



Summer 2022

In Search of the Pelasgians: Discursive Strategies and Greek Identities from the Archaic Period to the Roman Imperial Era

Tristn Lambright
tlambright@stu.jsu.edu

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THESIS APPROVAL

Candidate: Tristn D. Lambright


Major:: History

Thesis Title: In Search of the Pelasgians: Discursive Strategies and Greek Identities from the Archaic Period to the Roman Imperial Era

Approval:

Yuliya Minets
Professor of History
Major Professor

Russel Lemmons
Distinguished Professor of History

Gordon Harvey
Distinguished Professor of History

Channing R. Ford
Dean, Graduate Studies

IN SEARCH OF THE PELASGIANS:
DISCURSIVE STRATEGIES AND GREEK IDENTITIES FROM THE ARCHAIC PERIOD
TO THE ROMAN IMPERIAL ERA

A Thesis Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty
of Jacksonville State University
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts
with a Major in History

By

Tristn D. Lambright

Jacksonville, Alabama

5 August 2022

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Tristn D. Lambright August 5, 2022

ABSTRACT

In ancient literature, the Pelasgians appear as an ambiguously defined and geographically ubiquitous primeval ethnic group or tribe. Various classical writers describe the Pelasgians as simultaneously pre-Hellenic and non-Hellenic — ancestral and barbarian, chronologically earlier and essentially different. The ongoing ideological and rhetorical negotiations of Pelasgian identity in ancient literature played a critical role in discussions of Greekness — discussions rooted in the distant past, informed by fluid and contradictory myths, and shaped by intellectual, social, and political transformations of the period. By contextualizing these discussions, this study attempts not simply a reconstruction of the mythological Pelasgians, but a reconstruction of the intellectual, social, and political tensions that shaped discourse on the Pelasgians in antiquity. The proposed study focuses on the discursive constructions of Pelasgian identity attested in Greek literature from the Archaic (Homer, eighth century BCE) to Roman periods (Pseudo-Apollodorus, second century CE), and explores the specific strategies utilized and the goals achieved by ancient writers in their speculations about Pelasgians. This study intends to demonstrate the rhetorical and ideological significance of various “Pelasgian theories” utilized in ancient discourses for the construction and expression of Greek identity. It also addresses the fundamental issues of ancient cultures such as autochthony and otherness; Greekness and barbarism; narrative representations of identity; and the relationship between myth, literature, and identity.

vi., 117 PAGES

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Introduction

In 1879, Vasa Efendi (1825–1892), one of the key figures of the Albanian National Awakening, published a pivotal, if not provocative, book *The Truth on Albania and Albanians: Historical and Critical Issues*. In this publication, Vasa asserted that “the Epirotes, the Macedonians, and the Illyrians... [are] of pure Pelasgic race whom foreigners in modern times have designated Albanians,” and who “united themselves under one patriotic idea and in the fifteenth century put up the most decisive resistance to the Ottoman domination.” Further, Vasa asserted that “the Epirotes were distinct from the Hellenic people; that they had always had their own language, that of the ancient Pelasgi, incomprehensible to the Greeks but spoken today in Epirus, Macedonia, Illyria...the same language which is called Albanian or *Shqyptâre*.”¹

The moment could not have been more dramatic for such a manifesto. The Russian empire had just won the Russo-Turkish war (1877–78) and actively supported the Romanians’ and Balkan Slavs’ calls for independence. The Greeks, whose independent kingdom (since 1832) comprised the Peloponnese and central Greece, insisted on expansion further north. In this situation, Vasa’s task was an urgent and formidable one: to carve out a place for his own nation amid multiple competing nationalistic and imperial discourses. Yet Vasa’s vision of an Albanian nation free from Ottoman, Greek, or Slavic control and inhabited by “pure” Albanian descendants of the primeval Pelasgians is a curious one. By the late nineteenth century there was nothing new about using various pseudo-historical founding figures and groups to legitimize nationalistic sentiments and justify territorial claims.² What is striking, however, are the clear parallels between the way

1. Vasa Efendi, *The Truth on Albania and the Albanians: Historical and Critical Issues* (London: Centre for Albanian Studies, [1879], 1999): 58; 8–9, quoted in Michal Kopeček, *Late Enlightenment: Emergence of the Modern “National Idea”* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006), 122. On Vasa Efendi, see also: Uğur Bahadır Bayraktar, “Mythifying the Albanians: A Historiographical Discussion on Vasa Efendi’s *Albania and the Albanians*,” *Balkanologie* 13.1–2 (2011). <https://doi.org/10.4000/balkanologie.2272>

2. Benedict R. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006); John Coakley, “Mobilizing the Past: Nationalist Images of History,” *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*

in which the Pelasgians became instrumentalized for the purposes of the Albanian National Awakening and the similarly manipulative treatment the Pelasgians received in ancient Greek discourses.

Who were the ancient Pelasgians, and did they actually exist? We may never be able to answer these questions with any degree of certainty. For one, historians have long dismissed the Pelasgian-Albanian link espoused by Vasa. Rather than seeking to recover the “actual” Pelasgians in history, however, we plan to investigate how the Pelasgians, whoever they may have been, appeared in ancient Greek literature, and more importantly, how Greek writers activated and utilized this ethnic group in their speculations about Greek, semi-Greek, and non-Greek identities. These speculations reveal much more information about the intellectual climate and identity-building processes familiar to classical writers than about the pre-historic past. This inquiry into the enduring ambiguity and utility of the Pelasgians in antiquity provides important clues about the intellectual, social, and political concerns and tensions of the ancient world.

My project belongs to the interdisciplinary area at the intersection of intellectual and social history, Classics, and the Study of the Ancient Mediterranean. It explores the fundamental issues of cultural anthropology such as identity and its changes. It focuses on the interplay between reality and its representations in narratives. My primary goal is to investigate how Pelasgian identity was discursively constructed in Greek antiquity and how these constructions evolved over time depending on ever-changing political contexts as well as the goals and strategies of specific classical writers. The ultimate questions I would like to raise are:

- How were the Pelasgians defined and described by classical writers, from Homer (eighth

10.4 (2004), 531–560; John Connelly, *From Peoples into Nations: A History of Eastern Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020). For nineteenth-century examples, see: Karl Otfried Muller, *Die Dorier* (Breslau: Josef Max und Komf, 1824) and Johann Georg von Hahn, *Sind Die Albanesen Autochthonen?* (Jena: F. Mauko, 1854).

century BCE) to Pseudo-Apollodorus (c. second century CE) and what changes did these descriptions and definitions undergo over time?

- What contemporaneous intellectual, social, and political concerns and tensions motivated ancient writers to resort to stories about the ancient tribe of Pelasgians, and how did these concerns shape their accounts of Pelasgians?
- What rhetorical and ideological functions did the “Pelasgians” perform in the writings of different ancient authors (i.e., what ideas they helped promote; what sentiments they channeled; what opportunities they explored; what goals they achieved; what strategies they reveal)?
- What do ancient Greek speculations about the Pelasgians reveal about their context-specific and dynamically changing ideas of “Greekness?”

WHO WERE THE PELASGIANS?

In ancient literature, the Pelasgians appear as an ambiguously defined and geographically ubiquitous primeval ethnic group or tribe. There are no historical accounts which speak on behalf of the Pelasgians to provide an emic definition of their identity (i.e., a view from within, explaining “who *we* are”). Instead, all existing sources present an etic perspective – a view from outside, grappling with the question “who are *they*?”

No one seems to agree either about the Pelasgians’ home territory or about their identity. Homer (eighth century BCE), the earliest Greek writer, locates them at Larissa, either in Thessaly (Central Greece) or in the Troad region (northwestern Asia Minor), and casts them as ancient “pre-Achaean” allies of the Trojans.³ His younger contemporary Hesiod (c. 750–650

3. Homer, *Iliad* 2.840; J. L. Myres, “A History of the Pelasgian Theory,” *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 27 (1907): 181, <https://doi.org/10.2307/624440>; Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood, “Herodotus (and Others) on Pelasgians: Some

BCE) places the Pelasgians in several different locations – Crete, the large island just off the southern coast of Greece; Dodona, an important religious sanctuary in northwestern Greece; and Arcadia, the region in the central Peloponnese.⁴ The great historian Herodotus (c. 484–430 BCE), writing two and a half centuries later, locates the Pelasgians in Samothrace and Lemnos (both are large islands in the northern Aegean), and in Achaia (the northern Peloponnese). The geographer Strabo, living in a much later period (c. 63 BCE–21 CE), describes the Pelasgians as a race historically “spread throughout the whole of Greece.”⁵ These ubiquitous Pelasgian links to certain territories throughout the ancient Greek world, however, depended largely on mythological stories about Pelasgian origins and their subsequent migrations.⁶

In antiquity, the question of where someone or something came from was ultimately a question of identity; etymology was often mistaken for ontology. Pelasgians were not an exception to this rule. Ancient Greek stories about Pelasgian origins reflect conscious attempts to define who the Pelasgians were and how they related to the historical Greeks. The fluidity of Pelasgian identity attested in Greek literature, however, reflects a fundamental duality that not only mirrors a “Greek vs. barbarian” dichotomy, but also exceeds and even subverts it. The “Greek vs. barbarian” dichotomy is self-sufficient, enduring, and omnipresent in classical discourse. What makes the Pelasgians unique is that they occasionally appeared on different sides of this fundamental divide or existed beyond these categories altogether. Various writers described the Pelasgians as simultaneously “pre-Hellenic” and “non-Hellenic” – ancestral and

Perceptions of Ethnicity,” in *Herodotus and his World: Essays from a Conference in Memory of George Forrest*, ed. Peter Derow and Robert Parker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 109.

4. Jeremy McInerney, “Pelasgians and Leleges: Using the Past to Understand the Present,” in *Valuing the Past in the Greco-Roman World: Proceedings from the Penn-Leiden Colloquia on Ancient Values VII*, ed. Christoph Pieper and James Ker (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 28.

5. Strabo, *Geography* 5.2.4, tr. Horace Leonard Jones, Loeb Classical Library 50 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1923); McInerney, “Pelasgians and Leleges,” 31.

6. Sourvinou-Inwood, “Herodotus (and Others),” 108.

barbarian, chronologically primeval and essentially different. This fluidity and duality of Pelasgian identity allowed ancient writers to cast the Pelasgians as both primeval Greek ancestors and barbarian Greek rivals – vertical predecessors and horizontal “Others.”⁷ Greek writers relied heavily on this dual characterization to define not only the Pelasgians, but also the boundaries of “Greekness” in relationship to the Pelasgians.

Different writers in different periods, however, alternately prioritized the ancestral and barbarian features of this duality. Moreover, ancient writers continuously modified and adjusted their constructions of Pelasgians according to ever-changing cultural contexts and the specific agendas these contexts informed. As non-Greeks, the Pelasgians appeared as early as Homer’s *Iliad*. In a striking episode, the Achaean Ajax slays the Trojan Hippothous, the “glorious son of Pelasgian Lethus” in the violent struggle for Patroclus’ corpse.⁸ The Pelasgians’ role in this confrontation provides an early and dramatic attestation to their place within the Greek–barbarian dichotomy: since they fight in the ranks of the Trojan army, they are positioned firmly in opposition to “Greekness”. This “oppositional” construction of identity features prominently in narratives in which disparate ethnic groups seek to demonstrate their fundamental distinctions and conflicts by placing themselves, literally or figuratively, opposite one another. The Pelasgians were thus instrumentalized in ancient narratives to perform the function of the “Other” against which the Greek “Self” was defined. This function became an important feature of post-Homeric speculations regarding Pelasgian identity.

