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# Creating history and identity in Asia Minor: the case of Aeolian Kyme

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## Abstract

This paper presents a reconstruction of history and traditions linked to Aeolian identity in Asia Minor, concentrating on the *archaiologiai* and other mythical accounts about the Aeolian cities and with a primary focus on creating and reconstructing Kyme's history. The origins of these *poleis* are connected with the so-called "Aeolian migration", whose tradition is reported by Herodotus (1.149–151) and Strabo (13.1.3): this account is linked to the origins of Kyme too and it is based on the Aeolian founders who landed on the new territory, previously populated by an autochthonous *ethnos* (Pelasgians). The literary sources attest another account concerning the origins of this *polis*, which is based on the role of the Amazons (who represent the "otherness") as founders and eponymous of the city (Hecat., *FGrHist* 1 F226; Strabo 11.5.4; 12.3.21; 13.3.6; Mela 1.18.90; Steph. Byz., s.v. Κύμη). The identity of the Aeolians in Asia Minor alternatively is constructed on these traditions, which are interpreted by modern scholars as piece of "intentional and perceived history": such accounts would be a literary creation, composed of the memories and perceptions of the Aeolian *ethnos*, who needed to represent its origins at certain moment of its history. Following the current historiographical methodologies, this paper will examine the literary sources about the foundation stories and mythical accounts relating to the Aeolian city of Kyme and will try to give a reconstruction of its history and identity. Moreover, considering a wider perspective, the paper will focus on the creation of early historiographical representations of Aeolians' past and will investigate the mechanisms with which the Aeolian history and identity have been elaborated by the ancient authors.

## Keywords

Aeolians; Aeolis; Amazons; *archaiologiai*; Asia Minor; eponymy accounts; foundation accounts; Greek ethnicity; Greek identity; Greek traditions; Hecataeus; Herodotus; intentional history; Kyme; Pelasgians; Strabo

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This contribution deals with some remarks from a different perspective achieved in my doctoral thesis. It takes into consideration only the historiographical dimension of the cities' accounts, according to the recent historiographical approaches: see Gehrke (2010: pp. 15–33). More precisely, I will try to reconstruct how much and in what way the literary tradition has elaborated the accounts related to the migration and the origins of Kyme.

The dynamics and the processes involved in the construction of history and identity through the ancient world are extremely complex. They are generally connected with different aspects related to each *ethnos* or *polis*, as every single group represents, at a given moment of its history, its traditional heritage linked to identity factors and historical contingencies, which are variable and modifiable over time.<sup>1</sup> This is a debate that has been approached from many perspectives in the field of recent historiography, but which still has much to say, particularly in terms of the representation and construction of interpretative models concerning the Greek cities of Asia Minor. Among these traditions, frequently myth is a *medium* and a filter with which the traditional heritage and identity of a people or a city are elaborated, and this making-process generates different elaborations.

The mechanisms related to the genesis of the history and identity of the Aeolians in Asia Minor constitute a case that in modern historiography has not yet been sufficiently investigated in terms of the elaboration of accounts: in particular, it is not clear which are the modalities of the representation about the origins of a *polis* – which in Greek traditions take the shape of eponymy and foundation accounts and, in general, *archaiologiai* – and the processes underlying the predominance of one tradition over another. Often, in fact, different nuclei of tradition are found to be present in the same city.

Following the current historiographical methodologies, the aim of this contribution is to investigate the literary sources related to the foundation myths on the Aeolian cities in Asia Minor, focusing on the main *polis*, Kyme. Moreover, considering a wider perspective, the paper will focus on the creation of early historiographical representation of Aeolians' past and will investigate the mechanisms with which the Aeolian history and identity have been elaborated by the ancient authors.<sup>2</sup>

## 1. The origins of the Aeolians in Asia Minor

In the ancient world, identity takes the form of an elaboration that is built through the contribution of different basic elements of an *ethnos* or a *polis*. Generally, the construction of the history, within the traditions of the Greeks, follows frequently recurring models and patterns, which can be summarised as follows: 1) first of all, the memory of a historical event, which can be defined according to a space-time dimension; 2) secondly, the perception of that given historical event, which varies from age to age and from historical context to historical context; 3) thirdly, the synthesis of these factors, that is the tradition, which is the repository of the historical and cultural heritage. Therefore, it is possible to say that memory, perception and tradition contribute to generate, or rather “create”, the history of a people or a city.

1 According to this perspective, the collective sense of identity and history would be represented in a specific historical context. For these aspects see, among others, Brillante (1990: pp. 91–138); Scheer (1993); Hall (1997); Price (2007: pp. 115–124).

2 Relating to the construction of the Greek ethnicity and identity in Asia Minor see Hall (2000: pp. 389–402); Gehrke (2001: pp. 286–313); Malkin (2001); Hall (2007: pp. 40–60); Cifani & Stoddart (2012); McInerney (2014); Di Benedetto (2022: pp. 47–63); Hallmannsecker (2022).

