

6. Conclusions

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6.1. Local History and the Representation of the Third Space

The current investigation focused on the early stages of local Boiotian historiography. Hellanikos was the first author who systematically tackled the history of the region: his observations on the pre-Kadmean populations and the original version of the foundation myth of Thebes derived from sources that document the richness of traditions in the region. Armenidas was active soon after and offers useful insights into the debates surrounding Theban topography (the Seven Pyres, the Isles of the Blessed), Boiotian religion (Athena Itonia), and other centres of the region, such as Mount Kithairon, connected to the myth of Aktaion. This wide horizon was also peculiar to the historiographical interests of Aristophanes, who provides good information on the history of Tanagra and of Tilphossion; at the same time, evenemential and contemporary history played a role in his works, which can be detected through his observations on the arrival of Herodotus and on the local magistrates. Finally, the choice to delimitate this study with Daimachos offers an insight into two features of his period: as a polygrapher, Daimachos is a scholar of the fourth century BCE, a man who studied the construction techniques of military machines and the ancient wars between Athens and Megara; at the same time, local traditions surface in his fragments and closely show how the current wars of the sixties were quickly leaving a trace in the historical landscape of these fighting communities.

Daimachos partially loses that strong tie with the identity of place that distinguishes local historiography from what is commonly understood as “universal history” (*Zeitgeschichte*). In the previous works by Armenidas and Aristophanes, the main basis is still built through local imagery: this was made up of “relationships between founding heroes and mythical

kings, memories of crucial alliances in past wars, or links defined by cults or supraregional sanctuaries”.¹⁴⁴⁷ These local historians offer the opportunity to investigate the contents of various local traditions transmitted in single Boiotian centres, such as Haliartos or Orchomenos, which formed their specific historical identity.

In general, it is important to remark how small traditions with a real regional impact occur in our fragments of Boiotian local historiography. Apart from a few observations, there is no systematic research on the territory in our available selection of materials. We can try to look for the relevance of local imagery from a regional perspective,¹⁴⁴⁸ however, when working in this field, we need to be able to focus and also understand those memories and narratives that were not subsumed in the regional conscience. In contrast to external sources, Boiotian literature in poetry (Hesiod, Pindar, Korinna)¹⁴⁴⁹ and in prose, represents an overlapping of poleic and interpoleic narratives: these coexisted and were variously harmonized by local historiographers. When Aristophanes (F 4) sheds light on the fight between Thebes and Naxos around the origins of Dionysos, we retrieve through his reading a contraposition that otherwise would have been lost. Moreover, as the study on Daimachos’ view of the war between Megara and Athens shows (F 3), in cities like Plataia, contrasting traditions existed on the history of neighbouring Attica, despite the growing popularity of the other view: Daimachos, in particular, is a living example of the conservative nature of the Plataian world, with his astronomical theories which were, by then, a century old (F 7).

It is important, given the growing influence of Thebes from the end of the fifth century BCE, that these fragments help us better understand the differences between the Thebes imagined in literature, with its foundation myths and the great events of its history, and the hardly graspable physical Thebes, whose ancient sites lie below the contemporary city.¹⁴⁵⁰ To us, Armenidas’ notes on the Theban acropolis (F 3) present a perspective on how a Boiotian (maybe a Theban) talked about one of the most important places of the city. This city is a telling example of the quantity of contemporary and later sources on its

1447 Pretzler 2005: 237.

1448 Kühr 2006; Larson 2007. More specifically on Thebes: Berman 2015.

1449 On the variety of the poetical traditions that attest to the slow formation of a local narrative in Boiotia, see *supra* 1.1.2.

1450 Cp. Aravantinos – Kountouri 2015 and Berman 2015.

landscape, on the way in which this material was part of the local imagery of the Thebans. There was a dichotomy between the literary Thebes, as it had been imaginatively built by literates and erudites from abroad, from Homer on, and the Thebes of everyday life, the place where you could actually look for the site where Kadmos had fought the dragon. In a stimulating study, Berman (2015) suggests that we see the relationship between these two Thebes through a perspective coming from cultural studies, that of the “third space”.¹⁴⁵¹

Conceiving a space as a *third space* means describing and understanding its impact on the local population as the output of the overlapping of three plans: the space is a compromise, then, of (1) the original functions and scopes of the single subspaces and buildings which constitute it (denotative function: the theatre as space for displaying and performing); (2) the original emotional perception (primary connotative function: the theatre is where a *polis* sees its world of values and its community, on the stage); (3) the combination of the previous plans, insofar as the space is charged and enriched by practice and discourse (secondary connotative function: the theatre helps the citizens and the audience remember an ancient cultural period).

These new theoretical tools improve our understanding of the fundamental texts for the study of ancient localism, such as Strabo’s *Geography* or Pausanias’ *Periegesis*: it can be argued that, in these works, the literary perspective reaches a balance between the likely autoptic observations of the author and, on the other hand, the vast amount of information he already possessed. As far as Thebes and Boiotia are concerned, there is an interplay of sources which operates, in particular, on Pausanias’ experience:¹⁴⁵² he was using a sensible number of poetical and historiographical sources that resonate in this section of the

1451 On the “third space”, see Lefebvre 1974, Tuan 1977, and Soja 1996.

1452 Strabo’s Boiotian chapter (9.2) is commented on by Wallace 1979, who argues (168–72) that Strabo only visited part of the region and depended on literary sources for the interior part of Boiotia (cp. Roesch 1982a: 258). Strabo is generally more useful on regional traditions than on single details referring to single Boiotian towns: he has a critical approach towards mythical materials (Saïd 2010; Patterson 2017), but I would not suggest that he had first-hand experience of Boiotian local historiography, unlike other authors who lived in his age, or a little later (Ovid and Conon: Schachter 1990b; Theon of Alexandria: see Aristophanes F 1).

work.¹⁴⁵³ An interesting example which shows how the creation of third space in literature affects our understanding of ancient localism comes from Pausanias' introductory remarks on Mt. Helikon (9.28.1):

Helikon is one of the mountains of Greece with the most fertile soil and the greatest number of cultivated trees. The wild-strawberry bushes supply to the goats sweeter fruit than that growing anywhere else. The dwellers around Helikon say that all the grasses too and roots growing on the mountain are not at all poisonous to men. (tr. J. Frazer)

Despite the fact that, in the later excursus on the Mouseion and on its statues, some descriptions can be trusted and are certainly reliable,¹⁴⁵⁴ this literary introduction on the Mount as a *locus amoenus*, where even the snakes are not poisonous, is at the intersection between a literary idealization and a general portrayal of a nice location.¹⁴⁵⁵ This kind of approach was exactly what Plutarch indirectly criticizes, when, in his *Amatorius* (1.794A), he has Flavianus ask Autoboulos for a more “trustworthy” picture of the Helikon:

“Curtail, we beseech ye, your discourse at present, forbearing the descriptions of meadows and shades, together with the crawling ivy, and whatever else poets are so studious to add to their descriptions, imitating with more curiosity than grace Plato's Ilissus [Pl. *Phd.* 230B], with the chaste tree and the gentle rising hillock covered with green grass” (tr. W.W. Goodwin).

This rhetorical rejection of the “*topos* of the poetic or philosophical landscape”¹⁴⁵⁶ can be understood as a reaction to a well-trodden path in the literary representation of this area. Local sources, especially the historiographers, had indeed started this process of reappropriation of the landscape, by offering to their audience a genuinely parochial view

1453 For this reading of Pausanias' ninth book, see Musti 1988b and Gartland 2016b; see Pretzler 2007, for a reconsideration of Pausanias' agenda and method; Knoepfler 2004 and Müller 2013, on Pindar and Polybius, as an (ignored) source on Hellenistic Boiotia.

