

## Ethnicity in Mediterranean protohistory



Wim M.J. van Binsbergen & Fred C. Woudhuizen

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## PREFACE

The present monograph on ethnicity in Mediterranean proto-history may well be regarded as the main and final result of the project on the ethnicity of the Sea Peoples as set up by Wim van Binsbergen as academic supervisor and worked out by Fred Woudhuizen who, in the process, earned himself a PhD from the Erasmus University Rotterdam (2006). In the course of the supervision, Wim van Binsbergen had already drafted his views on the theory and method of ethnicity in the Mediterranean Bronze Age, as a complement to the supervisory discussions and the available published literature; after the completion of the dissertation, he found that he also had specific things to contribute on the details of Sea Peoples ethnicity. We decided to join forces and produce a manuscript which combines the desired market edition of Fred Woudhuizen's dissertation with a fully worked out version of Wim van Binsbergen's ideas on the topic.

It will soon be clear to the reader that the two authors differ considerably in their view on the matter, largely as a result of their different background and disciplinary allegiance. Thus Wim van Binsbergen (Parts I and III) – apart from providing an elaborate theoretical framework – , as a historicising anthropologist is focusing on long-term processes and cultural features, whereas Fred Woudhuizen (Part II) as of origin a historian is more occupied with the reconstruction (however difficult, in the protohistorical context) of

the petty historical incidents. But however much the two authors may differ in detail and in overall disciplinary orientation, in the end they offer the reader a balanced synthesis, co-authored by both of them (Part IV), in which their respective views turn out to be complementary rather than diametrically opposed, and in which also a further methodological and linguistic vindication is offered for the more controversial points contained in the present book.

Notwithstanding the serious divergences in opinion, what the two authors have in common – and what sustained their close and enthusiastic co-operation over the years – is their uncompromising effort to turn data from the margins of prehistory, which effectively means from protohistory, into history. In this manner they flatter themselves to have retrieved knowledge of otherwise long forgotten episodes of human civilization, more specifically, in this particular case, the eastern and central Mediterranean in the Bronze Age.

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