According to the literary tradition, Asia Minor is the region on which peoples and lineages from mainland Greece settled and arrived through the so-called “migrations” starting from the eleventh century BC, after the Trojan War.<sup>3</sup> These displacements would have transferred not only ethnic elements of the migrant peoples but also their identity (or identities) to the new lands, which gave life to a new identity, through the contribution of various other factors and on the basis of precise and differentiated historical needs. One of these movements, which ancient authors call Αιολική ἀποικία,<sup>4</sup> would have given rise to Αιολις in Asia Minor, a choronym derived from the ethnonym Αιολεῖς who inhabited this region.<sup>5</sup> According to the literary tradition – unlike the data from archaeology<sup>6</sup> –, it would have been the displacement characterised by the participation of heterogeneous Greek ἔθνη (Thessalians, Boeotians, Locrians, Spartans, Argives, Peloponnesians),<sup>7</sup> which took place after the Trojan War and was directed towards the northern Aegean: this movement would have led to the occupation of the islands of Lesbos and Tenedos and the microasiatic coast, placed between the plain of the Caicos River in the north and the Gulf of Smyrna in the south. The result of the migration would have been the foundation of several cities in that area, which would be called Aeolian Asia in historical times.<sup>8</sup> The literary sources represent such displacement through foundation accounts and *archaiologiai*.<sup>9</sup>

The Aeolian cities, according to the *vulgata* reported by Strabo and other sources, would have been founded by the descendants of Orestes, son of Agamemnon, during the Aeolian expedition that started from Boeotia and Thessaly and took place about

- 3 Dated 1194–1184 BC, according to the traditional chronology (Eratosth., *FGrHist* 241 F1). On the history of migrations to Asia Minor, including the previous bibliography, see Càssola (1957); Vanschoonwinkel (1991); Lemos (2007: pp. 713–727); Kopanias & alii (2015); Wiedemann & alii (2017).
- 4 Relating to the Aeolian migration see Càssola (1957: pp. 119–121); Sakellariou (1958: pp. 309–324); Bérard (1959: pp. 1–28); Angeli Bernardini (1997: pp. 71–79); Ragone (2000: pp. 285–356); de Fidio (2005: pp. 423–450); Vanschoonwinkel (2006: pp. 130–133); Rose (2008: pp. 399–430); Fowler (2013: pp. 597–602); Di Benedetto (2023: pp. 31–50); Tufano (2023: pp. 39–70). Scholars generally agree with the idea that the tradition of the Aeolian migration would have been elaborated by Hellanicus of Lesbos: see Ambaglio (1980: p. 138); Fowler (2013: pp. 682–689).
- 5 The geographical references are found in Strabo 2.5.21; 31; 9.2.3; 12.1.3; 13.1.3–4.
- 6 In this contribution, the term “migration” will only be used as a conventional reference, meaning the mass displacement made by the Aeolians, with the awareness that a unique migratory phenomenon did not exist. In the last twenty years, in fact, processual and post-processual archaeological research has revealed that it is no longer appropriate to deal with mass phenomena but with progressive and episodic infiltrations. For an updated report on the problem see, among others, Van Dommelen (2014: pp. 47–483, with bibliographical references).
- 7 Among the literary sources, the Aeolians are represented as αἰολοί, “various”: Hellan., *FGrHist* 4 F32 (ἐκ ποικίλων τόπων); Menecl. Barc., *FGrHist* 270 F10 (ἐκ πολλῶν ἐθνῶν); Ps.-Hdt., *Vita Hom.* 1 (παντοδαπά ἔθνεα Ἑλληνικά); Eust., *Comm. ad. Dion. Per.* 820 (*GGM* 2, p. 361, ποικίλων τινῶν καὶ μεγάλων ἀνθρώπων); Lyc., *Alex.* 1377 (σύν πολυγλώσσοφ στρατῶ).
- 8 It should be noted that the creation of an Aeolis in geographical terms is traced to the time after the Trojan War: for this problem see Bugno (2005: pp. 359–362, and bibliography included there).
- 9 For the chronology of foundation of the Aeolian cities, there is a disagreement between the established archaeological documentation, which does not allow us to go back beyond the 8th century, and the literary tradition, which instead dates the foundations at least three centuries earlier. For a general overview see Mohr & Rheidet (2020: pp. 1–46).

sixty years after the Trojan War:<sup>10</sup> such migration would have led to the creation of a new ethnic identity in Aeolis in Asia Minor.<sup>11</sup>

## 2. The traditions about the foundation of Kyme

It is possible to trace a process of ethnogenesis identity in the sources relating to the most ancient Aeolian settlement on the microasiatic coast: it is the city of Kyme, which would have been at the head of the Aeolian *koinon* in the archaic age.<sup>12</sup> We can find at least two typologies of foundation tradition about this city: an Aeolian account, in which the Greeks are perceived as founders of the city, and an Amazonian account, which considers the Amazons as eponymous and founders. I will examine the sources that report both traditions, in order to understand the myth-making process in relation to the construction of city's history and identity.