1454 See Robinson 2012 and Knoepfler 2005.

1455 On the idealization of this sacred space, cp. the remarks by Rocchi 1996.

1456 Robinson 2012: 253.

of their surroundings. We can also consider here, under the same light, the different example of Pindar: this poet showed, in the first decades of the “pre-Classical” *koinon*, how myth acted on the interpretation of one’s surroundings. His Thebes and his Boiotia were part of a cultural scenario, where the poet creates the place, while the place determines his poetical background.¹⁴⁵⁷ As a Theban, Pindar offers a view from within, but this process is not completely neutral or genuine, insofar as representation of the imagery is influenced by the genre and by the prehistory of the cultural strata involved by the narrative.¹⁴⁵⁸

When the first local historiographers deal with their own areas, they try to show more clearly why different layers of meaning developed. Let us consider here, for instance, Armenidas’ view that the Seven Pyres may coincide with two traditions, that of the Niobids and that of the Seven Argives.¹⁴⁵⁹ This contrasts with the univocal view of Pausanias (9.17.2), who only understood the place in connection with the Seven Argives: to Pausanias, the original functions of the place, its emotional perception and the combination of these plans, namely the Seven Pyres as a “third space”, is something less open and problematized. This intersection of the plans operates even more clearly in a passage where Pausanias reconsiders an autoptic experience, in the light of a literary witness (2.20.5):¹⁴⁶⁰

“All the chieftains who with him [Polyneikes] were killed in battle at the walls of Thebes. These men Aeschylus has reduced to the number of seven only, although there were more chiefs than this in the expedition, from Argos, from Messen, with some even from Arcadia. But the Argives have adopted the number seven from the drama of Aeschylus, and near to their statues are the statues of those who took Thebes” (tr. W.H.S. Jones).¹⁴⁶¹

1457 See 1.1.2 in the Introduction on Pindar’s own presentation as a Theban and as a Boiotian.

1458 On Pindar and Boiotia, see the synthesis by Olivieri 2011.

1459 Armenidas F 3.

1460 On this passage and on other passages where Pausanias questions literary traditions, cp. Pretzler 2005: 242-3. On Pindar’s topographical imagery, see in particular Olivieri 2014.

1461 ὅσοι σὺν ἐκείνῳ τῶν ἐν τέλει πρὸς τὸ τεῖχος μαχόμενοι τὸ Θηβαίων ἐτελεύτησαν. τούτους τοὺς ἄνδρας ἐς μόνων ἑπτὰ ἀριθμὸν κατήγαγεν Αἰσχύλος, πλείονων ἔκ τε Ἄργους ἡγεμόνων καὶ Μεσσήνης καὶ τινῶν καὶ Ἀρκάδων στρατευσαμένων. τούτων δὲ τῶν ἑπτὰ – ἐπηκολουθήκασι γὰρ καὶ Ἄργεϊοι τῇ Αἰσχύλου ποιήσει – πλησίον κείνται καὶ οἱ τὰς Θήβας ἐλόντες. A further example of how Pausanias combines these levels of interpretation, letting the ideological

Pausanias contrasts the literary tradition with his own knowledge of the tradition of the Seven against Thebes: not only is Aeschylus' number of seven a symbolic reduction of the deceased, but the provenance of the army (from Argos, but also from Messenia and Arcadia) is another possible correction of the dramatic rewriting of the myth. Despite this gap, the Argives adopted and accepted (ἐπηκολουθήκασι) Aeschylus' poetry, not the "reality" of the myth in the topographical accommodation of the story. Pausanias therefore witnesses how the three functions of a space can coexist and how literature may have a lively impact on the everyday existence of the local communities of ancient Greece.

Our study of Boiotian historiography, however, adopts a different and "static" form of local perspectives: the study of these texts allows us to move not in a dynamic way from the general (external, Panhellenic observers, as Pausanias or Strabo) to the particular (the poleic dimensions), but rather, completely inside and within the world of the *particulare*.¹⁴⁶² Before Nora (1978; Nora 1984–92) and Assmann (1988; Assmann 1992) introduced the idea of a "mnemotope" or *lieu de mémoire*, to describe the social meaning of a place, Roland Barthes (1967: 12) offered an interesting perspective on the local perception of one's own land, be it a *polis* or a sanctuary:

“[L]a cité est un discours et ce discours est véritablement un langage: la ville parle à ses habitants, nous parlons notre ville, la ville où nous nous trouvons, simplement en l'habitant, en la parcourant, en la regardant.”

This approach allows us to tackle local histories not just as ancient Baedekers on single relevant spots of the region, but mostly as discursive histories of the place characterized by a strong sense of identity of place. Only local sources, when they can be retrieved, offer a

agenda prevail over the topographical proximity, is his excursus on Tanagra (9.20.1–22.4), as is maintained by Jaillard 2007 (134: "Parcours mémorial, paysages divins et fragments de topographie ne cessent d'interférer selon une articulation propre au discours périégétique qui tend dès lors à constituer *une construction mythique au second degré*").

1462 I refer here to Francesco Guicciardini's idea of the *particulare*: according to the sixteenth century Italian thinker, every human community tends to the "particular", i.e. to the preservation and the enhancement of its richness and of its reputation (see his *Ricordi*, 28, and the essay on *Consigli et avvertimenti*, published in 1576). The world of the *particulare* certainly has a different and apter meaning in the modern world and a strict parallel must absolutely be considered with skepticism; nonetheless, the focus on particularism as a reaction and a different world from the general overlook must be at the heart of every study of ancient local historiography. On Guicciardini and the history of particularism in Italy, see a short overview in Birindelli 2015.

completely local perspective and are less influenced by the necessity to compare, and come to terms with, that network of traditions which coexists and conflicts in works like Strabo's *Geography* or Pausanias' *Periegesis*. We are forced to cope with a limited array of pieces of evidence, which we cannot overinterpret in order to align them to a literal understanding of the sources.

On the basis of the content of the fragments, we can recognize the main interests of these local historians and detect two tendencies: on the one hand, the attention to local variations or versions of a myth, otherwise unknown, or maybe only known through Imperial mythological handbooks; on the other hand, there is a distance from local patriotism, especially in Aristophanes, which we must interrogate for the actual, critical interaction between local historians and their specific audiences.¹⁴⁶³

The corpus analyzed here allows us to detect four themes that go from the original population of the region (6.1.1) to the foundation traditions of Thebes and other centres (6.1.2). The other two subjects which we can infer from the selected anthology of fragments are the relationships with Thessaly (6.1.3), in the forms of a recognized and implicit kinship memory in Armenidas and in Aristophanes, and an original attitude towards historical events (6.1.4), such as the alleged Athenian conquest of Salamis and the Theban participation in the second Persian War. These few examples show how contrasting versions could circulate and be considered valid and meaningful for the local audience in a world where Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon were probably not as popular as our local historiographers. These gave literary voice to an identity of place that is at the heart of ancient localism, with all its internal subdivisions.

6.1.1. Boiotian Populations and Panboiotian Myths: The Regional Perspective

Among the criteria that define ethnicity, a link with territory is almost a constant element.¹⁴⁶⁴ This is made clear, in the Boiotian case, by the ancient witness of Ephoros (*BNJ* 70 F 119), whereas a telling example comes from Strabo's tenth book (10.3.463A):

¹⁴⁶³ Cp. Pretzler 2005: 240, according to whom Plutarch was indeed influenced by this patriotism.

