax of Mantinea in sixth-century Cyrene provide an interesting example:⁷⁸

When this man came to Cyrene and learned everything, he divided the people into three tribes; of which the Theraeans and the perioikoi were one, the Peloponnesians and Cretans the second, and all the islanders the third (*Θηραίων μὲν γὰρ καὶ τῶν περιοίκων μίαν μοῖραν ἐποίησε, ἄλλην δὲ Πελοποννησίων καὶ Κρητῶν, τρίτην δὲ νησιωτέων πάντων*).⁷⁹

Now, it seems clear to me that the principle on which Demonax worked out his division of the citizen body was purely geographic. He put together people on the basis of common geographical origins; the creation of a tribal division including all islanders, despite the fact that there was no common island identity, but rather an Ionian or Doric one, supports in my view my claim. Could it be the case that experiences like these contributed to the formation of a common identity back in the Peloponnese?

Mercenary service of Peloponnesians is very well attested. Indeed, it seems that mercenaries from the Peloponnese had become a proverbial expression:

Corinth, exasperated by the war with the Corcyraeans, spent the whole of the year after the engagement and that succeeding it in building ships, and in straining every nerve to form an efficient fleet; *rowers being drawn from Peloponnese and the rest of Hellas* by the inducement of large bounties.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Hdt., 4.77.

⁷⁷ See Malkin 1994; Morgan and Hall 1996; Hall 2002, 58-65.

⁷⁸ See the recent interpretation of Hölkeskamp 1993.

⁷⁹ Hdt., 4.161.3

⁸⁰ Thuc., 1.31.1.

Meanwhile the Corinthians, with Potidaea in revolt, and the Athenian ships on the coast of Macedonia, alarmed for the safety of the place, and thinking its danger theirs, sent volunteers from Corinth, *and mercenaries from the other Peloponnesians*, to the number of sixteen hundred heavy infantry in all, and four hundred light troops. Aristeus, son of Adimantus, who was always a steady friend to the Potidaeans, took command of the expedition, and it was principally for love of him that most of the men from Corinth volunteered.⁸¹

The Spartans now therefore gladly sent seven hundred as heavy infantry with Brasidas, who recruited the rest of his force by means of money in *Peloponnese*.⁸²

The Peloponnesians received and enrolled in their army the mercenaries serving with Amorges without doing them any harm, *since most of them came from Peloponnese*, and handed over the town to Tissaphernes with all the captives, bond or free, at the stipulated price of one Doric stater a head; after which they returned to Miletus.⁸³

Indeed, it is very interesting that hiring mercenaries from the Peloponnese is something very common and natural even for anti-Peloponnesian ventures:

The seaport town of Siphae, in the bay of Crisae, in the Thespian territory, was to be betrayed to them by one party; Chaeronea (a dependency of what was formerly called the Minyan, now the Boeotian, Orchomenus), to be put into their hands by another from that town, whose exiles were very active in the business, hiring men in Peloponnese.⁸⁴

The opinion of Hippias prevailing, that they should recover the sovereignty, they set out collecting contributions from all the cities that owed them anything. Many of these gave great amounts, the Thebans more than any, and in course of time, not to make a long story, everything was ready for their return: for they brought *Argive mercenaries from the Peloponnese*, and there joined them on his own initiative a man of Naxos called Lygdamis, who was most keen in their cause and brought them money and men.⁸⁵

To sum up; Peloponnesian identity is a peculiarity that has been little studied. It should be studied in comparison with other Greek regional identities and it should be seen in diachronic perspective. This paper has also tried to argue that the Peloponnesian identity mattered in

⁸¹ Thuc., 1.60.1-2.

⁸² Thuc., 4.80.5.

⁸³ Thuc., 8.28.3-4.

⁸⁴ Thuc., 4.76.3. See also 6.22.

⁸⁵ Hdt., 1.61.3-4.

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different ways for different levels. Let us hope that future research will clarify these issues further.

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