### 2.1 The Aeolian accounts

If we refer to the historical event that makes the history in Aeolian Asia Minor, we must take into consideration the already cited “Aeolian migration”. The first historical reference about the Aeolian foundation of Kyme can be found in an Herodotean *excursus*, in the first book of the *Histories*, which is focused on the description of the Aeolian cities and on the context before the Ionian revolt.<sup>13</sup> The historian offers a guideline to define

10 Strabo 13.1.3: τέτταρα γὰρ δὴ γενεαῖς πρεσβυτέραν φασὶ τὴν Αἰολικὴν ἀποικίαν τῆς Ἰωνικῆς, διατριβὰς δὲ λαβεῖν καὶ χρόνους μακροτέρους. Ὀρέστην μὲν γὰρ ἄρξει τοῦ στόλου, τούτου δ' ἐν Ἀρκαδίᾳ τελευτήσαντος τὸν βίον διαδέξασθαι τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ Πενθίλον, καὶ προελθεῖν μέχρι Θράκης ἐξήκοντα ἔτεσι τῶν Τρωικῶν ὕστερον, ὑπ' αὐτὴν τῶν Ἡρακλειδῶν εἰς Πελοπόννησον κάθοδον· εἶτ' Ἀρχέλαον υἱὸν ἐκείνου περαιώσαι τὸν Αἰολικὸν στόλον εἰς νῦν Κυζικηνὴν τὴν περὶ τὸ Δασκίλιον· Ἰρᾶν δὲ τὸν υἱὸν τούτου τὸ νεώτατον προελθόντα μέχρι τοῦ Τρανικοῦ ποταμοῦ καὶ παρεσκευασμένον ἄμεινον περαιώσαι τὸ πλεόν τῆς στρατιάς εἰς Λέσβον καὶ κατασχεῖν αὐτήν. See also Vell. Pat. 1.4.4: *et mox Aeolii eadem profecti Graecia longissimisque acti erroribus non minus inlustres obtinuerunt locos clarasque urbes condiderunt, Smyrnam, Cymen, Larissam, Myrinam Mytilenenque et alias urbes, quae sunt in Lesbo insula*. The same tradition is found, in a different way, in Pind., *Nem.* 11.43–47; Demon, *FGrHist* 327 F17; *Schol. Vet. ad Lycophr.* 1374 (Scheer 1881: Vol. 2, pp. 379–380).

11 Regarding the Aeolian accounts and the foundation route of cities see, among others, Leaf (1923: pp. 40–43); Ragone (2000: pp. 285–295); de Fidio (2007: pp. 5–52); Di Benedetto (2023: pp. 31–50).

12 On the history of Kyme see, among others, Hošek (1974: pp. 179–206); Uggeri (2001: pp. 299–322). The archaeological evidence and documentation at Kyme seem to propose a date no higher than the 8th century, although the presence of grey pottery (typical of the Bronze Age in the Anatolian area) would lead to the hypothesis that the site would have been inhabited before the arrival of the Aeolians. However, according to the current state of research, there is no certain evidence that the Greek site existed before the archaic age. The date of the foundation is said to predate the Ionian foundations, supposedly between 1050 and 1040 BC., according to Hier. *chron.* (Helm 69b). For archaeological problems see, among others, Frasca (2005: pp. 567–579); Camera (2017: pp. 161–163).

13 Hdt. 1.149.1-2: αὐταὶ μὲν αἱ Ἰάδες πόλιές εἰσι, αἶδε δὲ αἱ Αἰολίδες, Κύμη ἢ Φρικωνῆς καλεομένη, Λήρισα, Νέον τεῖχος, Τῆμος, Κίλλα, Νότιον, Αἰγίροεσσα, Πιτάνη, Αἰγαῖαι, Μύρινα, Ἰρύνεια. αὐταὶ ἔνδεκα Αἰολέων πόλιες αἱ ἀρχαῖαι· μία γὰρ σφειὸν παρελύθη Σμύρνη ὑπὸ Ἴωνων· ἦσαν γὰρ καὶ αὐταὶ δώδεκα αἱ ἐν τῇ ἡείρῳ. Traces of a foundation tradition on Kyme can be found in Hes., *Op.* 636: Κύμην Αἰολίδα προλιπὼν ἐννήη μελαίνῃ.

the territory of the ancient Aeolis, giving a list of the Aeolian cities and distinguishing them on the basis of an “archaeological” criterion: according to this view, the twelve Αιολέων πόλεις αἱ ἀρχαῖαι date back to the time of the Aeolian migration. Among these cities an eminent role is attributed to Kyme, called Φρικωνίς, which seems to be the first city founded by the Aeolians from mainland Greece. Herodotus assigns to this *polis* a mark of “Aeolianness”, perhaps in consideration of a tradition attested to his time or, in any case, to him earlier: the epithet mentioned, in fact, would be connected with the city’s foundation account, according to which the Aeolian Agamemnonids, Cleves and Malaus, would have left from Mount Φρίκιον,<sup>14</sup> near Thermopylae, and would have founded the city after a long sea crossing.