¹⁴⁶⁴ Hall 1997: 25.

Strabo confirms that the Kouretes were Aitolians, because they inhabited Aitolian centres. Boiotia, however, represents an exceptional case for the contradiction between the common belief that the Boiotians arrived in the region sixty years after the Trojan Wars (Thuc. 1.12.2), and their presence among the other Greeks during this conflict. Classical thought, as represented by Thucydides, found a solution to the conundrum by postulating that there was already a small group in the same area.¹⁴⁶⁵ The specification of the starting point, Arne, may be the Thucydidean attempt to find a consensus between Homer, who recalls the presence of a Boiotian army at Troy, and the genealogical relationship between the eponymous Boiotos and Arne, which already surfaces in the pseudo-Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*.¹⁴⁶⁶ This indication is probably the reception of a local discourse, which started in the region in the Archaic period: in fact, by and large, there are various indications which confirm the internal acknowledgement of ethnicity in Boiotia in the Archaic period.¹⁴⁶⁷

As more and more studies on transregional sanctuaries confirm, it is hard to deny that in the sixth century BCE there was already a regional conscience. This was behind the external presentation of participants in these festivals: religion was an important factor in this process, even if not necessarily the primary and only one.¹⁴⁶⁸ When Hellanikos was working on his *Boiotian History* and Armenidas and Aristophanes were probably still young, the region already had a lively scene of festivals and cults, some of which had gained an international reputation.¹⁴⁶⁹ Let us consider here, for the sake of clarity, the festivals where the Theban Agasikles and his family gained a high reputation before Pindar wrote a song mentioning his participation at the Daphnephoria in the late forties of the fifth century BCE:

“For/ both of old and now they have been honored

1465 On this complicated interplay, see the commentary on Hellanikos’ F 2 (2.2.2); for a reconsideration of Thucydides’ witness, “l’unica ricostruzione antica del loro insediamento” (Prandi 2011: 241), in the context of the ἀρχαιολογία (1.1-12), cp. Larson 2007: 52-64.

1466 Larson 2007: 41-8.

1467 See in general Kühn 2007; Larson 2007; Kühn 2014.

1468 Cp. the different case studies discussed in Funke – Haake 2013.

1469 Cp. Alkaios F 325 V. with Armenidas F 1.

by those who live around them [ἀμφικτιόνεσσιν]
for their celebrated victories
with swift-footed horses,
for which on the shores of famous Onchestos
and b[y the glori]ous temple of Itonia
they adorned their hair with garlands.”¹⁴⁷⁰

The festivals of Onchestos and of Koroneia were a bustling meeting of Boiotians. Pindar was focusing here on all the people from the region that had contributed to honouring Agasikles and his family, the ἀμφικτιόνεσσιν mentioned at v. 43. While local traditions on Thebes likely have a Theban origin, a regional tradition could develop more easily in the presence of a regional revenue; it is possible to suggest that these short glimpses, offered by Pindar in his *daphnerikon*, refer to the same ἀγῶνες τ'ἔννομοι Βοιωτίων to which he alludes elsewhere (*Ol.* 7.84). Herodotus, Thucydides, and Ephoros draw both on poleic and on regional traditions, but it needs to be reassessed where these traditions found a feasible moment of development and common reflection.

Local historiography offers an (unfortunately partial) insight into the results of this common regional process, for instance, by recording what equated to Boiotian “pre-History”. In his *Boiotian History*, Hellanikos collected the traditions on the Encheleis, who once upon a time lived in Boiotia (F 1). The “Eel-men” may be one of those native populations, who were subsequently substituted or expelled by the actual Boiotians to another region:¹⁴⁷¹ they contributed to the vacuum in demography, where scholars like Ephoros, from the outside, tend to imagine the Pelasgians. The concise presentation of the Encheleis does not refer to a violent occupation of the region, nor does it link them to the exile of Kadmos, as in many other Athenian sources of the late fifth century BCE. In his work, therefore, Hellanikos had to offer an essay of pre-Boiotian ethnography, probably

1470 Pind. F 94b,41-7 S.-M., tr. E. Mackil. See Mackil 2012: 160-3 and Papazarkadas 2018 on the family of Agasikles.

1471 For a general picture of the populations that preceded the Boiotians in the region, see Breglia 2011.

particularly detailed, if we compare it to the other excursuses we possess on the same topic.¹⁴⁷²

These Encheleis are “pre-Kadmean”, because they are neither Phoenician, nor clearly (explicitly) Boiotian. At the same time, we must admit that the presence of Kadmeans and Boiotians at Troy complicates this picture, and we are left with general patterns, which cannot possibly be reduced to a single reconstruction of the original populace.¹⁴⁷³ We can say that before Boiotos appeared in this narrative, a number of entities occupied the region and this mythical past was also constructed on the grounds of a present agenda. It is hard to escape the impression that, to a Boiotian, these Eel-men would suggest the well-known product of Lake Kopais. With its extent and its products, this basin therefore helped the evolution of this local history-writing.

This sense of presentism also contributed to rethinking national figures according to the daily relationships of the Boiotians. When Armenidas (F 1) says that Itonos, the father of Boiotos, was the son of Amphiktyon, he accepts a family tie that closely links Boiotos both with the Amphiktyony of Anthela and with the genealogical tree of Boiotos. This tradition goes beyond the old-style genealogical approach to eponymous heroes, whereby a population uses a kinship tie to strengthen both their identity and their current political agenda. Armenidas also testifies to the fluidity of these figures and, with the *Boiotos* of Corrina, presents a unique opportunity to closely observe how a whole *ethnos* presents its putative father in a transregional network. By the time local historians start writing, they already have a network of regional myths that have a relatively long story.

Smaller communities and cities of the region interacted with these pan-Boiotian traditions by adding local appendices to preexisting narratives. The case is best demonstrated by the myths that developed around the Kadmeans and their escape from the Argives, even in a small oracular site like the Tilphossion. Aristophanes (F 11) and Pindar, quoted in the same context by Athenaeus,¹⁴⁷⁴ focused on the death of the prophet Teiresias because his death forever tied him to the place. His death through congestion was the probable consequence of the forgetfulness induced by Zeus (and, therefore, as a revenge): this tradition had

1472 Cp. 2.1.2.

1473 On the “Pre-Kadmeans”, see Breglia 2011. For an introduction to these populations, cp. Kühr 2014a: 228-30.

1474 Cp. 4.12.1.

already been referred to in the *Melampody*, but Aristophanes was the first prose author to deal with it.¹⁴⁷⁵ There were rich, local varieties of details on this character, which may have arisen from the memory of the place and of the oracle of Tilphossa (inevitably linked, for the Boiotians and for the Greeks, to the occurrence of the nymph and of the place in the Homeric *Hymn to Apollo*).¹⁴⁷⁶ This reduplication of the same material already touched upon in the *Melampody* had, however, a different focus in the case of Aristophanes: the attention of the author, and therefore of his audience, shifts from the character Teiresias to the place of the Tilphossion. Its sanctity derives from the story of the character and from his death, whereas the *Melampody* had a different scope and internal organization. Also, here, we see how the oracular spot became a third space to its inhabitants, and local historiography provided them with an explanation of its history.