In Greek discourse, however, this function is by no means unique to the Pelasgians. Herodotus defined the Greeks against the Persians; likewise, in Thucydides, the Spartans play a

7. McInerney, “Pelasgians and Leleges,” 42.

8. Homer, *Iliad* 17.285-305, in *The Iliad*, 2 vols., tr. A. T. Murray, ed. William F. Wyatt, Loeb Classical Library 170–171 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1924).

similar role in relationship to the Athenians. It is the alternative construction of the Pelasgians, namely, the one that features the Pelasgians as ancestral, even autochthonous, that makes them unique. Indeed, this ancestral, autochthonous construction imbues the Pelasgians with dynamic foundational characteristics distinct from those of the Spartans or Persians. For those ancient Greeks to whom the concept of autochthony – αὐτόχθων, “having the same land” or “being sprung from the earth itself” – played a key role in their self-definition (primarily Athenians, Boeotians, and some Peloponnesians), this link to the ancestral Pelasgians was important. According to the *Library* of Pseudo-Apollodorus, a compilation of Greek mythological stories dated to the first or second centuries CE, Hesiod was the first to describe the eponymous Pelasgus, father of Arcadian cultural hero Lycaon, as an autochthonous “son of the soil.”⁹ This later reference to the lost passage of Hesiod is congruent with the information provided by Asius of Samos (sixth century BCE) in a fragment quoted by Greek geographer Pausanias (110–180 CE). Asius describes the foundational hero of the Greek ethnic groups as “godlike Pelasgus ...[whom the] black earth gave up.”¹⁰ Herodotus echoes this myth of Pelasgian autochthony in the *Histories*, tracing Athenian descent from the autochthonous Pelasgians by way of the Ionians.¹¹ For sixth- and fifth-century Athenians, however, this myth of Pelasgian–Ionian descent appeared to undermine their claims to primacy via their autochthonous status in the Mediterranean, eliding them undesirably with habitants of Ionian settlements along the Anatolian coast. The Athenian counter-tradition of the time therefore once again started to prioritize discourse positing the Pelasgians as non-Greeks. According to this tradition, the Pelasgians

9. Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 2.1.1, 3.8.1, in *Apollodorus: The Library*, vol. 1, *Books 1–3.9*, tr. James George Frazer, Loeb Classical Library 121 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1921).

10. Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 8.1.4–5, tr. W. H. S. Jones, Loeb Classical Library 272 (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1918–1935).

11. Herodotus, *Histories*, 1.56.2; 8.44.2.

appear as non-Greek migrants expelled from Attica in early Athenian history for treachery, thus rendering the Athenians the rightful indigenous inhabitants of Attica.¹²

These examples provide just a single illustration of one of the most important premises of this study, namely, that speculations about Pelasgian identity, in all their varieties, played a critical role in classical discussions of Greek identity – discussions rooted in the distant past, informed by fluid and contradictory myths, and shaped by various intellectual, social, and political transformations of the period. Our task is to contextualize various references to the Pelasgians and implicit and explicit statements about their identity in Greek sources. The essential duality and fluidity of these descriptions provide a dynamic framework in which to explore the goals and strategies of specific writers.

Any possible historically authentic information about the “actual Pelasgians” that may have constituted an initial core of these discussions had almost certainly been reshaped to suit the preferences and sensibilities of the Archaic and Classical eras.¹³ This reshaping renders the “actual Pelasgians,” whoever they might have been, effectively inaccessible to modern historians. By contrast, through contextualizing the ever-changing modifications of earlier mythological accounts, we can attempt not simply a reconstruction of the “mythological Pelasgians,” but a reconstruction of the intellectual, social, and political tensions that ultimately shaped discourse on the Pelasgians in ancient Greek literature.

PREVIOUS SCHOLARSHIP

While there has been a recent increase in scholarly interest in discursive constructions of ancient identity, no attempt has been made to carry out such an integrated study of the

12. Herodotus, *Histories* 6.137.3-4.

13. Sourvinou-Inwood, “Herodotus (and Others),” 108.

intellectual, social, and political concerns and tensions of the ancient Greek world that shaped discourse on Pelasgians in a broad chronological perspective, from the Archaic to Roman periods. My research builds upon the fundamental contributions of J. L. Myres (1907), J. A. R. Munro (1934), Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood (2010), and Jeremy McInerney (2014), which outline the main characteristics of Pelasgian identity and its changes over time. I would like to continue the work of these scholars, but switch attention from the descriptive study of the Pelasgians in major Classical writers to an integrated analysis of the intellectual, social, and political contexts within which Archaic to late Roman authors negotiated Pelasgian identity. This analysis will thus touch upon the fundamental issues of ancient culture such as autochthony and otherness; Greekness and barbarism; narrative representations of identity; and the relationship between myth, literature, and identity.

Only a few previous studies have centered on discursive constructions of Pelasgian identity. J. L. Myres' *A History of the Pelasgian Theory* provides what is essentially a genealogy of the Pelasgians in ancient literature by chronologically arranging references to the Pelasgians from Homer to Herodotus. Importantly, Myres explores the enduring fluidity of Pelasgian identity by making a distinction between “substantival” and “adjectival” references to the Pelasgians.¹⁴ “Substantival” references to Pelasgians suggest the existence of an “actual” Pelasgian people located in different territories throughout the Greek world. By contrast, “adjectival” references featuring “Pelasgian” in the attributive position — e.g., “Pelasgian Argos”¹⁵ and “Pelasgian Zeus,”¹⁶ — indicate a connotative conception of the Pelasgians beyond their actuality, suggesting instead that the term “Pelasgian” is generally synonymous with “pre-

14. Myres, “History of the Pelasgian Theory,” 172.

15. Homer, *Iliad* 2.680-5.

16. Homer, *Iliad* 16.233-5.

Achaean” or “non-Achaean,” and therefore barbarian. According to Myres, this dual-usage indicates a burgeoning antithesis or opposition between the Achaeans and the Pelasgians in the Panhellenic conflict of the Trojan War (which Myres fails to date, relegating the conflict to the realm of myth).¹⁷ The conceptual fluidity of the Pelasgians as alternately actual and figurative, pre-Achaean and non-Achaean demonstrates the ambiguous role they played as simultaneously ancestral and barbarian elements in ancient Hellenic discourses.

J. A. R. Munro’s *Pelasgian and Ionians* is a study of the Pelasgians that explores the link between the autochthonous Pelasgians and the Athenians via the Ionians.¹⁸ More recent works such as *Herotodos (and Others) on Pelasgians: Some Perceptions of Ethnicity* by Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood and *Pelasgians and Leleges: Using the Past to Understand the Present* by Jeremy McInerney further clarify this Pelasgian-Athenian link by contextualizing mythological references attested in Herodotus. McInerney, for example, focuses in part on mythical stories about the origins of the so-called “Pelasgian walls” – Bronze Age walls constructed in Athens below the Acropolis to enclose a sacred region known as the Pelargicon.¹⁹ For the Athenians, the Pelasgian walls stood as a physical testament to their triumph over Pelasgian rivals whom they expelled from Attica.

Sourvinou-Inwood elaborates upon a similar set of mythological stories about the Pelasgians, but places them in a different geographical context. In the myth of Cyzicus attested in fragments from ancient Greek historian Ephorus of Cyme (c. 400–330 BCE), the Pelasgians clash with the Argonauts in revenge for their expulsion from Thessaly by the Aeolians, an event

17. Myres, “History of the Pelasgian Theory,” 182.

18. J. A. R. Munro, “Pelasgians and Ionians,” *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 54.2 (1934) <https://doi.org/10.2307/626855>.

19. McInerney, “Pelasgians and Leleges,” 35.

parallel to the expulsion-revenge narrative of Athenian myths.²⁰ Yet the fluidity and duality of Pelasgian identity in mythology allowed for both positive and negative treatment of the Pelasgians. The myth of Pelasgus, for example, reported by the second-century CE Greek geographer Pausanias, casts him as a culture hero unmatched in “stature and in prowess, in beauty and in wisdom.”²¹ Moreover, the version of the Pelasgian expulsion from Attica found in a fragment from historian Hecataeus of Miletus (c. 550 BCE–c. 476 BCE) recorded in Herodotus’ *Histories* holds that it was Athenian jealousy that prompted the confrontation between the Pelasgians and Athenians and that the expulsion of the Pelasgians was unjust.²² Sourvinou-Inwood also parses Herodotus’ fluid characterization of the Pelasgians as alternately Greek and barbarian and discusses two “types” of Pelasgians: (1) those Pelasgians, such as the Athenians, who had become Greek, and (2) those Pelasgians who had not become Greek and were distinct from the Athenians and other Greeks. This Pelasgian “double ethnicity” attested in Herodotus parallels the “dual usage” of the Pelasgians in Homer, but critically “destabilizes” the strict conceptual boundaries between Greek and non-Greek by allowing for a degree of movement and hybridity between the Greek Athenians and the barbarian Pelasgians across these boundaries.²³

The complex discursive strategies inherent to the ancient dealings with ethnic identity, including the Pelasgians, are outlined in Jonathan Hall’s seminal *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity*. In this book, Hall emphasizes literature as the primary “discursive channel” through which identity is “actively proclaimed, reclaimed, and declaimed.”²⁴ The phenomenon of

20. *Scholia on Apollonios of Rhodes’ Argonautica* 1.1037, in *Jacoby Online*, ed. Ian Worthington, Stefan Schorn, Hans-Joachim Gehrke, Felix K. Maier, Veronica Bucciattini (Leiden: Brill, 2007), <https://scholarlyeditions.brill.com/bnjo/>; Sourvinou-Inwood, “Herodotus (and Others),” 135.

21. Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 8.1.4–5; Sourvinou-Inwood, “Herodotus (and Others),” 135.

22. Herodotus, *Histories* 6.137.1; Sourvinou-Inwood, “Herodotus (and Others),” 136.

23. Sourvinou-Inwood, “Herodotus (and Others),” 140.

24. Jonathan Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 182.

Pelasgian alterity or otherness played a central role in ancient discussions of “Greekness”. Yet the fluidity and duality of Pelasgian identity allowed Greek writers to instrumentalize the Pelasgians in narratives of descent as well as narratives of barbarian opposition.

Lastly, Josephine Quinn’s book *In Search of the Phoenicians* is important methodologically as a successful example of a study exploring discursive constructions of ethnic identity in antiquity.²⁵ The book focuses on the Phoenicians, not the Pelasgians, but the methodological approach it promotes can be applied to other ethnic groups throughout the ancient world. Moreover, Quinn analyzes how the Phoenicians were instrumentalized in modern nationalist discourses. The Pelasgians, as we have seen, faced a similar fate in their instrumentalization by champions of the Albanian National Awakening. Quinn identifies intellectual, social, and political concerns that ultimately made the ancient Phoenicians relevant to modern discussions about identities. Her approach thus provides a much-needed methodological framework for any attempt to correlate the discursive constructions of Pelasgian identity in narratives of ancient writers with their contemporaneous contexts as well as their rhetorical and ideological goals and strategies.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE PRESENT WORK

The structure of the work reflects the major focal points of the discussion. It will consist of an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, and a bibliography. The chapters are organized mostly chronologically while allowing room for different thematic strands to be explored in individual sections.

25. Josephine Crawley Quinn, *In Search of the Phoenicians* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017).

The current introduction provides the initial information about the proposed study, its purpose, goals, and research questions; its subject matter and the methodological approach; its geographical and chronological scope; and the overview of primary sources and secondary literature.

The first chapter will focus on the Greek writers of the archaic period, from the epic poets Homer in the eighth century and Hesiod in the seventh century to the sixth-century logographers Hecataeus and Acusilaus and the lyric poet Asiaticus whose works are preserved mostly in fragments. Homer depicts the Pelasgians as primeval allies of the Trojans. Given the importance of Homer as a foundational figure in ancient Greek literature, this chapter will inquire into why he describes the Pelasgians the way that he does and how later writers adopted, modified, and more consistently utilized this initial discursive set-up in the seventh and sixth centuries BCE. This chapter will also examine and contextualize the distinct Pelasgian genealogies in Homer and Hesiod to which later writers cleave for their constructions of Pelasgian and Greek identity.