The reference to Phriconian origins of Kyme’s founders is drawn only from a Strabonian *excursus*, in the thirteenth book of the *Geography*, in which the account on the *archaiologia* about the Aeolian cities – relatable to the Aeolian migration<sup>15</sup> – is reported in an overview, perhaps as the result of previous historiographical elaborations.<sup>16</sup> In a subsequent section, the geographer focuses his attention on the local context at the time and before the arrival of the Aeolians: the Aeolian founders would have come across the Pelasgians, perched on the site of Larisa, and next to it they would have installed a garrison (called Νέον τεῖχος), with which they would have ensured the control of the surrounding territory and would then have founded the city of Kyme.<sup>17</sup> Comparing both sections, it can be noticed that the two texts deal with the account of the foundation of the *polis* from two different perspectives: while the first account reports the elements characterizing the history and identity of a people (the genealogy, the king leader who represents the history, the affiliation territory, the shared collective cultural heritage), the second one illustrates the phases of a dynamic of settlement and regional occupation, in which the demarcation boundary made by the Aeolians would also delimit an ethnic-identity border between Aeolians and Pelasgians, that is, between Greeks and non-Greeks.<sup>18</sup>

Considering both sections as an unitary foundation frame and leaving aside the problems related to the historicity and perception of the Pelasgians,<sup>19</sup> it can be said that the local tradition reported by the geographer highlights the elements that are at the basis

14 The tradition according to which the Aeolian founders come from the Locrian area around Mount *Phrikion* is also attested in Hellan., *FGrHist* 4 F80 *apud* Steph. Byz., s.v. Φρίκιον (φ 104 Billerbeck).

15 For the text see note n. 10.

16 For an in-depth examination see de Fidio (2005: pp. 423–450); Di Benedetto (2023: pp. 31–50).

17 Strabo 13.3.3: φασι γὰρ τοὺς ἐκ τοῦ Φρικίου τοῦ ὑπὲρ Θερμοπυλῶν Λοκρικοῦ ὄρους ὀρηθέντας κατὰραι μὲν εἰς τὸν τόπον ὅπου νῦν ἡ Κύμη ἐστί, καταλαμβάνοντας δὲ τοὺς Πελασγούς κεκακομένους ὑπὸ τοῦ Τρωϊκοῦ πολέμου, κατέχοντας δ’ ὅμως ἔτι τὴν Λάρισαν διέχουσαν τῆς Κύμης ὅσον ἑβδομήκοντα σταδίου, ἐπιτεχίσαι αὐτοῖς τὸ νῦν ἔτι λεγόμενον Νέον τεῖχος ἀπὸ τριάκοντα σταδίων τῆς Λαρίσης, ἐλθόντας δὲ κτίσαι τὴν Κύμην καὶ τοὺς περιγενομένους ἀνθρώπους ἐκέῖσε ἀνοικίσαι· ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ Λοκρικοῦ ὄρους τὴν τε Κύμην Φρικονίδα καλοῦσιν.

18 Relating to the different origins of these accounts see de Fidio (2005: pp. 423–450).

19 The account related to the Pelasgians are subject to interpretation, perception and representation by the Greeks. More specifically, the Pelasgians, together with Carians and Lelegians, are represented as the pre-Greek phase, not better specified: they are perceived as, on the one hand, previous inhabitants to the Greeks themselves, who perceived them as their predecessors, and, on the other hand, as autochthonous or as barbarians. On this aspect see, among the endless bibliography, Sakellariou (1977); Sourvinou-Inwood (2003: pp. 103–144); Skinner (2012: pp. 106–108); Fowler (2013: pp. 96–100).

of the construction and definition of the Greek identity in relation to and in opposition to a non-Greek *ethnos*, which is pre-existing in the colonising land. Therefore, the Greeks, according to the literary representation, would have replaced the Pelasgian substrate, rooted in Asia Minor,<sup>20</sup> giving life to a new time and a new space, as well as a new history. Thus, following the perspective of this account, it is possible to identify at least two levels of ethnic value in the history of the foundation of Kyme: the first moment of settlement, represented by the Pelasgians – already settled in the microasiatic area, in a pre-Greek period, not better defined – and the second moment, which is determined by the arrival of the Aeolians through the migration, inaugurating the Greek era.<sup>21</sup>

## 2.2 The Amazonian accounts

According to the Amazonian accounts, the mythical female warriors, who can be found in the Homeric poems and in the epic cycle,<sup>22</sup> are considered as the founders and eponyms of the city of Kyme.<sup>23</sup> This tradition would seem to go back to Hecataeus, the first witness who reports an account focused on the stationing of Amazons at Kyme. Hecataeus' fragment is handed down from a lemma of Stephanus of Byzantium, who refers to a tradition according to which the name of Kyme would have been Ἀμαζόνειον, a toponym linked to a local presence of the Amazons.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, in another section dedicated to Kyme, the lexicographer preserves an eponymy account and states that the name of Kyme derives from the omonymous Amazon (ἀπὸ Κύμης Ἀμαζόνος).<sup>25</sup> Another tradition, which could be perhaps the result of a process of re-elaboration in the Hellenistic age, is preserved in a section of Pomponius Mela's *De chorographia*, in which the Amazon Kyme is, at the same time, eponymous and founder of the city of Kyme but also the leader of an Amazonian army, who would have occupied the site after having driven out the previous inhabitants.<sup>26</sup>

The three testimonies taken into consideration (Hecateus' fragment and Stephanus' lemmas) make an explicit reference to an Amazonian account about Kyme, seen from different perspectives: on the one hand, the settlement and, on the other, the eponymy, but in none of them is possible to trace a foundation account. In particular, the text of Pomponius Mela provides further elements, useful for the definition of the city's iden-

20 On the history about the Pelasgians in Asia Minor see Strabo 13.3.3–4.

21 This contribution does not take into consideration other types of Aeolian accounts attested by the sources (Ps.-Hdt., *Vita Hom.* 1–2; Ephor., *FGrHist* 70 F114), which underlie different mechanisms of elaboration.