The history of Thebes and the history of Boiotia, then, intertwined continuously in these local histories, but not for the preeminence of Thebes: its history had an inescapable impact (Aristophanes had to explain why Teiresias had gone to Tilphossa in the first place), but the focus and the real interests of the author lay elsewhere. This intertwining of locales is further confirmed by a passage from Armenidas' *Theban history* (F 3) where the Theban site of the Seven Pyres is associated either with the tombs of the Seven Argives, who fell before Thebes, or with the bodies of the Niobidai, who were usually tied to Thebes. A recent repetition of a political interpretation understands this fragment as an echo of the mythological context between Athens and Thebes, with the pious reception of the corpses as a reason of pride or, conversely, of impiety.¹⁴⁷⁷ However, once we set this material in a local perspective, it opens new possible scenarios on the alternatives repeated by Armenidas: he was either showing his original research on the site or signalling, with his wide understanding, an important reading of the monuments.

The city, to return to Barthes' words (6.1), speaks to those who live in it, and this is truer for a historian of its most notable spots. The Thebans and the Boiotians, then, were looking at this place not as a static, monolithic *lieu de mémoire*, but as a place open to more interpretations among which Armenidas does not wish to choose, or to explicitly confirm.

1475 On this hypothesis, see 4.12.3.

1476 Cp. Sordi 1966 and 4.12.1.

1477 See *supra* the commentary.

The sense of an ideological contrast with another city, in fact, may work better as an interpretation tool for another fragment (4) of Aristophanes, where Thebes seems to react to Naxos concerning the role of one of the most important deities for the Thebans since the second millennium BCE, Dionysos. Despite the Theban perspective of these two last examples, the impact of Dionysos and of the Seven Argives on the history of the entire region need not be repeated here; instead, it is necessary to include these materials in the picture of the history of the region, because, if we do not read these fragments, we have no further proof of a contrast with Naxos or of a community debating its sacred areas.

Finally, another series of relevant local myths dealt with Herakles' life and successes. The myth was largely exploited in previous literature, but there was still room for specific innovations. In a fragment by Aristophanes (F 8), there is an attempt to provide a locally oriented, and assumedly original to us, version of his birth ("he is nobler than Amphytrion": F 8), so that Aristophanes might have suggested that he was not really Zeus' son. This version, where Zeus uses a stratagem to impersonate Amphytrion, became so popular that Aristophanes gives indirect confirmation of its acceptance in Thebes. The city must have developed a national biography of the hero, of which the materials are not preserved but can occasionally be glimpsed. Another interesting example, also in Aristophanes (F 9), concerns the tradition on Rhadamanthys as a teacher of Herakles. In this case, a pan-Boiotian connection to Rhadamanthys, who was already imagined in the region in connection with Herakles' mother, became the likely starting point for adding another name to the catalogue Herakles' teachers.

Aristophanes was not the only author in Boiotia, who would have been willing to accept these variations in important events of a hero's biography: an interesting parallel comes from the work of Daimachos, according to whom Achilles had a mortal mother (F 2). Whether later Thessalian sources used Daimachos to support the same view remains open to question. In the universal history of Daimachos several different regions are treated with a degree of detail that documents a high degree of research. The same impression results from the note on Pittakos as the first recipient of the bowl of the Seven Wisemen (F 3). The fragment is also interesting because it confirms the isolation of Daimachos among his contemporaries.

But what did being Boiotian mean, to a Boiotian? Aristophanes offers an original and unexpected answer, which seems to confirm the prejudices towards his own people: he describes the expulsion of Herodotus from Thebes (F 5) as the decision of a rude, boorish

citizenship, which, at least at the highest levels, did not want to accept the teachings of a historian presented as a travelling sophist. Aristophanes reversed, and at the same time, accepted the *topos* of Boiotian boorishness.¹⁴⁷⁸ Herodotus finds and speaks to an audience, or at least he tries to (ἐπιχειρῶν), but is then expelled, because of a decision of the elite citizens. How much this specific depreciation of Theban open-mindedness was a sign of a Boiotian (read: not-Theban) origin is a judgment that is definitely impervious to utter: Aristophanes, after all, was also the author of *Theban Annals*, if we accept the independent nature of this second title.¹⁴⁷⁹ The episode remains a unique witness to the number of prejudices and traditions which could also populate a national history of the region, despite the reception of a pan-Boiotian reconstruction of the past.

As briefly outlined here, therefore, Boiotian local historiography touched upon Boiotian regional myths and history, sometimes explicitly linking them with single places. This apparently external approach to the topic, similar to that of an ethnographer working on another population,¹⁴⁸⁰ allowed Aristophanes to accept that the Thebans, as claimed by Plato, were not in love with philosophy.¹⁴⁸¹ Cities (Thebes), springs (Tilphossa), and monuments (the tombs of the Seven; maybe the Temple of Dionysos Lysios in Thebes) spoke to the audience, and the local historians reproduce this reworking of memory. These historians offered an honest and not idealized version of the conflictual relationships between the communities: maybe the boorish Thebans who expelled a renowned historian pleased the other Boiotians, who were unfriendly towards Thebes, while the Naxians, in their mythic pride, were being challenged by the Thebans, not satisfied to be the well-known fatherland of Herakles. This appraisal of the material also challenges the idea that writing or referring to a local audience necessarily means pleasing its interests and likes: being parochial did not mean being patriotic.

1478 For a different way to interact with external prejudices, namely the saying of “Boiotian swine”, see in the Introduction 1.2.2.

1479 See Aristophanes T 3 and 4.1.1.

1480 For the parallel between local historiography and ethnography, see Tober 2017; on the respective place of these two genres according to Jacoby, cp. 7.1.

1481 Cp. 4.6.2.

6.1.2. Foundation Myths: Thebes, Chaironeia, Orchomenos

It is arguable whether the *Κτίσεις* (“Foundations”), which were firstly written in poetry and then, from the fifth century BCE on, in prose, may be considered an embryonic species of local historiography. As stories about one’s origins, “they reveal a lot about self-perception”, and so it is no surprise that they were among the major interests of local historiographers in Greece.¹⁴⁸² In the wide array of works of Hellanikos, however, there seems to be a distinction –with due respect to the value of the transmitted titles – between the three titles which explicitly refer to a single book on *Foundations*, and the others, which had a local perspective on single Greek regions (even if we did not accept the autonomous nature of the *Boiotian Histories*).¹⁴⁸³

In the absence of outright indications, we might infer a probable difference in the overall framework of these essays, but we must admit that, in the absence of an ascription, a fragment like the one on the foundation of Thebes (F 2) would be naturally conceivable in the *Ktiseis*-genre. While we can accept a structural closeness between the two genres when dealing with the same material, it would seem that the nature of the tradition has speciously betrayed the original intent of the local historiographers: to them, the foundation act is the first chapter of an excursus on a city or on a festival, not the core of the narrative. To recover the parochial traditions of this moment, they tend to adhere to versions of the story that had not made their way outside their place of origin. This different fate of the versions is clear in the case of Thebes: despite the popularity of the city and of its myth abroad, a singular version of its foundation tale was never made completely popular and communicated to Athenian audiences. A Lesbian, Hellanikos, provided the first literary witness to this Theban narrative in his *Boiotian Histories* (F 2).