The second chapter will explore descriptions of the Pelasgians in fifth-century BCE narratives. The primary sources for this chapter fall into two major categories – first, historical works by Herodotus, Thucydides, and a less known but equally important scholar Hellanicus of Lesbos; and second, dramatic compositions by three famous playwrights of the time – Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. This chapter will first consider the discursive construction of the Pelasgians as both autochthonous and barbarian in historical narratives, then our analysis will turn to the dramatic elaboration of these concepts in works of Greek tragedy. The historical events of this period that constitute an indispensable backdrop against which we will analyze the processes of negotiation of Pelasgian identity include: (1) the Greco-Persian wars (499–479 BCE); (2) the rise of Athens and its development into a regional imperial power which led to

growing hostilities between Athens and its allies (mostly Ionians); and (3) the increasing tensions between Athens and Sparta that culminated in the devastating Peloponnesian War (431–404 BCE). All these historical transformations influenced the implicit and explicit statements about Pelasgians in primary sources dated to this period. For example, when there was a need to promote the idea that Athenians were distinct from and superior to their Ionian allies, Athenian-based writers and their sympathizers rejected the link between the Pelasgian-Ionians and the Athenians. By contrast, during the conflict between Athens and Sparta, ancient writers articulated Athenian and Spartan antagonism and by emphasizing the groups' descent from different ancient Greek tribes – the former from the Pelasgian-Ionians, and the latter from the Hellenic-Dorians. In the context of the Greco-Persian wars and post-war enmity, moreover, the Persians were treated as the paradigmatic Other, the antipode of *all* Greeks, and the Trojans often served as a proxy for the Persians in literary compositions of the time. The Homeric remark on Pelasgians being allies of Trojans metaphorically transitions them to being pro-Persian and anti-Greek in the present conflict. Pelasgians were thus utilized in fifth-century sources to bolster important ideological claims and to express various affinities, hostilities, and anxieties as the need arose.

The third chapter will examine the developments and innovations introduced by Hellenistic and Roman writers who continued to explore the rhetorical and ideological possibilities of utilizing Pelasgians in their narratives. The Hellenistic era (323 BCE–31 BCE) witnessed further elaborations of Pelasgian identity in Apollonius of Rhodes, the famous author of the epic poem *Argonautica* based on mythological stories about Jason's adventures. An important elaboration here was the assumed connection between the Pelasgians, the Aborigine

inhabitants of Italy, and the Tyrrhenians,²⁶ a non-Greek people traditionally located in Italy. Remarks on the link between the Pelasgians and Tyrrhenians explicitly articulated by Hellanicus of Lesbos, a fifth-century elder contemporary of Herodotus, appear also in Myrsilus of Methymna, a third-century BCE writer referenced by Strabo.²⁷ The increasing interest in peoples and ethnic groups other than those inhabiting Greece and the attempts to accommodate them in a holistic picture of the universe may reflect a dramatic expansion of the Greek cultural horizons and their increasing interactions with foreigners in the Hellenistic era ushered by the conquests of Alexander the Great. The Roman era writers, from the late first century BCE to second century CE, — Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Strabo, Pausanias, and Pseudo-Apollodorus — came from different locations and cultural backgrounds. This chapter will analyze how Pelasgians started to appear in the Roman tradition and how ancient writers further promoted the idea of the Pelasgians connection to Italy and the Aborigines in Roman imperial discourses.

Finally, the conclusion will summarize the content of the work and contextualize its ideas in a broader historical and cultural perspective. Throughout this inquiry, we will attempt to identify specific strategies utilized and the goals achieved by ancient writers in their speculations about Pelasgians.

NOTE ON PRIMARY SOURCES

This study will analyze primary sources from Homer in the eighth century BCE to Pseudo-Apollodorus in the second century CE (see the detailed discussion in the section “Structure of the Present Work” above). Full translations of classical works such as Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Herodotus’ and Thucydides’ *Histories*, as well as works by Dionysius of

26. Herodotus, *Histories* 1.57; Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War* 4.109.

27. Strabo, *Geography* 5.2.4.

Halicarnassus, Strabo, Pausanias, and Pseudo-Apollodorus, are available online through Tufts University's Perseus Digital Library and in printed series such as the Landmark Ancient Histories; these works are also available in their original languages via publications of the Loeb Classical Library. Fragmentary or lesser-known works, such as fragments of Hecataeus and Hellanicus are accessible in online databases in their original Greek or Latin.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In historical accounts, ethnic groups appeared as alternately actual and mythical, essentially fixed and rhetorically malleable. For ancient historians, attempts to define and redefine the real and perceived boundaries of ethnic groups remained an ongoing project of negotiation. For modern scholars, however, the task is to reconstruct ancient historians' ideas, and by contextualizing them, draw conclusions about their underlying agendas.

The study of ancient ethnic categories requires the analysis of the social and political contexts in which they appeared. To explore speculations on group identity in antiquity is ultimately to trace the trajectory of broader cultural projects shaped by major historical transformations. The ongoing ideological and rhetorical negotiations of identity played an important cultural function; namely, they helped to articulate perceived ethnic divisions and to define in-groups and out-groups. To meaningfully analyze such negotiations, the study of the Pelasgians should focus not simply on “‘Who were [the Pelasgians],’ but rather ‘What were their functions?’”²⁸

28. McInerney, “Pelasgians and Leleges,” 34.

Chapter 1: Pelasgians in Greek Literature of the Archaic Period

For the ancient Greeks, the tracing of historical identity began in the crush and fury of an interminable war. In Homer's *Iliad*, the “well-greaved” (ἐϋκνήμιδας) Achaeans, united and armed against the “war-loving” Trojans (φιλοπτολέμοισιν), resolve in the final year of battle to march forward and destroy the gilded city of Troy.²⁹ In the midst of this pivotal conflict, Homer lists the ranks of the Greek forces in a series of descriptions known as the Catalogue of Ships. Among those valiant “sons of the Achaeans” listed in Homer's Catalogue stand the Boeotians, the Athenians, and the Lacedaemonians, as well as soldiers of a contingent from the region of “Pelasgian Argos,” (Πελασγικὸν Ἄργος) captained by ill-fated Achilles and poised opposite the spear-wielding, Trojan-allied “tribes of the Pelasgi” (φῦλα Πελασγῶν).³⁰

This chapter will focus on references to the Pelasgians in the works of Greek writers of the archaic period, from the epic poets Homer in the eighth century and Hesiod in the seventh century to the sixth-century writers Acusilaus of Argos and Hecataeus of Miletus, and the sixth century lyric poet Asius of Samos, whose works are preserved mostly in fragments. Homer depicts the Pelasgians as both primeval allies of the Trojans and “divine” neighbors of the Cretan Achaeans, linked in Greek memory to the ancient plains of Thessaly and Epirus. Given the importance of Homer as a foundational figure in ancient Greek literature, this inquiry will attempt to explain why he describes the Pelasgians in the way he does and how later writers adopted, modified, and more consistently utilized this initial discursive set-up in the seventh and sixth centuries BCE. This chapter will also examine and contextualize distinct Pelasgian genealogies in Homer, Hesiod, and Acusilaus on which later writers rely for their constructions of Pelasgian and Greek identity.

29. Homer, *Iliad* 1.13, 16.74.90; 1.8.15; 16.90, tr. Murray.

30. Homer, *Iliad* 1.235; 2.680–5, tr. Murray.

1.1.1 HOMER

Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* serve as important literary sources for the exploration of ethnic distinctions between Greek and non-Greek peoples in the Archaic world, boundaries continually negotiated by Greek authors seeking to situate various groups within a multi-ethnic matrix of Greek and non-Greek identity. Written in the late eighth or early seventh century BCE following the Bronze Age collapse and a veritable "Dark Age" of Greek history, Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* appear in the Archaic period as important testaments to the endurance of Greek creative tradition as well as to the emergence of a distinctly Greek cultural identity embodied in the glorified figures of the Heroic Age. In Homer's epics, Greek heroes' threatening encounters abroad, from Achilles' clash with the militant Amazons outside the gates of Troy, to Odysseus' encounters with savage sirens, witches, and Cyclopes in his decade-long journey, also evidence the Greeks' increasing interest in identifying and clarifying the boundaries of Greekness and non-Greekness in the midst of a post-destruction revival of travel, trade, and exchange throughout the Aegean.³¹

More than a simple chronicle of mythological events, Homer's epics, as products of extended oral tradition and composition, also incorporate a rich amalgamation of historical information, offering telling glimpses into both the pre-Archaic world and Homer's contemporary reality. Among other examples, glimpses of contemporary material developments across different "historical layers" of the epics appear readily in the *Iliad's* references to iron prizes and weapons.³² While iron appears rare and valued by Achilles as highly as "gold and ruddy bronze, and fair-girdled women" at one point in the epic, Trojan archer Pandarus later wounds bronze-armored Menelaus with an iron arrowhead, characterizing the metal as seemingly

31. J. Hall, *Ethnic Identity*, 46.

32. Bernard Knox, introduction to Homer, *The Iliad*, tr. Robert Fagles (New York: Penguin Books, 1990), 13–17.

expendable. Iron also appears familiar and commonplace throughout the *Iliad* in phrases recalling the “iron din” (σιδήρειος δ’ ὀρυμαγδός) of war or the flaming “iron rage” (μένος ἦκε σιδήρεον) of Patroclus’ funeral pyre.³³ Alongside these reflections of contemporary material reality, scholars such as Shawn A. Ross hold that information regarding historical institutions, ideas, and dynamics also tend to endure in oral tradition insofar as they remain “immediately relevant to the poet’s audience or relat[able] directly to contemporary social structures.”³⁴ In this way, information regarding historical institutions, ideas, and dynamics function in a contemporary literary context “to explain or justify contemporary conditions, express group identity, or legitimize rights and privileges.”³⁵ Ancient mythological dynamics, divisions, and affinities, such as linguistic division among the Trojans or a sense of kinship among the unified Achaeans during the Trojan war, for example, thus emerge in oral tradition and written epic as telling reflections of contemporary social concerns, beliefs, and tensions. Homer’s epics, therefore, serve as telling reflections of the poet’s contemporary understanding of and creative elaboration upon preserved mythological and historical *topoi* and figures of the Bronze Age past, including the Pelasgians. Recalled from ancient oral tradition and incorporated into eighth-century BCE literature, the Pelasgians feature in Homer’s epics because of their enduring relevance to the intellectual, social, and political concerns and realities of Homer’s contemporary society, and it is in this context that the Pelasgians must be considered.³⁶

33. Homer, *Iliad* 17.425; 23.177, tr. Murray; Ruth Russo, “The Heart of Steel: A Metallurgical Interpretation of Homer,” *Bulletin for the History of Chemistry* 30.1 (2005), http://acshist.scs.illinois.edu/bulletin_open_access/v30-1/v30-1%20p23-29.pdf.

34. Shawn Ross, “Barbarophonos: Language and Panhellenism in the *Iliad*,” *Classical Philology* 100.4 (2005), 300, <https://doi.org/10.1086/500434>; Ian Morris, “The Use and Abuse of Homer,” *Classical Antiquity* 5.1 (1986), 87, <https://doi.org/10.2307/25010840>: “It would perhaps be an exaggeration to say that non-literate societies float in a kind of perpetual present, but it does seem to be the case that ideas that are no longer relevant to the present rapidly disappear from oral tradition.”