22 *Il.* 3.189; 6.186. See also *Aethiopsis* and *Theseis* in Bernabé (1996: pp. 65–71; pp. 135–142 respectively).

23 On the Amazonian account see Blok (1996: pp. 81–99); Moscati Castelnovo (1999: pp. 137–164); Mele (2005a: pp. 411–416); Ragone (2005: pp. 315–358); Di Benedetto (2020: pp. 135–156). Concerning archaeological problems related to the Amazons see, among others, Rotroff-Lamberton (2014: pp. 127–138, with bibliographical references).

24 Hecat., *FGrHist* 1 F226 *apud* Steph. Byz., *s.v.* Ἀμαζόνειον (α 245 Billerbeck): Ἀμαζόνειον· οὕτως ἔκαλεῖτο καὶ ἡ Κύμη, ἐν ἧ αἱ Ἀμαζόνες ᾤκουν. Ἐκαταῖος δ' ἐν Αἰολικοῖς διὰ τοῦ ἰ γράφει τὸ ὄνομα.

25 Steph. Byz., *s.v.* Κύμη (κ 261 Billerbeck): Κύμη· πόλις Αἰολίδος πρὸ τῆς Λέσβου, ἀπὸ Κύμης Ἀμαζόνος. ἔκαλεῖτο δὲ Ἀμαζόνειον [...] ἔστι δὲ καὶ ἑτέρα Φρικωνίτις λεγομένη [...]. See also Strabo 13.3.6.

26 Mela 1.18.90: *Cymen nominavit, pulsus qui habitaverant, dux Amazonum Cyme*. See, for a similar case, Diod. 3.55.4.



tity. The text segment *pulsis qui habitaverant*, behind which lies an excerpt of account, would indicate a pre-Amazonian presence on the site: these unknown inhabitants would have occupied the territory of Kyme before the arrival of the Greeks. Therefore, the site of Kyme would have been occupied, before the Amazons took possession of the area, by an obscure *ethnos*, presumably autochthonous and placed in a pre-Greek phase.

What we find in the Amazonian tradition on Kyme can be compared to a wider context, in which the Amazons appear as eponymous and founders of a group of Ionian (Ephesus and Smyrna) and Aeolian cities (Kyme and Myrina) within two short Strabonian sections. In the first case, the geographer relates to a specific past, whose traces would have been tangible, and alludes to the existence of tombs of the Amazons, probably still visible at his time.<sup>27</sup> In the second section, Strabo reports the tradition according to which the historian Ephorus distinguished two moments of occupation in Asia Minor: before the Aeolian and Ionian migrations, the Amazons would have founded, in Aeolis and Ionia, many cities, to which they would have given their name; and among these cities there would have been also Kyme, Ephorus' homeland.<sup>28</sup>

It is possible to say that the Amazonian tradition is represented by accounts articulated in three branches (settlement, eponymy, foundation), which are subject to reinterpretation and manipulation over time, depending on the historical context.<sup>29</sup> From the Amazonian accounts preserved by the sources it can be deduced that, according to the literary representation, the tradition about Kyme would have undergone more processes of elaboration and re-elaboration. Even in the case of the Amazons – as for the Aeolians – it is possible to highlight the elements that define the Aeolian identity: the territory to which they belong, a shared history and a leading figure. The data provided by Pomponius Mela would seek a moment even before the Amazonian phase: it would be a tradition aimed at overshadowing the Amazons, who would not have been the first to inhabit the site but would be subsequent to a past that they obliterated.

### 3. Some remarks about the mechanisms of the foundation accounts

The analysis of the literary sources made in this contribution leads us to propose a hypothesis of reconstruction concerning the processes and mechanisms about the genesis of Kyme's identity and history. Examining these accounts, we have to take into consideration that *archaiologiai* and foundation myths are considered by the ancient authors as an account constructed and perceived as “history”, and especially as the basis of the shared common past and local identity traditions. It has been rightly noticed that the

27 Strabo 11.5.4: κτίσεις γοῦν πόλεων καὶ ἐπωνυμίαι λέγονται, καθάπερ Ἐφέσου καὶ Σμύρνης καὶ Κύμης καὶ Μύρινης, καὶ τάφοι καὶ ἄλλα ὑπομνήματα.

28 Strabo 12.3.21: τοὺς δ' Ἀμαζώνων μεταξὺ Μυσίας καὶ Καρίας καὶ Λυδίας, καθάπερ Ἐφορος νόμιζει, πλησίον Κύμης τῆς πατρίδος αὐτοῦ. καὶ τοῦτο μὲν ἔχεται τινος λόγου τυχὸν ἴσως· εἴη γὰρ ἂν λέγων τὴν ὑπὸ τῶν Αἰολέων καὶ Ἰώνων οἰκισθεῖσαν ὕστερον, πρότερον δ' ὑπὸ Ἀμαζόνων· καὶ ἐπωνύμιους πόλεις τινὰς εἶναι φασί, καὶ γὰρ Ἐφεσον καὶ Σμύρναν καὶ Κύμην καὶ Μύριναν.