This complex and convoluted scholium to Hom. *Il.* 2.494 has many parts in common with the relative section on the foundation of Thebes in Apollodoros’ *Library*. The text seems to betray a variation of the myth, in Hellanikos, concerning the relationship between Kadmos and Ares: this is particularly in line with the rest of Hellanikos’ Boiotian fragments, as it would seem that the historian had a very good knowledge of the region,

1482 Quote from Kühr 2014a: 228. On the *Ktiseis* as an example of local historiography, cp. e.g. Thomas 2014b: 163.

1483 See *supra* 1.3.1.

not always in accord with what we learn from the Athenian sources of the same period.¹⁴⁸⁴ The fragment on the foundation of Thebes offers a connection between the founding act, which establishes an etymological link between the cow (βοῦς) followed by Kadmos and the Boiotian region, and the wedding of Kadmos and Harmonia. Hellanikos seems to have depicted the position of Ares towards Kadmos in positive terms, and this may also be indirectly proven by the absence of an explicit association of the name of the spring and the god in this version. More often than not, Hellanikos was interested in these poorly attested variations of Theban myth, as in the case of the peaceful solution to the fight between Eteocles and Polyneikes (*BNJ* 4 F 98). It could be, as in the case of the pre-Kadmean Encheleis, that Hellanikos was writing a local history with a very good expertise on the subject. His *Boiotian History* had to be an erudite penchant to the oral circulation of other versions of the same myths, more akin (known?) to the tastes of the Athenians who watched Euripides' *Phoenician Women* or listened to Herodotus' *Histories*.

At the end of the fifth century, the Athenian playwrights and Herodotus confirm a wealth of knowledge both on Kadmos and on the singularity of the Theban case: a Greek city that was founded by a foreigner, as if it were a Greek colony. The common ground of these external rewritings of the foundation myth was always Homer, with his Kadmeids at Troy: from the seventh century BCE, it is not impossible to think that the first move towards this legend concerning origins existed in Thebes.¹⁴⁸⁵ Apart from the “Panhellenic” Homer, the only local alternative was the Theban Cycle (even if what we know from the *Oedipodea*, the *Thebaid*, and the *Epigoni* contrasts or does not explicitly confirm a possible engagement with this topic).¹⁴⁸⁶ If we accept an early date for Korinna, we might also include her, but even at an early date she does not seem to represent a real alternative to the local historians: all these authors would have drawn on the same local materials and used them differently.

1484 See on this 2.2.2 and the scholarship discussed in 7.2.

1485 On the evolution of the foundation myth of Thebes, see the commentary *ad* Hellanikos F 2.

1486 The apparent absence of the foundation myth from the extant fragments most probably depends on their scarce number. In two cases we can gather two inferences concerning Kadmos: his “table”, probably a wedding gift, was mentioned in the *Thebaid* (F 2 West, *GEF*), and an uncertain fragment of the *Epigoni* (F 3* West, *GEF*) recalls the unfair treatment of the descendants of Kadmos.

The case of Pindar is particularly striking, because his treatment of the other important Theban foundation myth, that of the twins Amphion and Zethos, was different from that of the local historian Armenidas.¹⁴⁸⁷ This author had particularly good Theban sources, as his note on the Theban Isles of the Blessed might indicate (F 5); in the case of Amphion, he distinguished himself for the original characterisation of this twin. The depiction of Amphion as a poet-to-be, who plays the lyre, could either be a legacy of a previous locally embedded tradition, or an example of how, in the same years of Euripides' *Antiope*, the Thebans were looking at one of the most representative epichoric myths.¹⁴⁸⁸

Hellanikos, with his Kadmos helped by Ares, and Armenidas, who imagines a lyrical Amphion, testify to how the Thebans might offer a richer scenario to the world of their foundation myths: it may well be that the process of creation or reimagination of these stories, often postulated in the Archaic period on the basis of lyrical sources, did not stop. Local historiography could thus work in two directions: as a form of cultural resistance against external narratives, but also as an independent expression of one own's history. Unfortunately, it seems that these alternative foundation myths quickly disappeared. When Pausanias speaks about Amphion (9.5.7-9), he accepts the picture of a man endowed with the gift of music, but only mentions poets, from Homer to the Hellenistic poetess Myro, when speaking of this figure. Armenidas was still a meaningful source and precedent for Aristodemos of Thebes (*BNJ* 383), who implicitly referred to his theories on the Seven Pyres, but afterwards his parochial picture of the foundation of Thebes remained material for learned scholars of Archaic Greek poetry.

This limited circulation granted the survival of evidence for a strong historical interest in other Boiotian centres, especially those which, like Chaironeia, were not mentioned in the paradigmatic *Catalogue of the Ships* in the *Iliad*. While this assumption is often based on alternative traditions and changes of names recorded by Strabo and by later lexicographers, Aristophanes's definition of Chaironeia as a πόλισμα (F 7) is particularly important to us: the substantive often signals the diverse luck of a city in the present, compared to the past.¹⁴⁸⁹ In his *Boiotian Histories*, Aristophanes was also recalling the eponymous hero of

1487 On Pindar's treatment of the two twins, see briefly Schachter 1981: 29.

1488 The date of the *Antiope* is still debated, but the most probable period is 412-407 BCE (see 3.2.1).

1489 Cp. 4.8.3.

this centre, Chairon, a figure who is generally opaque and absent in other Boiotian genealogies: the function of Chairon is to justify the new name of Arne, the ghost candidate, where all the other Boiotian cities, like Chaironeia, recognized themselves when they could not find their “spot” in the *Catalogue of Ships*. This is not merely late erudite recollection of disparate traditions, but lively material meant for a local audience and derived from local sources: Aristophanes was writing both for the citizens of Chaironeia and for the citizens of other centres of the region, like Tanagra. In the excursus on this city, Aristophanes (F 1) reminds us of its original synoecism and the fratricide: the papyrus which transmits this text is particularly important, for it shows how Theon, in the first century CE, was still able to read Aristophanes’ *Boiotian Histories*.¹⁴⁹⁰

A consequence of the existence of these two excursuses, on Chaironeia and Tanagra, is that they both had to explain the absence of the city from the *Catalogue of Ships*. How could a local historian, in front of a regional audience, let two traditions coexist? Maybe a variety of alternatives was accepted and a degree of objectivity was sought, as the remark on the πολλή δόξα in the fragment of Aristophanes on Tanagra (F 1) seems to show. As stated in the section above, we can try to understand the rationale behind the birth of these traditions, but this does not mean that the single communities of these centres were blind, biased audiences, without any previous knowledge of the stories of their neighbouring *poleis*.

Aristophanes recorded the names of fighting cocks in Tanagra (F 2), which would be unnecessary, for instance, if we imagined a mere Tanagran audience for this section of the work: this regional local historiography, then, acts as an ethnography both at the general level, because it encompasses the history of the whole of Boiotia to explain it to the same Boiotians, and at a number of inferior levels, constituted by the cities and the sanctuaries covered in the work. Despite the frequency of contacts and the existence of regional institutions, the Boiotians still had to learn about the specific traditions of single parts of the region. The foundation myths of festivals also mattered, from what we read in the fragment on the institution of the Homoloia of Orchomenos (Aristophanes F 4). The prophetess went to Delphi and obtained sacred approval for this institution, where we can imagine a high number of Boiotian participants: a story on the foundation myth of the

1490 On this problem, cp. 4.2.1

festival was then, at the same time, a sample of “Orchomenian” material and a detailed focus on one of the cultural knots of Boiotia.

Not only Thebes, then, could bolster a long and fascinating *Traditionskern* on its foundation: one of the goals of the *Boiotiaka* was to offer a systematic and comprehensive picture of the other foundation myths of Boiotian cities. From this point of view, those contrasts between *poleis*, which we usually imagine as a constant in the history of the region, were not always pivotal in the formation or development of a myth. We should also liberate ourselves of the “Theban ghost”, as if every city wanted to be antecedent or better than Thebes. These traditions, however poorly attested and fragmented, echo local responses to the Homeric verses, which are the voices of poleic elites and poleic stories, secondarily collected and harmonized in works of regional breath.