35. Ross, “Barbarophonos,” 300.

36. Ross, “Barbarophonos,” 299–301.

1.1.2 THE *ILIAD*

Our earliest references to the Pelasgians, or, more precisely, to a Pelasgian presence in Greece, appear in two adjectival ascriptions in Homer's *Iliad*. In Book 2, the *Iliad*'s Catalogue of Ships locates the region of "Pelasgian Argos" in the plains of central Greece encompassing the Thessalian cities of Alos, Alope, Trachis, Phthiotis, and Phthia, Achilles' home city. References to "Pelasgian Argos" appear frequently in later descriptions of an ancient territory inhabited and ruled by the Pelasgians stretching from northern Greece to the Peloponnese. In Book 16, however, Achilles recalls the link between the Pelasgians and central Greece in his fervent prayer to "Dodonaean, Pelasgian" Zeus (Ζεῦ ἄνα Δωδωναῖε Πελασγικέ) for Zeus' protection of the Achaeans in battle.³⁷ This reference to a connection between the Pelasgians and Dodona seemingly extends the Pelasgians' ancient influence from Homer's Pelasgian Argos in Thessaly to the northwestern region of Epirus, the site of the Greeks' most ancient oracle of Dodona. According to Homer, the oracle of Dodona was historically attended by a group of priests called the Selloi who led a cult dedicated primarily to Zeus and his consort Dione.³⁸ This ancient connection between Dodona and Zeus emerges clearly in Achilles' invocation of "Dodonaean, Pelasgian" Zeus. Taken together with Homer's location of "Pelasgian Argos" in the plains of Thessaly just east of Epirus, Achilles' invocation seems to reveal the distinct memory of a Pelasgian influence or presence among the earliest inhabitants of Epirus at the most ancient oracle of Dodona. This lends enduring significance to the term "Pelasgian" in its association with pre-archaic antiquity. This pre-archaic "Pelasgian" period of Greek antiquity also clearly predates the time of the Trojan War. Homer lists no actual Pelasgians among the Myrmidon, Hellene, and Achaean habitants of Thessaly at the time of the Trojan War, nor does he list any

37. Homer, *Iliad* 16.230–16.235, tr. Murray.

38. Homer, *Iliad* 16.233–235.

Pelasgians among the allied Thessalian contingents of “Pelasgian Argos.”³⁹ Instead, Homer locates a contemporary settlement of actual Pelasgians, those fierce “tribes of the Pelasgi” (φῦλα Πελασγῶν), including those of “deep-soiled Larisa” (Λάρισαν ἐριβόλακα), far from Greece among the Trojan allies of the east.⁴⁰

The exact location of Homer’s “deep-soiled” Pelasgian Larisa remains uncertain. Given the location of Homer’s “Pelasgian Argos” in the plains of Thessaly, the famous Thessalian city of Larisa remains a notable — if improbable — possible location for Homer’s Pelasgian Larisa. This is because Homer explicitly names the contemporary Greek habitants of Pelasgian Argos led by Achilles against the Trojans as “Hellenes, Myrmidons, and Achaeans,” barring a settlement of actual Pelasgians from the plains of central Greece.⁴¹ Among the allies of the Trojan east, Homer also clearly locates the Pelasgians, “even those that dwelt in deep-soiled Larisa,” in list order just after a contingent of Mysian and Thracian soldiers from the cities of Percote, Practus, Sestus, Abydus, and Arisbe, and just before the contingent of Thracian soldiers “enclosed by the Hellespont.”⁴² The Thracians and the Ciconians of the southern coast of Thrace appear next in the list, followed by the Paeonians of Amydon near the river Axios in North Macedonia, who join the Trojans “from far away” (τηλόθεν).⁴³ Based on this order, an active wartime settlement of Trojan-allied Pelasgians appears to be localized in a region between that of the Mysians of Asia Minor and that of the Hellespontine Thracians, not nearly as distant as that of the Paeonians of North Macedonia.⁴⁴ Near Troy, however, along the broad shores of the Hellespont, Pelasgian Hippothous, the son of “Pelasgian Lethus” and co-leader alongside his

39. Homer, *Iliad* 2.680; Robert Drews, “Argos and Argives in the *Iliad*,” *Classical Philology* 74.2 (1979): 111–35, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/267669>.

40. Homer, *Iliad* 2.840–1, tr. Murray.

41. Homer, *Iliad* 2.680, tr. Murray.

42. Homer, *Iliad* 2.835–45, tr. Murray; Myres, “Pelasgian Theory,” 172.

43. Homer *Iliad* 2.848, tr. Murray.

44. Myres, “Pelasgian Theory,” 111.

brother Pylaeus of the “tribes of the Pelasgi that rage with the spear,” perishes first in the struggle between the armies to retrieve Patroclus’ corpse. As Hippothous falls in dramatic defeat “at the foot of great-hearted Patroclus” (Πατρόκλοιο πόδα μεγαλήτορος), he falls “far from deep soiled Larisa” (τῆλ’ ἀπὸ Λαρίσης ἐριβόλακος).⁴⁵ Based on this passage locating the city of Larisa “far from” Troy, Greek Hellenistic geographer Strabo (c. 64 BCE–24 CE) decidedly locates Pelasgian Larisa south of Troy along the western coast of Asia Minor at the site of Larisa Phokris near the Aeolian city of Cyme, one thousand stadia from the city of Troy.⁴⁶ According to historian Robert J. Rabel, however “any death [in the *Iliad*] beyond the reach of one’s kin is a death far from home: grief, not geography, provides the measure.”⁴⁷ Thus, Hector, slain by Achilles just outside the gates of Troy and carried away to the Achaean ships, lies “far” (τῆλε) from the baths drawn for him by Andromache⁴⁸ and “far” (νόσφι,⁴⁹ ἀπάνευθε⁵⁰) from his grieving parents. Hippothous’ death “far” (τῆλ’) from Larisa therefore provides little geographical evidence for locating the city farther from Troy near the city of Cyme. Strabo also names multiple other Larisas in Asia Minor as possible locations for the Pelasgians’ homeland, illustrating the prevalence of the place-name and the difficulty of locating a specific Pelasgian Larisa precisely.⁵¹

Despite their uncertain provenance, the Pelasgians emerge within the conflict of the Trojan War as foremost enemies of the Achaeans, an antagonism revealed in Hippothous’ defeat by Telemonian Ajax.⁵² Slain by Ajax for his vicious loyalty to the Trojans in the struggle for

45. Homer, *Iliad* 17.285–305, tr. Murray.

46. Strabo, *Geography* 8.3.2.

47. Robert J. Rabel, “Hippothous and the Death of Achilles,” *The Classical Journal* 86.2 (1990): 129. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3297721>.

48. Homer, *Iliad* 22.445, tr. Murray.

49. Homer, *Iliad* 22.508.

50. Homer, *Iliad* 24.211.

51. Strabo, *Geography* 13.3.2.

52. Homer, *Iliad* 17.288.

Patroclus' corpse, Hippothous positions the Pelasgians directly at odds with the Achaeans in the conflict. This oppositional method of identity-building, in which "Greek" is defined by direct conflict with "non-Greek" features prominently in Greek myth, iconography, and literature. This is evident, for example, in mythological accounts of Titanomachy and Amazonomachy in which Greek forces invariably prevail against non-Greek foes. By positioning the Pelasgi, led by Pelasgian Hippothous, in direct conflict with the Greeks, Homer casts the Pelasgians as opponents of Greekness, effectively reflecting and reifying the developing conceptual and ethnic divide between Greek and non-Greek in the Archaic period.

In Homer's account of the Trojan War, the conceptual roots of this divide appear readily between the Greeks and Trojans, emerging most prominently in Homer's identification of distinct linguistic arrangements among the Trojan army as reflections of disunity and disorder. Rather than representing a strict linguistic divide between the Greeks and the non-Greek Trojans, who each appear to communicate effectively across battle lines, linguistic arrangements in the *Iliad* mark a conceptual divide between the orderliness of Greek linguistic unity and the disorderliness of non-Greek linguistic diversity. In Book 4, the Greek allies, unified and capably commanded by their captains, thus rush against the Trojans "in silence," while the Trojans allies rush in fierce "clamor...bleating nonstop [like sheep]" with "no common language to bind them all together ... tongues mixed (γλῶσσα μέμικτο) and clash[ing]," in cacophonous disunity.⁵³ The Achaeans' unified silence contrasts sharply with the Trojans' disunified noisiness as a marker of Achaean harmony in the chaos of battle.⁵⁴ This is a distinction significant for its link to parallel articulations of non-Greekness and alterity in the *Iliad* predicated upon assessments of linguistic

53. Homer, *Iliad* 4.433, tr. Murray.

54. See Hilary Susan Mackie, *Talking Trojan: Speech and Community in the Iliad* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1996) 19–21 for a discussion of Trojan "clamor" as a marker of social disunity and Achaean silence as a marker of social unity.

difference in its relationship to geographical foreignness.

Further, Homer explicitly attributes Trojan linguistic disunity to the fact of the allies' being "summoned from many lands," directly linking linguistic difference and geographical foreignness in a developing concept of non-Greek alterity.⁵⁵ In Book 2, the goddess Iris thus warns Hector of the potential disunity fostered by linguistic diversity among the Trojan allies of the "wide-strewn human race."⁵⁶ Similarly, the Trojan Dolon, son of Eumedes, warns Odysseus of the Trojan allies' disunity and disloyalty linked to their geographical foreignness, explaining that, while the Trojans stand watch against the Achaeans through the night, the allies "summoned from many lands" lie sleeping, "for neither their own children nor their wives live nearby."⁵⁷ By contrast, the numerous contingents of the Greek army, whose allies hail from locations as distant from the Greek mainland as the eastern Aegean island of Rhodes, remain linguistically unified throughout the conflict of the Trojan War. Linguistic unity within the Achaean army thus emerges as a stable, harmonizing link between the army's geographically diverse contingents, while linguistic diversity among the Trojan allies directly undermines the unity and cohesion of the geographically diverse Trojan army.⁵⁸

This contrast between Achaean unity and Trojan disunity clearly parallels the dichotomous distinctions between Greek and non-Greek which come to feature prominently in Classical assessments of barbarity. As former Trojan allies, the Pelasgians are often located in these assessments just beyond the boundaries of Greekness. In the *Iliad*, the Pelasgians also appear located beyond the boundaries of Greekness in conceptual proximity to barbarity. For Homer also lists the Carians, a group whom he describes as distinctly βαρβαρόφωνος, "strange-

55. Homer, *Iliad* 4.433–38.

56. Homer, *Iliad* 2.802–6.

57. Homer, *Iliad* 10.420–422.

58. Ross, "Barbarophonos," 314.

speaking” or “barbarian-speaking,” among the Trojan allies of the Trojan Catalogue.⁵⁹ Based on their position next-to-last in the Trojan Catalogue, the Carians appear to be “one of the most [geographically] remote contingents [of Trojan allies] listed.”⁶⁰ The Carians’ geographical remoteness thus appears to correspond directly to their linguistic barbarity, confirming “linguistic difference as a marker of distance and alterity.”⁶¹ Similarly, the Pelasgians, although not considered quite as remote as the barbarous Carians, feature among the Trojan army as a comparably foreign contingent of Trojan allies who contribute equally to the disunity identified by Homer as intrinsic to the linguistically and geographically heterogeneous Trojan army. While Homer does not explicitly describe the Pelasgians as barbarian, moreover, their alliance against the Greeks alongside the barbarous Carians emphasizes the Pelasgians’ foreignness in relation to the Greeks as well as the Pelasgians’ conceptual proximity to barbarity in Homeric thought.

In spite of the apparent cultural-linguistic divide between the Achaeans and Trojans in the conflict of the Trojan War, points of commonality also emerge between the leaders of the Achaean and Trojan armies, illustrating the lack of strictly dichotomous distinctions between Greeks and non-Greeks in the Archaic period. For one, comparably “glorious” leaders emerge among the Achaeans, Trojans, and Trojan allies, including Hippothous, ill-fated leader of the Pelasgians. Homer describes Pelasgian Hippothous, alongside Hector, Ajax, Achilles, and Odysseus, as “brilliant” or “glorious” (φαίδιμος) despite his role as an eager enemy of the Greeks.⁶² When questioned by Odysseus about the sleeping Trojan allies, moreover, Dolon describes the Pelasgians as “brilliant,” “divine,” or “godlike” (δῖοί τε Πελασγοί), an epithet

59. Homer, *Iliad* 2.867, tr. Murray; Ross, “Barbarophonos,” 304.

60. Ross, “Barbarophonos,” 305.

61. Ross, “Barbarophonos,” 314: “Focusing on the *Iliad* itself, linguistic variation arises from two motivations on the part of the poet. The first occurs widely in the epic tradition and has been noted above: linguistic difference as a marker of distance and alterity. The second is more specific to the internal dynamics of the *Iliad*: the desire to cast the Trojan host as divided and chaotic, the Akhaian as unified and organized.”

62. Homer, *Iliad* 17.285, tr. Murray.

readily ascribed to fierce leaders both of the Achaean and the Trojan armies.⁶³ In the tradition of Homeric epithetical language, which proves useful both metrically and mnemonically for fulfilling each line of Homeric dactylic hexameter, epithets function deliberately and meaningfully to characterize important narrative figures.⁶⁴ In this context, Homer appears to mark the Pelasgians and Achaeans as equally glorious figures of the *Iliad*. Thus, Homer's assessment of Trojan and Pelasgian alterity on the basis of their linguistic difference and geographical foreignness runs parallel to a discernable concept of Trojan and Pelasgian gloriousness comparable to Greek gloriousness, illuminating an intriguing point of commonality between Greeks and non-Greeks in the fulfilment of the Greek warrior ideal. The application of identical epithets to both Greek and Trojan warriors also further evidences the incompleteness of a totalizing concept of non-Greek alterity and barbarity in Homeric thought, concepts which in their fullest articulation come to define the diametrical opposite of idealized Greekness.