29 For these problems see *infra*.



Amazons, according to the imaginary of the ancient authors, are perceived as a non-Greek *ethnos*, who lived isolated from the Greeks, and they appear as allies of the Trojans in the War within the epic tradition: many scholars, indeed, suppose that they represent the “otherness” from the Greeks,<sup>30</sup> and therefore this status places them in a particular ethnic-identity relationship in Greek accounts. I will return to this issue later.

Such reconstruction of the sources allows us to state that the function of the Aeolians and Amazons in the Greek traditions are functional to label the territory as “Aeolic” and/or “Amazonian” in a certain period or in a particular phase of a city: it is a space that was previously devoid of identity and that takes on a sense from an ethnic-identity point of view. This has an effect not only on the territory, but also on the history of this land. According to Kyme’s Aeolian foundation account (Strabo 13.3.3), the first populating in the area is represented by the Pelasgians (figures of indefinite identity), which the Greeks – following a historiographical pattern common to other cases<sup>31</sup> – find on the territory where they will found their cities. They are followed by the Aeolians, who introduce their mythical-historical heritage in the new land. In accordance with an alternative elaboration, the accounts about the Amazonian eponymy and foundation of Kyme (Hecat., *FGrHist* 1 F226; Strabo 11.5.4; 12.3.21; 13.3.6; Steph. Byz., *s.v.* Κύμη) would highlight a different kind of populating, according to which the Amazons would precede the arrival of the Aeolians in Asia Minor. Instead, the presence of the Pelasgians at Kyme rests on a different diachronic relationship, as can be drawn from the text of Pomponius Mela (1.18.90), which could attest to an even earlier (or contemporary) level than the Amazons. This is what can be deduced from the sources.

In an overall view, the two different traditions would give us the picture of a succession of settlement in Kyme from Pelasgians, through Amazons, to the Aeolians: this idea can be supposed if we assume that the people reported by Pomponius Mela could be identified as the Pelasgians mentioned by Strabo in the *excursus* on the Aeolian foundation of Kyme.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, in an overview, it is possible to define at least three levels of populating at Kyme: the first moment, which involves the obscure inhabitants (Pelasgians), and the second moment, represented by the settlement of the Amazons; the third phase would be the Aeolian settlement, which creates the new Greek history.

Among the traditions examined it seems to trace the attempt to reach an increasingly ancient moment that can be referred to the origins of the city. The *archaiologia* related to Kyme could be marked according to the following diachronic phases: 1) non-Greek or, alternatively, “other” moment (obscure inhabitants/Pelasgians or Amazons); 2) Greek moment (Aeolians). Of these three phases, the last one is the moment from which the history and identity of a people start to be elaborated, because the time of the foundation – ascribable to the migration – makes the beginning of the history. We could say: a *πρότερον* (a mythical past), consisting of Pelasgians and/or Amazons, and

30 See, for example, Carrier-Detienne (1979: pp. 381–405); Talamo (2010a, pp. 109–128); Mac Sweeney (2013: pp. 152–153).

31 See, among others, the case of Miletus in relation to the Carians as reported by Ephor., *FGrHist* 70 F127.

32 *Contra* Ragone (2005: pp. 352–353) believes that these inhabitants are to be identified in the Pelopids, who would be the ancestors of the Atrids.

a ὕστερον (a mythical-historical time), represented by the Aeolians. Therefore, in the case of Kyme's tradition, it is possible to see a sort of "ethnic stratigraphy". Having said that, Strabo (or, more likely, his source) would consider the populating of Kyme (and perhaps of the Aeolis) as being based on an *archaiologia* articulated in several diachronic and diastratic phases, each of which would correspond, as in a sort of mythical-historical *continuum*, a pre-Greek/non-Greek (Pelasgians/Amazons) and Greek (Aeolians) evidence.

#### 4. The creation of the city's myth-history and the elaboration of the city's identity

Let us now return to the question about the Aeolian identity and how it is closely linked to the construction of Kymeian history. We could start with this question: why would the city of Kyme adopt a foundation myth through the elaboration of two different accounts (Aeolian and Amazonian)?

Scholars have convincingly argued that the traditions of the migrations to Asia Minor that took place after the Trojan War – including the *Aiolische Wanderung* – would be literary and historiographical creations, dating back to the 5th century BC.<sup>33</sup> However, the original nucleus of these mythical traditions must be searched for in a period prior to the classical age, in which they would have been taken up and refunctionalised for the historical and political needs. Recent contributions have highlighted that the process of identity origins related to Aeolian Asia Minor would be created during the archaic age (precisely before the end of the 8th century),<sup>34</sup> when the *poleis* defined a link with the Trojan past:<sup>35</sup> the mythical reference would have been to the Troad (and the territories that were in the hands of Priam), which was taken over by the Atrid king Agamemnon, leader and winner of the Trojan war, and he became also the progenitor of the Aeolians themselves. Moreover, we can say that the existence of Agamemnonid dynasties, in Aeolian Asia Minor, was used to give a legitimacy to the ownership of lands once subject to Priam.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, the Aeolian *archaiologia* was possible through the appropriation and vindication of the Atrid genealogy and, in particular, through the direct connection with the victorious leader-king, to whom – according to Ethnicity Studies<sup>37</sup> – the construction of a shared history for an entire *ethnos* can be traced: this process can be achieved through the historicization and the re-elaboration of the epic tradition and mythical accounts in a local key, which reflects a precise historical context, presumably linked to the power of a king Agamemnon attested in the archaic period.<sup>38</sup>