6.1.3. Boiotia and Thessaly

In recent years, the idea of an “Aiolic” dialect and population has been particularly criticized: it is claimed that neither archaeological nor linguistic evidence supports the existence of such a group and, therefore, the idea of common descent. In particular, the absence of a clear common archaeological culture in the Aiolid led Rose (2008) to question the reliability of the tradition on the Aiolian migration from Boiotia and Thessaly to the East in the early first millennium BCE. Similarly, Parker (2008) studied the Thessalian, Boiotian, and Lesbian dialects, and recognized a series of independent innovations in these dialects, which discredits the idea of a common origin. These two studies concluded that the traditions on Aiolian migration were an artificial product of the ethnogenesis of the Classical Age, prompted by the desire to unify different cultures, and written using the cultural tools of migration and expansion. An important corollary was the strong attack on the secondary character of the eastern Aiolians: there would be no reason, in Parker’s view, to claim that Lesbos developed an Aiolian dialect because its population spoke this dialect from the early occupation of the island. Consequently, language could no longer be used as proof of an ethnic descendance or similarity.

This approach, in fact, is more the result of contemporary studies on ancient Greek history than of our very sources: language was one of the *indicia* of ethnicity, but not the only one, nor do we have proof, in the Aiolic case, that language was always used to prove this ancient kinship tie.¹⁴⁹¹ At the same time, the Boiotian dialect underwent a number of innovations and changes in the sixth century BCE, which strongly separated it from the close northwestern dialects spoken in Phokis and Lokris, and from its Attico-Ionian neighbours. As documented by Pantelidis (2018), there was an ancient dialect subcontinuum in this area, which was soon interrupted by this phenomenon. In his words, “the confinement of many important changes within Boeotia from a certain time onwards is perhaps not unrelated to the strong ethno-cultural identity of the Boeotians” (185–6). The same dynamics cannot be observed in relation to the western Thessalian dialects, which remained particularly close and similar to the Boiotian, thus forming a subcontinuum, where a reciprocal understanding was possible between these dialects.

In other words, even if we accept the revisionist thesis of Parker, there is no need to claim that it disproves the ancient theories of Boiotian migration from the north. The later, systematic accounts on migration from Thessaly, as retold by Strabo and Pausanias, are the final stage of a long process, which at the beginning did not entail, for instance, the island of Lesbos. Under this specific respect, we can agree on the constructionist view of Parker, who sees the linguistic similarity between these far areas as an unreliable piece of evidence for an ancient unique ethnic identity. When Thucydides, at the end of the fifth century BCE, accepts the idea of a kinship tie between the Boiotians and the Lesbians, he is working with the genealogical tree of Aiolos and with a view of the Greek world influenced by the ongoing war: kinship relationships are now more important and are particularly appreciated from this *external* point of view.¹⁴⁹²

This does not mean, however, that the Boiotians agreed with this picture and, more particularly, that they felt a connection with the Thessalians because they kept a historical memory of the migration. It may also have been the other way around, namely that, from

1491 See *supra* ad Aristophanes F 3 on the ambiguous expression, used by Istros (F 5 Berti), διὰ τὸ παρ’ Αἰολεῦσιν τὸ ὁμοιοητικὸν καὶ εἰρηνικὸν ὄμιλον λέγεσθαι.

1492 On the weight of these kinship ties in the Peloponnesian War, see Fragoulaki 2013: 101–39. It would be interesting to know more on the Lesbian reception of this motif, but the surviving materials of Lesbian local historiography do not allow us to make any statement on this subject (on these materials, see the observations by Thomas 2014b: 156 and n.34).

the synchronic realization of a continuum between the two regions, several traditions later developed, formed according to the mindset of the Classical Age. This process of emic ethnogenesis does not allow us to deny that an actual migration or movement of people between the regions occurred: as the same Parker (2008) acknowledges, a small number of people may have caused the diffusion of these phenomena.

One of the aims of the current study was to try to see what the interested parties claimed about their own past, before external and later sources reworked the original tradition. The idea of a specific relationship between Boiotia and Thessaly was already spreading, without the mention of Aiolos, centuries before the development, in Ahrens (1839), of an “Aiolic” dialect. According to a reading suggested by Huxley (1969: 93), already at the end of the sixth century BCE, a tradition described Boiotos, the eponym hero of the Boiotians, as the child of Melanippe, born in Thessaly. The scholar inferred this from the following fragment by the epic poet Asius (F 2 West, *GEF*):

καὶ Ἄσιον τὸν ποιητὴν φήσαντα ὅτι τὸν Βοιωτὸν Δίου ἐνὶ μεγάροις τέκεν
εὐεΐδῆς Μελανίππη.

The syntagm Δίου ἐνὶ μεγάροις refers to the union with Zeus, and, therefore, to Melanippe. This woman was the daughter of Aiolos and thus Hellen’s granddaughter, and her connection to the Aiolids implicitly associates the figure with the world of the Thessalian national characters (and with the Aiolian myths).¹⁴⁹³ Boiotos and Melanippe, however, sufficed to connect Boiotos with Thessaly, since Melanippe was also the daughter of Cheiron. This genealogy of Boiotos and the relevance of the Itonian cults, which claimed to be related to the Thessalian city of Iton, confirm Boiotian acknowledgement, at an early stage, of this mythic kinship between the Boiotians and the Thessalians: this is also corroborated by the relevance of the Thessalian Arne in the *Shield of Herakles*.¹⁴⁹⁴ The carefulness of Thucydides, when he recalls the origin of the Boiotians from Thessaly (1.12.2), may emanate from a historical tradition accepted in the region, despite the general view of an opposition between Boiotia and Thessaly.

1493 This scenario is considered likely by Larson (2007: 21), who still accepts Huxley’s reading. The translation of the fragment is therefore: “The poet Asios, then, says that ‘the comely Melanippe begot, in Zeus’ halls, Boiotus’.”

1494 On the role of the centre in this work, cp. Larson 2007: 50–2.

When Plutarch (*de Hdt. mal.* 33) attacks Herodotus' statement on the position of the Thessalians in favour of the Thebans after their final surrender at Thermopylai (Hdt. 7.233), Plutarch claims that this fact is impossible, ἐπιεικὲς δὲ καὶ φιλόανθρωπον οὐδέν, “in the complete absence of mild relationships [between Boiotians and Thessalians]”. This simplification obscures what we can gather from Boiotian local historiography, where Thessalian myths entered Boiotian local history without perceivable signs of resistance or rebuttal. Armenidas claims that the father of Boiotos, Itonos, was born in Thessaly (F 1). He also connects him with Amphiktyon and therefore with the amphiktyony of Anthela: in this instance, the relationship between the Boiotians and Thessalians facilitated the birth of a kinship tie that was so important to the Boiotians that it entered into their own national story. Itonos thus becomes the symbol of a tradition that links the regions, but also introduces the Thessalians in one of the most important cults of Archaic Boiotia, the Itonion of Koroneia, where the Boiotians possibly already celebrated national games.¹⁴⁹⁵ This complex process also justifies the idea that these ancient authors were dealing with an audience desperately looking for new memories and traditions that were easily invented.