Therefore, while the Pelasgians remain proximal to a nascent concept of barbarity in Homeric thought, the boundaries between Greeks and non-Greeks, including boundaries between the Greeks and the Trojan-allied Pelasgians ultimately remain incompletely conceptualized and articulated in the *Iliad*. Where ethnic boundaries begin to emerge, they appear to hinge primarily on assessments of linguistic and geographical foreignness and their relationship to disunity within the heterogeneous Trojan army. Homer's links between the Pelasgians and the plains of central Greece, moreover, further reflect the lack of a stabilized, totalizing concept of alterity and barbarity in Homeric thought. This allows for the ready incorporation of the Pelasgians into ancient Greek historical tradition, connecting them to the plains of Thessaly and the oracle of Dodona, and the simultaneous conceptual distancing of the Pelasgians from the Greeks as non-

63. Homer, *Iliad* 10.420-422, tr. Murray.

64. Knox, introduction to Homer, *The Iliad*, tr. Fagles, 15.

Greek Trojan allies. Further, the epithetical correspondence between Homer’s “glorious” (φαίδιμος) and “divine” (δῖοι) Pelasgians and Greeks emerges as a point of commonality between Greek and non-Greek — a point of commonality that extends into descriptions of the Pelasgi in Homer’s *Odyssey* and offers an enduring link between the Greeks and Pelasgians as comparably glorious figures of Homeric epic.

1.1.3 THE *ODYSSEY*

Far from Troy and their uncertain settlement in Larisa, the “glorious” Pelasgians (δῖοι τε Πελασγοί),⁶⁵ comparable in glory to Achilles (δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς)⁶⁶ and Odysseus (δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς; φαίδιμ’ Ὀδυσσεύς) themselves, reappear in Homer’s *Odyssey* among the Achaeans, Dorian (Δωριέες), and native Cretan inhabitants of the “thickly-peopled” southern Aegean island of Crete, a multi-ethnic island boasting a number of cities of “mixed tongues.”⁶⁷ But how in the *Odyssey* did the Pelasgians, those ready allies of the Trojans in the *Iliad*, come to arrive on Crete alongside the Achaeans and Dorians? Historians J. L. Myres and J.A.R. Munro hold that the Pelasgians Homer mentions here are immigrants to Crete alongside the Greek Achaeans and the Dorians of the northern Aegean.⁶⁸ These migrant Cretan Pelasgians also appear readily assimilated into later literary accounts of Achaean and Dorian migration. An obscure fragment attributed to eighth-century BCE Greek writer Hesiod in the *Etymologicum Genuinum* (ninth century CE), for example, locates an established settlement of Pelasgians on Crete, naming the

65. Homer, *Iliad* 2.244; 10.429, tr. Murray; Homer *Odyssey* 11.202, tr. A. T. Murray, ed. George E. Dimock, Loeb Classical Library 104 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1919).

66. Homer, *Iliad* 1.292, tr. Murray.

67. Homer, *Odyssey* 19.170–175, tr. Murray.

68. Myres, “Pelasgian Theory,” 176; J. A. R. Munro, “Pelasgians and Ionians,” *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 54 (1934): 112, <https://doi.org/10.2307/626855>.

Pelasgians one of three “Hellenic” tribes to settle on the island.⁶⁹ Fragments of fifth-century BCE Greek historian Andron of Halicarnassus describe a migration of Dorians, Achaeans, and Pelasgians led by Tektaphos, grandson of Hellen, from central Greece to the island of Crete.⁷⁰ Finally, Diodorus Siculus’ (c. 90–30 BCE) *Bibliotheca Historica* locates the Pelasgians on Crete, “by reason of [Pelasgians’] continuous expeditions and migrations” across the Aegean.⁷¹ A clear tradition of Pelasgian migration appears established in later accounts of the Pelasgians’ presence on Crete, but this tradition is not clearly recoverable in Homer’s account. Instead, Homer’s attestation to a diverse population on Crete may simply attest to the enduring cosmopolitan character of the island. Throughout the pre-Archaic and Archaic periods, Crete served as a nexus of trade between central Greece, the Cyclades, and the Ionian settlements of Asia Minor. This centered the island in the flow of diverse cultural and material exchange throughout the Aegean. Rather than preserving the specific memory of a pre-Archaic Pelasgian migration to Crete, Homer’s attestation to a Pelasgian presence on Crete may therefore affirm the cosmopolitan character of the island as a nexus of ongoing trade throughout the Aegean. Elaborating on a mythological tradition preserved in the *Iliad* casting the Pelasgians as widely-dispersed throughout the Aegean, this account positions the Pelasgians on Crete at the center of ongoing contact and exchange between the diverse habitants of Greece and the surrounding Aegean.

Within the context of Homer’s narrative, moreover, Odysseus’ attestation to a Pelasgian presence on Crete appears at an intriguing point. Odysseus, forced by Athena to conceal his identity upon his return to Ithaca, assumes a false identity as Aethon, son of the Cretan

69. Hesiod, *Fragment 8*, in *Hesiod, the Homeric Hymns and Homeric*, tr. H. G. Evelyn-White, Loeb Classical Library, vol. 57 (London: William Heinemann, 1914): 275.

70. Andron of Halicarnassos, *Fragment 16*, in *Die Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker I-III*, ed. Felix Jacoby (Leiden: Brill, 1923–1959).

71. Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* 5.80.1, tr. C.H. Oldfather, Loeb Classical Library 340 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1939).

Deucalion and brother of Cretan leader Idomenus, and recounts to Penelope an encounter with Odysseus on Aethon's home island of Crete during the hero's journey to Troy. Located in the so-called "Third Cretan Tale" of Odysseus' "lying tales,"⁷² Aethon's claim that he hails from "broad Crete," (Κρήτη εὐρείη) serves a dual function for establishing the plausibility of Odysseus' lie. For one, Aethon's account of his journey from Crete to Ithaca as well as his encounter with Odysseus and the Achaeans on Crete centers the island as a nexus of travel between Ionia and the Greek mainland, establishing Odysseus' lie as plausible on account of the island's reputation as a point of contact between Greece and distant Aegean settlements. On the other hand, Odysseus' claim that he hails from "broad Crete," alongside his attestation to an obscure Pelasgian presence on the island, may rely in large part for its believability on its "geographica[l] remov[e] from the knowledge"⁷³ of Odysseus' audience, enabling Odysseus to "fashion lies out of what no man can see [for himself]" (ὅθεν κέ τις οὐδὲ ἴδοιτο).⁷⁴ In this context, Odysseus' attestation to a Pelasgian presence on Crete in the Heroic period, being more than a possible reflection of established tradition of Pelasgian migration throughout the Aegean, likely features to emphasize the remoteness and exoticism of ancient Crete by reference to its elusive Pelasgian inhabitants, a group enduringly "geographically removed" from the knowledge of Homer's audience. Alongside his suggestion of a Pelasgian migration to Crete, Myres thus additionally notes the utility of Homer's reference to the Pelasgians on Crete for adding "verisimilitude" to Odysseus' tale. This affirms the narrative purposefulness of Homer's reference for diversifying and exotifying the island.⁷⁵

72. Homer, *Odyssey* 19.170, tr. Murray.

73. Chris Emlyn-Jones, "True and Lying Tales in the 'Odyssey,'" *Greece and Rome* 33.1 (1986): 2, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/643020>.

74. Homer, *Odyssey* 11.364–5, tr. Murray.

75. Myres, "Pelasgian Theory," 176.

In the midst of ongoing trade, colonization, and exchange in Homer’s contemporary world, the poet’s accounts of Odysseus’ encounters with remote and threatening foreigners also feature as bold oppositional reflections upon what Malkin describes as “the intricate, sometimes hybrid, mutually reflecting world of exploration, contacts, colonization, and coexistence involving various Greeks and native populations” in which ethno-cultural differences increasingly emerge between Greeks and non-Greeks.⁷⁶ In Odysseus’ account of his encounter with the “savage” (ἄγριος) Cyclopes, for example, he emphasizes these ethno-cultural differences, describing the Cyclopes as a “lawless” (ἄθεμίστων) people with “no institutions, no meetings for counsels ... and each one is the law for his own wives and children, and cares nothing for others” (τοῖσιν δ’ οὔτ’ ἀγοραὶ βουλευφόροι οὔτε θέμιστες ... θεμιστεύει δὲ ἕκαστος παίδων ἢ δ’ ἀλόχων, οὐδ’ ἀλλήλων ἀλέγουσι).⁷⁷ The Cyclopes’ lack of familiar Greek forms of sociopolitical organization and community poses a direct counter to traditional Greek systems of community and counsel-based governance in which Greek cultural identity and unity appears rooted. This difference represents for Odysseus the peak of savagery, an Archaic prefiguring of ethno-cultural barbarity.⁷⁸ In this context, Homer’s location of the Pelasgians on the multi-ethnic, “mixed-tongue[d]” island of Crete appears all the more interesting. The Cretan Pelasgians of Homer’s *Odyssey*, those eager allies of the Trojans alongside the barbarous Carians, at considerable remove from Odysseus’ audience, appear thoroughly socio-culturally integrated, if not completely ethically or linguistically integrated, into Cretan cosmopolitan society alongside the Greek Achaeans and Dorians. This instance of cultural cohesion among the Dorians,

76. Irad Malkin, *The Returns of Odysseus: Colonization and Ethnicity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), xi.

77. Homer, *Odyssey* 9.105–115, tr. Murray; Deborah Levine Gera, *Ancient Greek Ideas on Speech, Language, and Civilization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

78. Daniel Bellum, “Friend, Foe, or Other? Monsters and Identity on the Odyssean Sea” (MA Thesis, University of New Mexico, 2009), https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/fll_etds/72.

Achaeans, and Pelasgians on Crete subverts the Pelasgians' traditional oppositional role as anti-Greek elements in the *Iliad* and obscures the oppositionally-defined boundaries between Greek and non-Greek in the context of the *Odyssey*. Instead, the Pelasgians appear culturally integrated with the Greek populations of Crete, positioning the Pelasgians as ethno-culturally non-barbarian elements of Greek cosmopolitan society. Homer's location of the Pelasgians on Crete thus illustrates the ambiguity and vital negotiability of Pelasgian identity in Homeric narratives of the Archaic period, narratives in which the Pelasgians feature as both proximally barbarian and proximally Greek.

1.1.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS ON HOMER

Homer's association of Pelasgians with the plains of central Greece, the Trojan east, and the island of Crete positions the Pelasgians in early Archaic tradition and literature as an ancient people of uncertain provenance localized in different places throughout the Aegean and in migration alongside the Achaeans and Dorians around or before the time of the Trojan War. Given their uncertain origin coupled with their links in the *Iliad* to both the Trojan east and to central Greece — a link reflected as readily in the toponymy of Homer's Pelasgian Argos as in Achilles' invocation of Pelasgian Zeus at Dodona — as well as their link to the multi-ethnic island of Crete in the *Odyssey*, the Pelasgians appear to be of dual or ambiguous ethnic affiliation, both Greek and non-Greek. This illustrates the Archaic Greeks' contemporary sociopolitical conditions, tensions, and concerns regarding the ambiguity and negotiability of Greek ethnic affiliations and identities. While the Pelasgians' alliance with the Trojans in the conflict of the Trojan War places the Pelasgians firmly opposite the Greeks, the Pelasgians' appearance among the “clashing” tongues of the Trojan army and among the “mixed-tongue[d]”

inhabitants of Odysseus' Crete positions them as alterior to the Greeks on account of their implied linguistic difference, yet culturally familiar enough to be mentioned along with the Achaeans and Dorians as part of Crete cosmopolitan society. The Pelasgians' implied linguistic difference as inhabitants of Crete's "mixed-tongue[d]" cities, as well as their association with the linguistically diverse and disunified Trojan army, among which Homer identifies the Carians as distinctly *barbarophonos*, places the Pelasgians in conceptual proximity to barbarity – a proximity nonetheless confounded by their attested geographical and cultural connection to the Greeks. Indeed, as possible ancient inhabitants of "Pelasgian Argos," devotees of "Dodonaean, Pelasgian" Zeus, and "glorious" neighbors of the Cretan Achaeans, the Pelasgians seem to be intimately geographically and religiously linked with the Greeks as late as a decade after the Trojan War in Odysseus' attestation. Given their presumably harmonious inhabitation of Crete alongside the Achaeans, they appear in the *Odyssey* as potential allies of the mainland Achaeans in the conflict of the Trojan War, a conflict in which the loyal Cretans, led by Cretan leader Idomeneus, feature prominently. References to the Pelasgians in Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* ultimately reflect ambiguous ideas about Pelasgian identity in the Archaic period. These references also mark the beginning of an enduring literary tradition in which the Pelasgians, elusive and ubiquitous, primitively Greek and proximally non-Greek, nearly barbarian, feature as variously functional rhetorical tools for the construction of Greek and non-Greek identity.