33 Hammond (1975: p. 777).

34 Carlier (1984: p. 463).

35 On this problem see Mele (2005: p. 19); Fowler (2013: p. 154).

36 See Herodotus' remarks on this problem (5.94.2).

37 Hall (2002: p. 9).

38 The existence of a *basileus* named Agamemnon at Kyme is attested by Nic. Dam., *FGrHist* 90 F51; Her. Lemb, *Exc. Pol.* 36 Dilts. See Carlier (1984: pp. 462–463).

On the other side, if the re-elaboration of the Trojan myth in an Aeolian key seems to have taken place during the high-archaic age, the Amazonian tradition to which we have testimony from Hecataeus onwards (and Pindar, for the Ionian area)<sup>39</sup> may have been subject to reinterpretation during a particular period preceding the logograph by at least a century and a half. The definition of Ἀμαζόνειον as a toponym for Kyme<sup>40</sup> could be a clue to a phase in the city's history in which there would have been an Amazonian perception: more precisely, the city would have been endowed with Amazonian origins through an Amazonian peopling. The process of the elaboration of such a tradition should be investigated taking into account the historical context of the cities of Asia Minor during the 7th century BC, when, within the city of Kyme (as in the cases of Colophon, Ephesus and Smyrna), a civic opposition of groups linked to the Lydian party (the so-called λυδίζοντες) and groups linked to the Greek traditionalist party had arisen. In a historical context in which the Amazons would refer to Lydia, a similar tradition would have been created to mark the affiliation of such groups to the pro-Lydia party and contrast their identity with that of the opposite party.<sup>41</sup> And it can be assumed – as has been hypothesised recently<sup>42</sup> – that even at a time when the Amazons represented the Persians, the same identity dynamic came up again during the Persian wars (and perhaps onwards), re-functionalising it for the historical context of reference (Greeks versus Persians). In both specific cases, there would have been an ethnic opposition between Greeks and non-Greeks.

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Having considered these things, we can state that memory and city tradition use mythical accounts as historical patterns, in various historical periods and identity contingencies, in order to construct, deconstruct and reconstruct – following a cause and effect relationship – the heritage of a *polis*, which has its roots in the mythical tradition. In fact, the protagonists of the accounts taken into consideration (the Atrids, from whom the Aeolians descended, and the Amazons) are figures that are found variously through the *epos*, although they do not play an eponymic and founding role: according to a complex process of re-elaboration, they are subject to a re-qualification and a re-characterization, by following specific historical needs and factors, becoming the bearers of historical-identity values and symbols of several cities.

The case of Aeolian Kyme is a *specimen* of how identity and history are created, starting from two traditions lying on different nuclei, but which are in close relationship with the territory on which they were elaborated: on the one hand, the Aeolian account (related to the foundation of the city) refers to the mythical time of the Aeolian migration, and, on the other, the Amazonian account (defined by settlement, eponymy and foundation) traces the origins of the city to Amazons settled *in situ* in a period that can be considered as “other” (before the Greeks).

39 Pind., fr. 174 Snell-Maehler *apud* Paus. 7.2.7.

40 Hecat., *FGrHist* 1 F226 (see n. 24).

41 For a general historical context see, among others, Cook (1982: pp. 196–221). On the Amazons as a representation of the Lydians see Mazzarino (2007: pp. 174–175); Talamo (2010: pp. 73–74); Pezzullo (2017: pp. 182–183, with bibliographical references).

42 See Di Benedetto (2020: pp. 147–150).

In this sense, the foundation myth is the representation in the shape of memories and/or elaborations of the settlement of a people on a new land: the Amazonian and the Aeolian accounts contain elements that relates to the identity of the Aeolian world of Asia Minor, that is, the myth of common descent (the founder, the eponym) and the association with a specific territory. These are the elements that, according to J. Hall's view, generate the identity of an *ethnos* group (a shared history, a distinctive culture and a specific affiliation territory):<sup>43</sup> for these reasons, they represent the starting point for the creation of a city history. Thus, we can say that – following a local process of re-elaboration of the mythical accounts – the *polis* refers to the figure of the hero or founder, generally placed in a mythical time, in order to construct its history and its identity, which can be grafted both on a foundation and eponymy tradition: the aim and the function of this process are the possibility to guarantee the origins as ancient as possible to the city itself. This process frequently occurs in local traditions: they are exploited and re-elaborated *ad hoc*, to shape the identity and the historical heritage according to specific historical and political issues through the mechanism of representation of the origins. The *medium* of this process are myth and its accounts: as the myth is not something defined and fixed permanently, but is subject to variations in relation to the historical circumstances, history and identity can be manipulated and reshaped over time and for many reasons.