Under these assumptions, it is also useful to reconsider another case where language apparently played a part in local memory. The Boiotians were united around regional festivals, like the *Homoloia*, which came from an “Aiolic” word, according to Istros (F 5 Berti). Despite the likely etymology and the scholarly suggestion that there was a physical movement of the same people behind the diffusion of the epithet, local historians of Boiotia offered completely parochial readings of the name of the festival: Aristophanes (F 3), in the early fourth century BCE, connected it with a Homoloia, whereas Aristodemos (*BNJ* 383 F 5a) linked it with the hero Homoloos, despite his awareness of a Thessalian Mount Homole (F5b).

Therefore, it would be inappropriate to claim that the Boiotians extensively and constantly accepted a kinship tie with the Aiolians and the Thessalians, once this was recognized for a specific reality, like that of Itonos (Armenidas F 1).¹⁴⁹⁶ As the same fragment by Armenidas on the Itonion shows, in Boiotia the awareness of, and at the same time the quest for, a

1495 “Trans-regional importance”: Beck – Ganter 2015: 135.

1496 Cp. Moretti 1962: 100. On this contest see the brief overview in the commentary on Armenidas' fragment (3.1.1) and Olivieri 2010–1.

belonging to the genealogic tree of Hellen *and* a more specific regional connection with Thessaly and the Aiolian world coexisted. Perhaps not by chance, Daimachos, in a different historical work, puts forth minor local Aiolian traditions. Assigning a mortal mother to Achilles (F 2), as in later Thessalian local historiography, or emphasizing the presence of the Mytilenenaen Pittakos among the Seven Wisemen (F 3: a variation rarely accepted), attests to how sensibility and cautiously Boiotian historiographers were when faced with different materials. Perhaps Pittakos was already part of a moment of Boiotians who were trying to use the Lesbian links of their Aiolian descent more extensively, but it is important to repeat that this never happened on a systematic basis and that every similarity did not bring about another one.

The consideration of the fragments dealing with Thessalian and Aiolian myths shows that local historiography was not a mere tool of patriotism, a blatant manifesto of nationality and localism, in complete ignorance of neighbouring regions and cultures. These *Boiotian Histories* tell us about how the Boiotians included Thessaly and other Aiolian peoples in their past. It was this sincere, or at least locally accepted, feeling that made the celebration and the success of festivals like the *Homoloia* or the *Panboiotia*, feasible. The Aiolian mirage is more the result of a contemporary debate than the genuine picture that emerges from the ancient Boiotian committal with all the traditions and materials that associated the region with the Thessalians.

6.1.4. Local History and the History of the Classical Period

Local historiography represents a specific expression of local culture: differently from other literary genres, it expressly deals with core moments of the local past. For this reason, whatever theme becomes part of the work has a direct connection with the present situation of the audience, which can be addressed directly in the case of those local historians who come from and belong to the same community (Armenidas, Aristophanes). It can also be seen indirectly, such as the case of those authors like Hellanikos, who focus on specific regions and recover the local traditions of each of these. For all these reasons, there is a contextual presentism behind the writing of local historiography, which makes every local historiography, in theory, a contemporary history. The local perspective which was advocated in the Introduction allows us to detect a relationship between the political evolution of the interested community and the development of local historiography:

“When the present and future were so uncertain, origins and one’s own polis could be more comforting, an area of familiar certainty. Origins would be even more useful and reassuring when the future posed real threats.”¹⁴⁹⁷

There are cases, nevertheless, where it is less easy to detect a specific relationship with the local audience, as has been done with other areas in a recent study.¹⁴⁹⁸ The present corpus contains fragments which almost always lack an indication of the original context, where the information quoted or alluded to was present in the original historical work. Moreover, while we can be relatively sure that Aristophanes (F 5) recorded the way in which Herodotus interacted with the Thebans, the anecdote does not prove anything concerning specific relationships between Boiotian historiographers and their public. As Douglas Olson was able to show by analyzing the fragments of the first book of Herodotus’ *Histories* quoted by Athenaeus (with or without the number of the book), a decontextualization of the fragments can be extremely deceiving, even for an author, Herodotus, who explicitly touches upon political, military, and historical events.¹⁴⁹⁹ As a result, we cannot dismiss the possibility that even the previously mentioned fragments on, say, the Homoloia (Aristophanes F 3) or on mythical figures like the Telchines (Armenidas F 7), may belong to a section mostly centered on contemporary events.¹⁵⁰⁰

Besides these fragments, however, there are instances where it is easier to make a case for an original evenemential setting, such as the attention Aristophanes gives in his *Theban Annals* (F 6) to the Theban officers and their role in the battle of Thermopylai. Plutarch’s polemical tone and the historical background of the Persian Wars must be kept in mind.¹⁵⁰¹ This sole indication on the identity of the Theban *strategos*, in fact, may be deceptive for the reconstruction of the general characteristics of the work; nonetheless, the transmitted title and this detail might actually indicate attention to central events in the Theban reworking of the national past in the fifth and in the fourth centuries. Local

1497 Thomas 2014a.

1498 Tober 2017.

1499 Douglas Olson 2015 (and see Dover 2000, on the quotes from Aristophanes’ *Frogs*); Lenfant (1999) analogously tried a similar experiment, with the quotes from Herodotus in other authors.

1500 At the same time, we should abandon the assumption that all the *Horoi* were structured through the annals and that these works could not consider mythical narrations (Thomas 2014b, *spec.* 156).

1501 See 4.6.3.

historians, like every historian, had to choose how and what to recollect; but recalling the name of a member of a family, Anaxander, whose descendants were alive and in the audience, was not a casual choice; it was the public duty of the local historian and the demand requires particular attention.¹⁵⁰²

A further potentially evident case is the obscure mention, in a fragment (4) of Armenidas, of the Thracian origin of Bibline wine, with the enumeration of the two centres where it was produced. A possible interpretation, as the one offered by Schachter for the *BNJ*, linked the mention of the area to an anecdote: a group of Theban captives once escaped their Thracian guardians, after letting them drink a strong wine. The story is well-known, and we have different settings, but none of the sources mention places as minor as the ones isolated by Armenidas. Since our re-evaluation of the linguistic evidence allows us to be free from the view that Armenidas “had” to live at the end of the fifth century BCE, we might move to a different scenario. It is not impossible that Armenidas was referring to the sea campaign of Epameinondas, an event whose relevance may have been downplayed by other contemporary sources. The interpretation of this fragment was profoundly influenced by the tradition, since it probably reached Athenaeus through an intermediate source on the most famous Greek winess.¹⁵⁰³ Even in such a catalogue, however, it is puzzling to read that Armenidas was so precise and punctual to remember not only the wine, in itself well-known from Hesiod on, but also the exact names of two centers which are relatively obscure.

The same author probably offers another glimpse on the internal Theban politics of the early fourth century, if we understand his collocation of the Isles of the Blessed on the Kadmeia¹⁵⁰⁴ as part of the mythical context on the place of sacred memories. Sparta and Thebes, during the years of the Spartan occupation of Thebes (382–79 BCE), fought over the identification of the spot where the mortal body of Alkmene was kept. Hypothetical as this understanding might look, an unbiased reading of the fragments of Armenidas does

1502 Cp. Hornblower 2000 on Herodotus’ and Thucydides’ use of personal names in their works. The study shows that historians may have different approaches towards the relevance of personal names and that Thucydides’ minor number of personal names (473 vs. Herodotus’ 940 people) does not mean that their mention is not significant.

1503 Wilamowitz 1884b; see however 3.4.1 on the criticisms of this view. On the Theban sea campaign, see Appendix 7.3.

1504 See 3.5.2.

not endorse their belonging to a mythico-antiquarian stage of local historiography, as if it is only in Aristophanes that an attention to contemporary history finds space.