1.2.1 HESIOD

The development of the Pelasgians' role in the articulation of ancient Greek identity can be readily traced from Homer to the genealogical works of eighth-century BCE didactic poet Hesiod, Homer's later contemporary. Born in Ascra, Boeotia, a region of central Greece, to a

merchant father who hailed from Cyme, an Aeolian city in western Asia Minor, Hesiod lived and worked alongside his brother Perses as a shepherd and farmer before being struck by the Muses of Mt. Helicon and becoming a poet.⁷⁹ Apart from his full extant works *Theogony*, *Works and Days*, and *Shield of Heracles*,⁸⁰ Hesiod's work survives in fragments. This includes his influential *Catalogue of Women* in which the poet traces the descent of the four major Greek tribes — the Dorians, Achaeans, Ionians, and Aeolians — from their eponymous ancestors Doros, Achaïos, Ion, and Aiolos, to the semi-divine Hellen, son of Deucalion's wife Pyrrha and Zeus, and progenitor of a distinctly "Hellenic" identity.⁸¹

Among these genealogical works, an obscure fragment attributed to Hesiod preserved in Strabo (c. 64 BCE–24 CE), who cites Ephorus of Cyme (400–330 BCE) for his information about Hesiod, appears most interesting. This fragment introduces a figure of uncertain genealogical origin named Pelasgus, father of the "god-like" Arcadian culture hero Lycaon (Λυκάωνος ἀντιθέοιο), as the eponymous ancestor of the elusive Pelasgians.⁸² This fragment alone provides little information about Pelasgus. In additional fragments attributed to Hesiod in Pseudo-Apollodorus' *Library* (first or second century CE), however, the figure of Pelasgus reappears rooted directly in the Arcadian soil as an autochthonous (αὐτόχθων) or "sprung from the earth" ancestor of the Arcadians.⁸³ This account of Pelasgus' autochthonous origins in Arcadia is intriguing and significant, as we will see, even as it reflects an apparent anachronism. This is because myths of autochthony linked to earth-born ancestors had yet to be articulated in the Archaic period. According to historian Vincent L. Rosivach, the term αὐτόχθων represents a

79. Hesiod, *Theogony* 29–35.

80. Doubts persist about the authorship of the *Shield of Heracles*, but it is traditionally attributed to Hesiod.

81. J. Hall, *Ethnic Identity*, 42–43, 69.

82. Strabo, *Geography* 5.2.4, tr. H. L. Jones, Loeb Classical Library 50 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1923).

83. Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*, 2.1.1; 3.8.1, tr. Frazer, 121–122 (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1921): "Hesiod says that Pelasgus was an autochthon" – Ἡσίοδος δὲ τὸν Πελασγὸν αὐτόχθονά φησιν εἶναι.

conscious coinage of Classical Attic vocabulary referring originally to a groups' permanent habitation in a region without reference to literal chthonic origins ("autochthonous" meaning not "born from the earth" but "having the same land").⁸⁴ Only with the Athenians' gradual "blending"⁸⁵ of myths of their descent from earth-born Erechtheus with myths of their permanent habitation of Attica did the concept of autochthony officially "extend its range of meaning to include 'earth-born'," ⁸⁶ a shift which Rosivach describes as a "special Athenian development."⁸⁷ Historian James Roy corroborates Rosivach's argument and holds that "Hesiod would scarcely have used the actual word *autochthon*," in the early Archaic period to describe an earth-born figure since the term had not yet acquired its chthonic associations.⁸⁸ Pseudo-Apollodorus is clearly familiar with the link between the concept of autochthony and the idea of earth-born ancestors forged in the Classical period and still present in his contemporary post-Classical discourse. This explains his insertion of the term αὐτόχθων in Hesiod's remark about Pelasgus as an earth-born ancestor of Lycaon. Despite this anachronism, however, a fragment of Asius of Samos (c. sixth century BCE) preserved in the work of Greek geographer Pausanias (c. 110–180 CE) parallels Hesiod's suggestion of Pelasgus' earth-born origins by naming "godlike" (ἀντίθεον) Pelasgus a Greek ancestor whom the "[b]lack earth gave up (γαῖα μέλαινα ἀνέδωκεν) that the race of mortals might exist."⁸⁹ This fragment of Asius corresponds to Pseudo-Apollodorus' attestation to an early Archaic tradition, possibly as early as Hesiod, naming

84. Vincent L. Rosivach, "Autochthony and the Athenians," *The Classical Quarterly* 37.2 (1987): 297-301, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/638830>.

85. Rosivach, "Autochthony and the Athenians," 301.

86. James Roy, "Autochthony in Ancient Greece," in *A Companion to Ethnicity in the Mediterranean*, ed. Jeremy McInerney (Somerset: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 2014): 242.

87. Rosivach, "Autochthony and the Athenians," 300–301: "...the belief that some of Athens' early kings were born from the earth had, originally, nothing to do with the belief that the Athenian race was indigenous to Attica; ... further... since being born from the earth normally had nothing to do with always living in a particular place, the association of chthonic origins with autochthony was a special Athenian development..."

88. Roy, "Autochthony in Ancient Greece," 242.

89. Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 8.1.4–5, tr. W. H. S. Jones.

Pelasgus an earth-born ancestor of the Greeks in Arcadia. Next to nothing is known about Asius, however, and the details of the tradition familiar to Asius about Pelasgus' earth-born origins and connection to the Greeks in Arcadia remain difficult to recover from his highly fragmented work.

Along with the link between “autochthonous” Pelasgus and the plains of Arcadia, other fragments attributed to Hesiod also link the Pelasgians to north central Greece. Most notably, one fragment attributed to Hesiod by Strabo names Dodona, the traditional sanctuary of Homer's “Dodonaean, Pelasgian, Zeus” as the “oak seat of the Pelasgians.”⁹⁰ A second, admittedly obscure fragment attributed to Hesiod by Greek grammarian Antoninus Liberalis (100 CE–300 CE), moreover, locates a settlement of Pelasgians in Thessaly, the site of Homer's Pelasgian Argos. According to this fragment, the god Hermes, who absconded with a herd of Apollo's cattle while Apollo was distracted by his love for a beautiful boy named Hymenaeus, travelled southeast from Thessaly “through the country of the Pelasgi, and Achaea in the land of Phthia, and through Locris, and Boeotia and Megaris, and thence into Peloponnesus.”⁹¹ Hesiod thus appears to cleave closely to Homeric tradition for his account of the Pelasgians' ancient settlements throughout central Greece, localizing the Pelasgians in both Dodona and Thessaly.

1.2.2 ACUSILAUS

Contemporary with Asius' account, a fragment of Greek logographer and prose mythographer Acusilaus of Argos (mid-sixth century BCE) recorded in Pseudo-Apollodorus, offers an alternative origin for Arcadian Pelasgus. Rather than naming Pelasgus an earth-born ancestor of Hesiod's Arcadians or Asius' “race of mortals,” Acusilaus instead names Pelasgus the son of Zeus and Argive Niobe, daughter of Argive culture hero Phoroneus, and brother of

90. Strabo, *Geography* 7.7.10, tr. H. L. Jones.

91. Hesiod, *Fragment* 16, tr. by Evelyn-White.

Argus, eponymous ancestor of the Peloponnesian Argives.⁹² According to the tenth-century CE Byzantine lexicon *Suda*, Acusilaus was born to a father named Kabas in a city called Kerkas “near Aulus,” a region traditionally located in Boeotia, central Greece, the location of Hesiod’s home city of Ascra (Ἀκουσίλαος· Κάβα υἱός· Ἀργεῖος ἀπο Κερκάδος πόλεως οὔσης Ἀυλίδος πλησίον).⁹³ Various sources note the close correspondence between the works of Acusilaus and Hesiod, including Plato’s *Symposium* (c. 385 BCE)⁹⁴ and Clement of Alexandria’s *Stromata* (second century CE), the latter of which denounces Acusilaus’ faithful reproduction of Hesiod’s works as plagiarism.⁹⁵

Despite Acusilaus’ clear familiarity with Hesiod’s works, the logographer’s accounts of Pelasgus’ origins in the Peloponnese differ significantly in detail and chronology from Hesiod’s account. For one, Acusilaus’ Zeus-born Pelasgus does not originate from the earth as in Hesiod’s account, and thus cannot be considered the first inhabitant of the Peloponnese – neither as an autochthonous ancestor of the Peloponnesian Greeks, nor as a primeval ancestor of Asius’ “race of mortals.”⁹⁶ Second, this fragment of Acusilaus does not directly link Pelasgus with Arcadian Lycaon as primeval ancestor of the Arcadians, as Hesiod’s account does, leaving Pelasgus only vaguely linked to the Argive inhabitants of the Peloponnese via his kinship with eponymous Argus. Pseudo-Apollodorus nevertheless draws from this fragment of Acusilaus for his claim that all inhabitants of the Archaic Peloponnese were once named “Pelasgian,” (Ἀκουσίλαός

92. Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 2.1.1, tr. Frazer.

93. Acusilaus, *Fragment from Suda* Alpha 942, in *Suda On Line*, tr. Joseph L. Rife, eds. David Whitehead et al. (The Stoa Consortium, 2000), <http://www.stoa.org/sol-entries/alpha/942>.

94. Plato, *Symposium* 178B.

95. Clement, *Stromata* 6.26.7, tr. Philip Schaff, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325*, ed. Alexander Roberts et al., vol. 2, *Fathers of the Second Century: Hermas, Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus, and Clement of Alexandria* (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Pub. Co., 1885–97):

“Come, and let us adduce the Greeks as witnesses against themselves to the theft. For, inasmuch as they pilfer from one another, they establish the fact that they are thieves... Eumelus and Acusilaus the historiographers changed the contents of Hesiod into prose, and published them as their own.”

96. Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 8.1.4–5, tr. W. H. S. Jones.

φησι, καὶ Πελασγός, ἀφ’ οὗ κληθῆναι τοὺς τὴν Πελοπόννησον οἰκοῦντας Πελασγούς). This again positions the Pelasgians as ancient, if not autochthonous, ancestors of the Peloponnesian Greeks.⁹⁷

In the context of the Archaic period, however, Acusilaus’ linking of the Argives and Arcadians in brotherhood appears to reflect an enduring sense of kinship between the Argives and neighboring Arcadians in light of their repeated military alliances against the encroaching Spartans. The Argives and Arcadians consistently allied against the Spartans during conflicts of the Archaic period, including the First (c. 740–720 BCE)⁹⁸ and Second (c. 668–650 BCE) Messenian Wars in which the Spartans triumphed over the competing Heraclid monarchy in Messenia established under King Cresphontes and his son Aepytus and expanded their territory eastward.⁹⁹ According to Pausanias, it is in the midst of these conflicts that the Argives and Arcadians’ mutual hatred for the Spartans “blazed up openly” because of the Spartans’ “continual encroachments” into Peloponnesian territory.¹⁰⁰ Even after the Spartans’ defeat by the Argives at the scantily attested Battle of Hysiae (c. 669 BCE), conflict between the Spartans and their powerful Argive neighbors continued well into the sixth century BCE, culminating in the Argives’ defeat at the fateful Battle of the Three Hundred Champions (c. 546 BCE). The Argives’ and Arcadians’ mutual concern to protect their territories from Spartan encroachments during the eighth through sixth centuries BCE may have shaped the development of a sense of Argive-Arcadian kinship reflected in the Argive-Pelasgian brotherhood featured in Acusilaus’ account.¹⁰¹

97. Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 2.1.1, tr. Frazer.

98. Strabo, *Geography* 8.4.10; Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 4.11.1; 4.13.6.

99. See: Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 4.3.7, 8.5.6–7; Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 2.8.5; Nino Luraghi, “Becoming Messenian,” *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 122 (2002): 45–69, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3246204>.

100. Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 4.5.3; 4.14.8, tr. W. H. S. Jones.

101. See J. Hall, *Ethnic Identity*, 48.

Furthermore, Acusilaus' linking of the Argives and Pelasgians in brotherhood may serve as a direct response to Hesiod's and Asius' accounts of Arcadian autochthony. By positioning Pelasgus as brother of Argos, Acusilaus appears to level claims of Arcadian autochthony, equalizing the Argives and Pelasgian-Arcadians in brotherhood as mutually predominate, divinely-born natives of the Peloponnesus. By the Classical period, claims to autochthony, as claims to essential indigeneity, played an important role in stabilizing ethnic identity and bolstering ethnic groups' claims to political priority in their ancestral territories against competing claims to priority by divine descent, migration, and conquest.¹⁰² The enduring utility of myths of autochthony for stabilizing local identities can be seen clearly in the endurance of traditions of Arcadian autochthony into the Classical period. Indeed, Herodotus' *Histories* names the Arcadians as one of two surviving autochthonous groups in the Peloponnese in the Classical period, illustrating the stability of ideas about Arcadian identity linked to traditions of the Arcadians' descent from autochthonous Pelasgus.¹⁰³ In this context, Acusilaus' insertion of Pelasgus into Argive genealogy as the brother of Argos represents a remarkable response to what appears to be an ongoing shift in the conceptualization of Greek identity in the Archaic period — from a reliance on tales of conquest and theogeniture to the utilization of tales of autochthony — a shift made more salient amid the conflicts and political transformations of the Classical period.

102. J. Hall, *Ethnic Identity*, 107; P. Di Yan, "Anthropogony, Myth and Gender: Athenian Autochthony as a Case Study" (PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 2018), 11.

103. Herodotus, *Histories* 8.73.1–3. The second autochthonous group being the Kynourians, described by Herodotus as "aboriginal," Dorianized Ionians and as *Orneatae* and *perioikoi* of the Argives.

1.2.3 HECATAEUS

Alongside Acusilaus' late-sixth-century BCE accounts of the Pelasgians, several fragments of Greek historian and logographer Hecataeus of Miletus (c. 550–476 BCE)¹⁰⁴ preserved in Herodotus' *Histories* rely in part on accounts offered by both Hesiod and Acusilaus. Three fragments of Hecataeus identify Pelasgian influences or settlements in Central Greece: one in the region of Thessaly known as "Pelasgia" after the ruler Pelasgus (Θεσσαλία δὲ Πελασγία ἐκαλεῖτο ἀπὸ Πελασγοῦ τοῦ βασιλεύσαντος), a region once ruled by the descendants of Deucalion;¹⁰⁵ the next at Krannon and Athamanias founded by Krannon, an obscure son of Pelasgus, in Thessaly;¹⁰⁶ and the last in Attica alongside the Athenians at Mount Hymettos, where the Athenians allowed the Pelasgians to settle as payment for the Pelasgians' construction of the wall around the Acropolis.¹⁰⁷ Hecataeus' location of the Pelasgians in Thessaly parallels both Homeric and Hesiodic accounts localizing the Pelasgians in this region. An additional fragment of Hecataeus locates the Pelasgians in Arcadia as descendants of the eponymous Pelasgus, king of Arcadia and son of Zeus and Niobe. This attestation parallels Acusilaus' account of Pelasgus' birth from Zeus and Niobe.¹⁰⁸ Fragments attributed to Hecataeus thus incorporate elements of both Hesiod's and Acusilaus' accounts, furthering Archaic traditions of the Pelasgians as both originating in the Peloponnesus and enduringly linked to the plains of Central Greece.

104. Ilaria Andolfi, *Acusilaus of Argos' Rhapsody in Prose: Introduction, Text, and Commentary* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019), 2, dates Acusilaus prior to Hecataeus.

105. Hecataeus, *Fragment* 1.14, in *Die Fragmente*, ed. Jacoby, vol. 1a; *Scholia on Apollonios of Rhodes' Argonautica* 4.266.

106. Hecataeus, *Fragment* 1.133, in *Die Fragmente*, ed. Jacoby, vol. 1a.

107. Herodotus, *Histories* 6.137; Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 2.1.17.

108. Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 2.1.1.

1.2.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS ON ACUSILAUS AND HECATAEUS

Given the Pelasgians' variable characterization in post-Homeric Archaic accounts, only an ambiguous account of Pelasgian origins, inhabitation, and migration throughout the Greek world can ultimately be reconstructed. Based on accounts by Hesiod, Asius of Samos, Acusilaus, and Hecataeus, the primeval Pelasgians, descendants of an eponymous Pelasgus, originated at a point in the mythic past in the plains of the Greek mainland, most often in the Peloponnesus.

In Hesiod and Asius of Samos, Pelasgus is described as a first man or autochthon, linked in Hesiod to Arcadia via Arcadian culture hero Lycaon. These accounts feature centrally in the construction of an enduring autochthonous Arcadian identity into the Classical period. In alternative accounts by Acusilaus and Hecataeus, Pelasgus is described as a son of Zeus and Niobe and brother of Argus. While Acusilaus' account links Pelasgus only to the Argives as brother of Argus, Hecataeus' parallel account of Pelasgus' birth from Zeus and Niobe links Pelasgus, brother of Argus, to the Arcadians with Pelasgus' role as king of Arcadia. Acusilaus' insertion of Pelasgus into Argive genealogy as brother of Argus, meanwhile, may serve as a response to various political concerns and dynamics in the Archaic Peloponnesus. This appears to reflect or reify a sense of kinship underlying the Argives' and Arcadians' enduring alliance against the encroaching Spartans in the conflicts of the Messinian wars and beyond. Acusilaus' insertion of Pelasgus into Argive genealogy may also serve to explain or neutralize competing genealogical traditions in which the Pelasgians and Pelasgian-Arcadians feature as uniquely autochthonous, and thus politically primary, inhabitants of the Peloponnese.

Despite the ambiguity of Pelasgian origins, migration, and inhabitation, the variability of the Greek Archaic tradition surrounding the Pelasgians, positioning them as both autochthonous ancestors to the Greeks of the Peloponnesus and as allies to the militant Trojans, illustrates

Archaic writers' conscious attempts to adjust mythic figures and genealogies to suit their contemporary concerns and contexts.

Chapter 2: Pelasgians in Greek Literature of the Classical Period

In 499 BCE, Milesian tyrant Aristagoras arrived in Athens to direct a stirring appeal to the Athenians for assistance in the revolt of the Ionian colonies of Asia Minor against the Persians of the Achaemenid empire (553–330 BCE).¹⁰⁹ Already at odds with the Persians for their alliance with exiled Athenian tyrant Hippias, the Athenians agreed to ally with Aristagoras and launched twenty ships to aid the Ionian revolt against Persia. In 498 BCE, backed by Athenian troops, the Ionians razed the Persian territory of Sardis, an offense for which the Persians vowed to seek revenge in the subsequent conflicts of the Greco-Persian wars (499–479). For Greek historian Herodotus, the Athenians' agreement to aid Aristagoras in the Ionian Revolt thus marks the “beginning of troubles for both Hellenes and barbarians” (ἀρχὴ κακῶν ἐγένοντο Ἑλλησὶ τε καὶ βαρβάροισι), centering ethnic distinctions between Greek and barbarian in Herodotus' monumental account of the Greco-Persian wars.¹¹⁰

This chapter will focus on references to the Pelasgians in fifth- through fourth-century BCE narratives. The primary sources for this chapter fall into two major categories — first, historical works by Herodotus, Thucydides, Hellanicus of Lesbos, and Ephorus of Cyme; and second, dramatic compositions by three famous playwrights of the time – Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. This chapter will first explore concepts of barbarity and notions of hybridity in Classical historical narratives, then it will analyze the ambiguity of constructions of the Pelasgians as both autochthonous and barbarian in Classical historical narratives. Finally, this chapter will analyze the dramatic elaboration of these concepts in the works of Greek tragedy. The historical events that constitute an indispensable backdrop against the processes of

109. Herodotus, *Histories* 5.97.

110. Herodotus, *Histories* 5.97.3, in Herodotus, *The Persian Wars*, tr. A. D. Godley, Loeb Classical Library 119 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1920–1925).

negotiation of Pelasgian identity include: (1) the Greco-Persian wars (499–479 BCE); (2) the rise of Athens and its development into a regional imperial power, which led to growing hostilities between Athens and its allies; and (3) the increasing tensions between Athens and Sparta that culminated in the devastating Peloponnesian War (431–405 BCE). All these historical transformations influenced the implicit and explicit statements about Pelasgians in primary sources dated to this period. For example, when there was a need to promote the idea that Athenians were distinct from and superior to their Ionian allies, Athenian-based writers and their sympathizers rejected the link between the Pelasgian-Ionians and the Athenians. By contrast, during the conflict between Athens and Sparta, ancient writers articulated the groups' antagonism by emphasizing their descent from different ancient Greek tribes – the former from the Pelasgian-Ionians, and the latter from the Hellenic-Dorians. In the context of the Greco-Persian wars and post-war enmity, moreover, the Persians were treated as the paradigmatic “Other,” the antipode of *all* Greeks, and the Trojans often served as a proxy for the Persians in literary compositions of the time. The Homeric remark on Pelasgians being allies of Trojans thus metaphorically transitions the Pelasgians to being anti-Greek in this period of conflict. The Pelasgians were thus utilized in various ways in fifth-century sources to bolster important ideological claims and to express various affinities, hostilities, and anxieties as the need arose.

2.1.1 HERODOTUS

On the southwestern coast of Asia Minor around 545 BCE, following the defeat of Lydian monarch Croesus by the Persian ruler Cyrus at the Battle of Sardes (c. 547 BCE), the Ionian region of Caria passed from Lydian control to Persian control as a satrapy of the

Achaemenid empire.¹¹¹ This satrapy was called Karkâ, and the tyrant Lygdamis ruled from the satrapy's capital city of Halicarnassus. Around 485 BCE, the great Greek historian Herodotus (c. 485 BCE–425 BCE) was born in Persian-dominated Halicarnassus to a Carian-Greek merchant family that, according to a late account in the Byzantine lexicon *Suda* (tenth-century CE), later fled to Samos to escape Lygdamis' tyranny.¹¹² In Samos, Herodotus began his monumental *Histories* (completed c. 425 BCE), the first dedicated historical inquiry into the Greek past. In his preface, Herodotus defines his inquiry as an effort to memorialize the events of the Greco-Persian wars (499–479 BCE) as well as the “great and marvelous works” (ἔργα μεγάλα τε καὶ θωμαστά) of the “Hellenes” and “barbarians” (τὰ μὲν Ἑλλήσι τὰ δὲ βαρβάροισι) alike, placing ethnic categories and considerations at the center of his account.¹¹³

Herodotus' interest in the exploration of ethnic distinctions and affinities features prominently in his *Histories*, primarily in expansive ethnographic digressions which serve for some scholars as a “mirror,” or “hall of mirrors” to developing concepts of ethnic identity in the Classical period.¹¹⁴ In the *Histories*' accounts of Greek–barbarian interactions and exchanges, Herodotus also explicates a fundamental pluralism, or hybridity, linking Greek and barbarian ethnic groups across the ancient Mediterranean. In “scientific” racial theories, the concept of hybridity refers specifically to the genetic intermixing of biologically “distinct” racial or ethnic elements. In sociological and postcolonial theories, however, the concept of hybridity refers primarily to the plurality, mutuality, and heterogeneity of identities and cultures shaped by the “complex and fluid dynamics of the colonial encounter.” In this context, “hybrid” ethnic,

111. Herodotus, *Histories* 1.28.

112. Herodotus, *Fragment from Suda* Eta 536, in *Suda On Line*, tr. Phiroze Vasunia (The Stoa Consortium, 2000), <http://www.stoa.org/sol-entries/eta/536>.