In this historiographical perspective, the traditions and the accounts preserved by the sources would not always reflect an authentic historical truth but elaborations that from time to time would have been created and recreated in given historical contexts: an account would reflect a (re)construction with which a community's collective sense of identity is represented, in a precise historical phase of the city. It can be assumed that, at different times in the history of the city, one tradition prevailed over another and vice versa, in order to comply with certain ethnic and identity contingencies and presumably with precise political choices and reasons.

## 5. Concluding remarks

What has been written so far has made it possible to bring to light the mechanisms and processes underlying the creation and adoption of a city myth according to precise historical-political contexts, which is likely reflected in the historiographical elaboration. In light of what emerged from this contribution, dynamics and processes related to the origins of Aeolian Kyme's history and identity are connected with two dominant traditions: one tracing it to the Aeolian founders, led by the Agamemnonid γένος, and the other tracing it to the Amazons. The two traditions, alternative but coexisting, represent pieces of the *archaiologia* of the *polis*: the search for the most remote possible genesis, within a shared common past (true or fictitious), dating back to a mythical time, is the typical mechanism of the foundation accounts, aimed at affirming the antiquity and priority of an *ethnos*. In both cases, we are faced with the historiographical phenomenon of

43 For this problem see especially Hall (1997: p. 25).

the “invention of tradition”, which in this case is achieved through the elaboration and the use of eponymy and foundation accounts, a more legitimising historiographical and narrative process, which has the aim of claiming an “earlier” but also “other” time (of Amazonian ancestry): these typologies of accounts lead to place the *polis* and its citizens in a dimension of continuity with the Lydians and the Persians but also of alterity with regard to an interlocutor (Aeolians, Ionians, Dorians, Greeks in general).

If the historicisation of the Trojan myth with an Aeolian perspective would have taken place around the end of the 8th century BC, the Amazonian tradition would emerge as a counterbalance to the pre-existing Aeolian tradition: while in an archaic phase (7th–6th century BC) the Amazons would represent the Lydians and the Lydian element that would overlap with the members of the traditional Greek group, during the classical period (5th–4th century BC) they would represent the Persians.<sup>44</sup> Although the Amazonian myth was well-established at Kyme and was also shared by other surrounding cities,<sup>45</sup> so that the search for a more ancient time (given by the Amazons) might be said to be preferable to the Greekness, however the Amazonian tradition did not replace the Aeolian one: this is presumably because the mythical reference of the migration and its re-elaborations promotes the reassembling and the creation of a common collective identity with respect to city and individual histories.

The city traditions, according to current methodologies, are considered from the perspective of *Intentional Geschichte*:<sup>46</sup> it is an intentionally created history, with which a *polis* would represent its past through the elaboration of a common history, composed of memories and perceptions and having an identity value. The accounts on the *archaiologiai* related to a city are elaborations through which a *polis* or more *poleis* create their origins through the use of their past. As we have seen, it is a frequent process among local traditions: in this process, myth is subjected to manipulations due to specific historical and identity circumstances, which direct its functionality. This is what we can draw from the foundation and eponymy accounts related to Aeolian Kyme.

Considering a broader historiographical level, the foundation myths that can be traced in the Greek traditions in Aeolian Asia have their roots in the Homeric *epos*, both as regards the Amazons and as regards the Aeolians. These mythical accounts are perceived and represented as part of the traditional heritage and identity elaborated by the Aeolians in relation to their origins: this process was seen operating particularly in the case of Kyme. It is a common past shared by an *ethnos* that recognizes itself and self-identifies in a given territory and with certain identity values.<sup>47</sup> Literary sources have preserved traces of the Greek settlement along the western coasts of Asia Minor, a dynamic that is represented and elaborated in tradition and local heritage according to a common patterns: the foundation accounts, in fact, are characterized by a common structure substantially based on the replacement of autochthonous and pre-existing people to the Greeks – barbarians, non-

44 The fourth-century historian Ephorus would be the last representative of this myth.

45 The case of Kyme can be used as an interesting example for the other Aeolian cities in Asia Minor, such as Larisa, Neon Teichos, Temnos and Myrina. For this problem see Di Benedetto (2020: p. 151).

46 Gehrke (2010: pp. 15–33).

47 Relating to the Aeolians as an *ethnos* see, among others, recently Beck (2019: pp. 385–404).

Greeks (such as Amazons and Pelasgians) –, placed in a time not well definable and rooted in the space where the newcomers (Aeolians) will settle. With the latter a new space-time dimension is established, history begins, especially through the role of the founder, since it represents the system and the identity baggage of the migrant *ethnos*. Therefore, the identity of the Aeolians in Asia Minor is to be considered as an “intentional and perceived history”, based on literary creations that have reflections in the historiographical tradition. From this point of view, eponymy and foundation accounts (more generally *archaiologiai*) on Kyme (and presumably on the other Aeolian cities) would reflect a reconstruction or several reconstructions with which the collective sense of identity of the community or part of it is represented, in a precise historical context and in a close link between past, memory and invention.

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