Conversely, despite the fact that Daimachos engaged with the genre of continuous history directly following on Thucydides, we lack clear indications of a commitment to evenemential history. Still, we should consider that we only possess 4 fragments from this work and that, curiously, we know that in his *On Piety* (F 7) he offered an interesting detail concerning a comet that appeared in 468/7 BCE. It is particularly important to avoid an understanding of the fragments, in light of Daimachos' origins, for the real complexity of the picture of the Theban hegemony. Moreover, the fourth century is characterized by polycentrism, where the historical experience of Thebes is only one among many other regional expansions. Daimachos' F 1 on Aitolos, and his expulsion from Arcadia, might not refer to Epameinondas' support of the Achaians, but rather, to the kinship diplomacy between the Aitolians and the Eleans. The portrayal may derive from an anti-Elean stance in the years of war between the Arcadians and Eleans, which prompted a multilayered policy of mythic kinship and a revision of family trees.¹⁵⁰⁵ In the F 2 on Achilles, moreover, we understand a tendency to accept non-Boiotian traditions in a universal history, which was then open to external perspectives. Finally, we already mentioned the F 3 on Pittakos: this meagre description of the character would also be apropos in a contemplation of the complex history of Lesbos in the fourth century (even if the overlaid tradition on the Seven Wisemen should alert us to be prudent).

Direct references to contemporary history, in sum, are hard to single out, especially among local historiographers. Daimachos of Plataia is no exception and represents an important example of how different local traditions could coexist in a universal history. When we look more closely at local history in Boiotia, we are strongly limited by the fact that the sources ignored and diminished the value of any evenemential piece of information, which Armenidas or Aristophanes certainly gave. At the same time, we should be aware that both their versions and local reflections followed other traditional paths; for instance, there are some versions of the history of Boiotia generally unmentioned by Thucydides or Xenophon, but cursorily quoted by Diodorus and Plutarch. The origin of this material is

1505 Cp. 5.2.3.

generally defined as “local” and, particularly in the case of Diodorus, special attention is paid to his use of Ephoros.

Different approaches have been followed to combine the narratives of Thucydides and Diodorus: this is not the place to rediscuss a topic which can only be addressed on a case-by-case basis, but a “Boiotian” example might suffice for us to understand what kind of material was in the lost histories of Armenidas and Aristophanes. Both Thucydides and Diodorus relate, in different ways, the participation of the Boiotians in the Peloponnesian War: the contradictions between their narratives can be so strong that those who refuse to combine them or to accept their different focuses must choose one source over the other, regardless of the basis of their chronological distance. “If a thing is rubbish, it is rubbish, and little can be served by dredging through it in the hopes of discovering a speck of gold among the dross.”¹⁵⁰⁶

However, nowadays, Diodorus is better understood in relation to his own agenda and to his specific historiographical method. Even his main source, Ephoros, has been the object of further studies, and Daimachos’ T 1, with the list of three contemporary historians used by Ephoros (Daimachos, Kallisthenes, and Anaximenes), should warn us against a simplistic reading of Ephoros.¹⁵⁰⁷ In particular, the different ways in which Diodorus (12.69–70) and Thucydides (4.76–7; 89–101) record the battle of Delion of 424 have led to the general conclusion that Diodorus must have used other sources on this event. Diodorus’ mention of ἡνίοχοι καὶ παραβάται (12.70.1) has elicited a countless number of studies on the military composition of the Boiotian army on that occasion and on the meaning of this Homeric expression, which could refer to an elite corps.¹⁵⁰⁸ Other scholars have turned to the parallels between Diodorus’ narrative of the battle and a passage of Euripides’ *Suppliants* (650–725), which may represent an analogous, contemporary source of this fight.¹⁵⁰⁹ An unnoticed difference between Thucydides and Diodorus lies in the mention, in Diodorus (12.70.5), of a specific institution established after the victory of the Boiotians:

1506 Buck 1989: 92.

1507 Cp. at least Sacks 1990 and Clarke 2008.

1508 See most recently Brambilla 2015 for a detailed study on this topic.

1509 Not every scholar of Euripides, however, agrees with this parallel: see the discussions by Sordi 1995c and Toher 2001.

“[T]he multitude of the slain was so great that from the proceeds of the booty the Thebans not only constructed the great colonnade in their market-place but also embellished it with bronze statues, and their temples and the colonnades in the market-place they covered with bronze by the armour from the booty which they nailed to them; furthermore, it was with this money that they instituted the festival called Delia” (tr. W. Oldfather).

This witness forces us to face a number of problems because the Delia are not recorded on inscriptions before the end of the third century BCE, making previous indications extremely doubtful. In particular, scholars doubt that the festival was established on this occasion and have suggested that Diodorus simply offers a convenient aition of foundation.¹⁵¹⁰

We have more information on the Delion as a sanctuary and on its relative topography: while Herodotus (6.118), in the fifth century BCE, located the Delion in the Theban area, from Thucydides (4.76.4) on, the Delion is considered to be in Tanagra.¹⁵¹¹ This different status is in line with what we know about the actual organization of the festival: while the Thebans, in fact, might have established the contest, a fundamental role was played by Tanagra in the later management of this pan-Boiotian festival during the Hellenistic period.¹⁵¹² In fact, it could be argued that Diodorus solely ascribed to the Thebans a Boiotian institution on the basis of the (later) hegemonic stance of Thebes.

We therefore have a clear indication of a tradition that linked an important battle of the fifth century BCE to a later festival, which may have already been celebrated during the fourth century. Its institution, according to Diodorus, was facilitated by the use of the booty gained at Delion, which might indicate federal commitment rather than Theban appropriation of a common resource. On the other hand, already at the end of the fifth century, the Delion was located in the Tanagran area: despite the pan-Boiotian resonance

1510 Cp. e.g. Grigsby 2017: 100-1.

1511 On the poor knowledge of the festival before the third century BCE, see Brélaz – Andreiomenou – Ducrey 2007: 285-7.

1512 “Il semble, du moins, que la cité de Tanagra ait joué un rôle important dans le développement des Delia au cours de l’époque hellénistique, qui – à l’instar des Ptôia d’Akraiphia – revêtirent une dimension pan-béotienne, peut-être en souvenir de la victoire commune remportée sur les Athéniens en 424” (Brélaz – Andreiomenou – Ducrey 2007: 286).

of the victory, a new regional institution was placed in an area which changed its status in favour of the Tanagrans instead of the Thebans.

All this may lead to the strong suspicion that Diodorus was echoing a pro-Tanagran tradition, as the later evolution of the Delia had an inescapable “Tanagran colour” to a reader of the first century BCE. This aition may have developed at any moment between 424 BCE and Diodorus’ lifespan; however, by accepting the common ground between Diodorus and Euripides, or, in general, between Diodorus and source X on the Peloponnesian War, it is more likely that the detail of the foundation of the Delia was already in the main storyline of the source.

There is then a strong possibility that this story relating the foundation of the Delia derived from a very old tradition, despite the (current) absence of clear indications that the Delia was celebrated during the fourth century BCE. In any case, even if we refuse to postulate the existence of the festival in the absence of epigraphic evidence, we would have to admit that, after Aristophanes and Daimachos of Plataia, another local historian recorded this recent event of Boiotian history and specified what still mattered in the everyday life of that memory. This is the kind of contemporary history that local historians offered and that has been made anonymous by the paths of textual tradition. The deluge of Boiotian historiography also meant the anonymous character of these traditions, which were not always a mere narrativization of the identity of place.