113. Herodotus, *Histories* 1.1.0, tr. Godley.

114. David Braund, “Herodotus on the Problematics of Reciprocity,” in *Reciprocity in Ancient Greece*, ed. Richard Seaford, Norman Postlethwaite, and Christopher Gill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 178.

cultural, and racial identities emerge via an intermixing of endemic and imported elements as striking reflections of the ways in which the contours of identity remain fluidly shaped by “the composite, the impure, the heterogeneous, and the eclectic.”¹¹⁵

In Herodotus’ *Histories*, this postcolonial concept of hybridity helps to illuminate the syncretic processes of ethnic identity formation both within and beyond the context of the colonial encounter. By providing a framework for discerning the multiple and variable “interstitial passage[s] between fixed identifications,” such as Greek and barbarian identifications, the concept of hybridity also proves useful for challenging assessments of ancient identity as essential, unitary, or unambivalent.¹¹⁶ Indeed, ethnic identities in Herodotus’ *Histories*, including Greek and barbarian identities, appear at alternating points compositely constructed and mutually consolidated within a “middle space” of enunciation where strict barriers between ethnic groups become permeable and negotiable. It is in this “middle space” of negotiation where *hybridized* identities ultimately emerge.¹¹⁷ Herodotus’ attestation to the interconnectedness of Greek and non-Greek culture throughout his *Histories*, moreover, effectively “destabilizes... conventional notion[s] of culture and politics as ‘fixed,’”¹¹⁸ effectively “blurring the limitations of existing boundaries” between Greek and non-Greek.¹¹⁹

The Pelasgians appear at the center of this hybridizing tradition in Herodotus’ *Histories* as originally barbarian, and later Hellenized ancestors of the Attic Greeks (τὸ Ἀττικὸν ἔθνος), including the Ionians and the Athenians. With these groups’ descent from the Pelasgians,

115. Vanessa Guignery, Catherine Pessio-Miquel, and François Specq, eds. *Hybridity: Forms and Figures in Literature and the Visual Arts* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011), 13.

116. Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 4.

117. Paul Meredith, “Hybridity in the Third Space: Rethinking Bi-cultural Politics in Aotearoa/New Zealand” (Paper presented at Te Oru Rangahau Maori Research and Development Conference, Massey University, 1998); Bhabha, *Location*, 37.

118. Susan McWilliams, “Hybridity in Herodotus,” *Political Research Quarterly* 66.4 (2013): 745–55. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23612054>.

119. Meredith, “Hybridity,” 3.

Herodotus ethnically distinguishes them from the Hellenic Dorian Spartans as genealogically non-Hellenic stock. Herodotus states that the Spartans are of Hellenic Doric stock by their descent from Doros, son of Hellen, mythological ancestor of the entire Hellenic ethnos (ἔθνος), “population” or “nation.”¹²⁰ As for the Ionian-Athenians, Herodotus considers them to be of “Pelasgian stock” for their descent from the Attic Pelasgians (ἐόντα τὸ ἀρχαῖον τὸ μὲν Πελασγικὸν ... ἔθνος), a formerly barbarian people who adopted the Ionian name under the military command of Ion, grandson of Hellen, during the hereditary rule of “earth-born” king of Athens Erechtheus.¹²¹

While Herodotus admits his uncertainty about the Pelasgians’ origins, he affirms their barbarity based on linguistic arrangements in contemporary Pelasgian settlements which he locates “above the Tyrsenians in the city of Creston,” most likely located in Thrace¹²² and at “Plakia and Skylake in the Hellespont.” Here, Herodotus judges, based on the linguistic barbarity of the contemporary Pelasgians, that the Attic Pelasgian ancestors of the Athenians must have originally spoken a “barbarian language” (ἦσαν οἱ Πελασγοὶ βάρβαρον γλῶσσαν ἰέντες).¹²³ In parallel, Herodotus affirms the Dorian Spartans’ ethnic Hellenism by reference to their enduring

120. Herodotus, *Histories* 1.56, tr. Godley.

121. Homer, *Iliad* 2.547, tr. Murray; Herodotus, *Histories* 8.44.2, tr. Godley. As an “earth-born” founding king of Athens, the figure of Erechtheus and his doublet Erechthonius play critical roles in later fifth-century BCE articulations of Athenian autochthony. For Herodotus, the Athenians’ heritage remains rooted in their descent from the barbarian Attic Pelasgians, a link which distinguishes them from the Hellenic Dorians as a formerly barbarian people.

122. R. A. McNeal, “How Did Pelasgians Become Hellenes? Herodotus I. 56–58,” *Illinois Classical Studies* 10.1 (1985): 14, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23062530>: “Although there is no mention of a town of Creston in Thrace which must be wholly independent of Herodotus, the historian himself does elsewhere mention a town of Creston in Thrace (V. 3) and says that Xerxes’ army twice passed through Thracian Crestonia, which lay east of Mygdonia and the river Echeidorus (VII. 124; VIII. 116). These statements at least are quite compatible with a Thracian Creston in chapter 57. And of course Thucydides, who knew the north Aegean well, says specifically (IV. 109) that the Crestonians living in Thrace were Pelasgian and Tyrrhenian.” Herodotus’ (*Histories* 2.51) attestation to an ancient migration or settlement of Pelasgians on the northeastern Aegean island of Samothrace just south of the Thracian coast soundly situates the Pelasgians in the northeastern Aegean, substantiating scholars’ location of Creston in Thrace.

123. Herodotus, *Histories* 1.57, tr. Godley: Πελασγῶν τῶν ὑπὲρ Τυρσηνῶν Κρηστῶνα πόλιν οἰκεόντων, οἱ ὅμοιοι κοτὲ ἦσαν τοῖσι νῦν Δωριεῦσι καλεομένοισι (οἴκεον δὲ τηνικαῦτα γῆν τὴν νῦν Θεσσαλιῶτιν καλεομένην) καὶ τῶν Πλακίην τε καὶ Σκυλάκην Πελασγῶν οἰκησάντων ἐν Ἑλλησπόντῳ.

use of the Greek language, holding that the Dorians have “always used the same [Greek] language.”¹²⁴ Herodotus’ assessment of Pelasgian and Dorian linguistic arrangements effectively identifies the Pelasgians as ethnically barbarian, reifying the ethnic boundaries between the barbarian Pelasgians and Hellenic Dorians.

Despite their barbarian origins, however, Herodotus also attests that the Attic Pelasgians ultimately “became Hellenic” (Πελασγικὸν ἅμα τῇ μεταβολῇ τῇ ἐς Ἑλληνας) with their adoption of the Greek language (τὸ Ἀττικὸν ἔθνος ἐὼν Πελασγικὸν ἅμα τῇ μεταβολῇ τῇ ἐς Ἑλληνας καὶ τὴν γλῶσσαν μετέμαθε), centering the Pelasgians in the historian’s account of the growth and consolidation of the whole of the Hellenic ethnos. Indeed, Herodotus credits the Hellenization of the formerly barbarian Pelasgians for the increase and prosperity of the whole of the Hellenic ethnos, including the Hellenic Dorians, a group once “weak” (ἀσθενές) when living apart (ἀποσχισθὲν) from the Pelasgians.¹²⁵ Herodotus’ account of the Pelasgians’ early Hellenization also positions the originally Pelasgian Athenians and Ionians as assimilated Hellenes, illuminating the permeability of ancient ethnic boundaries and affirming the significance of linguistic unity and linguistic change for the consolidation of the Hellenic ethnos.¹²⁶

In connection with their barbarian origins, Herodotus also identifies the Pelasgians as the earliest habitants of Greece and the Athenians and Ionians as permanent habitants of Attica. Herodotus names the Athenians of “Ionian stock” a “Pelasgian race” that “has never left its home.”¹²⁷ This attestation contrasts Herodotus’ account of the Dorians’ historical migrations from central Greece into the Peloponnese under the leadership of Hellen’s son Doros.¹²⁸ It also

124. Herodotus, *Histories* 1.58, tr. Godley.

125. Herodotus, *Histories* 1.58, tr. Godley. Herodotus says that the Hellenic nation as a whole (Ἑλληνικὸν) “increased in great number” (αὐξήται ἐς πλῆθος) with the incorporation of the formerly barbarian Pelasgians.

126. Herodotus, *Histories* 1.57.

127. Herodotus, *Histories* 1.56, tr. Godley.

128. Herodotus, *Histories* 1.56.

connects the Pelasgians to the earliest Greek history – a connection reflected in Herodotus’ accounts of ancient Greek toponymy and cultural sites. In the story about the foundation of the oracle of Dodona, an oracle linked to the Pelasgians as early as Homer, Herodotus dubs the whole of ancient Hellas “Pelasgia,” affirming the Pelasgians primeval influence in Greece.¹²⁹ Herodotus also credits the Pelasgians with the adoption of the Egyptian names of the Greek gods – an adoption confirmed by the Pelasgians’ consultation with the ancient oracle of Dodona at a time when this oracle alone existed in Greece.

The fact that, in Herodotus’ account, the Pelasgians adopted the Egyptian names of the Greek gods also positions them as central to the development of Greek ethno-cultural identity. Herodotus’ *Histories* identifies shared religious belief and practices as one key feature for the formation and expression of a collective Greek ethno-cultural identity.¹³⁰ In Book 8, the Athenians reject Persian military commander Mardonios’ request that they ally with the advancing Persians to avoid “prov[ing] traitors to the Greeks with whom we share the same blood (ὁμαιμόν) and language (ὁμόγλωσσον), with whom we have established shrines and conduct sacrifices to the gods, and with whom we also share the same mode of life.”¹³¹ The Pelasgians’ role in the adoption of the Greek names of the gods thus connects them to the development of common Greek shrines and religious practices which, taken in hand with

129. Herodotus, *Histories* 2.56, tr. Godley. According to Herodotus the oracle of Dodona was founded by a black dove from Egypt miraculously capable of “human speech” (φωνῇ ἀνθρωπηίῃ) who declared the oak at Dodona a sacred site for the construction of an oracular shrine. By Herodotus’ interpretation, this “black dove” at Dodona was an Egyptian handmaid from the temple of Zeus in Thebes kidnapped by the Phoenicians, transported to ancient “Hellas,” then called “Pelasgia,” and sold as a slave in the city of Thesprotia near Dodona. Because the Egyptian woman spoke a barbarian language, the people of Dodona likened her unfamiliar speech to the unintelligible, inhuman cry of a dove (πελειάς). Once the woman adopted the “human speech” of the Greek language, the people of Dodona embraced her divinations and established the oracle at Dodona upon her request. Here, at Dodona in the region of “Pelasgia,” the Pelasgians arrive in early antiquity to confirm the adoption of the barbarian Egyptian names of the Greek gods.

130. Herodotus, *Histories* 1.131; 4.59.2.

131. Herodotus, *Histories* 8.144, tr. Godley: αὐτίς δὲ τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν ἐὼν ὁμαιμόν τε καὶ ὁμόγλωσσον καὶ θεῶν ἰδρύματά τε κοινὰ καὶ θυσίαι ἡθεῖα τε ὁμότροπα, τῶν προδότας γενέσθαι Ἀθηναίους οὐκ ἂν εὖ ἔχοι.

common descent and language, help to ethnically distinguish the Greeks from their barbarian neighbors.

In the development of the Greeks' common "mode of life," presumably embodied in the Greeks' political and civic institutions, the Pelasgians also emerge central for their role in the consolidation of Greek religious cult. Greek civic institutions, which set the shared coordinates for Greek political and civic life, also provided "a common framework for religious practice," positioning Greek religious cult and participation "in lockstep with the civic ideal."¹³² In the late Archaic and Classical periods, this civic, or political, ideal increasingly corresponded to the development of a superior Hellenic identity unified against the barbarian Persian threat. The celebration of Panhellenic festivals at Delphi, Olympia, and Eleusis throughout the Archaic and Classical periods, for example, correspond to the development of a unified ethno-cultural and political identity across the Greek world.¹³³ Moreover, Herodotus calls the pharaoh Amasis of Egypt a "philhellene" (φιλέλλην) for allowing the Greek colonists to construct shrines to their gods at the Panhellenic Greek port colony of Naucratis, Egypt, including the Panhellenic sanctuary of the Hellenion. This indicates that Greek cult was central for the articulation, expression, and universal intelligibility of Hellenic identity.¹³⁴ In this context, Herodotus' story about the Pelasgians assigning names to the Greek gods after their consultation with the oracle of Dodona positions the Pelasgians at the center of the historical and mythological origins of Greek

132. Pierre Bonnechere, "The Religious Management of the Polis: Oracles and Political Decision-Making," in *A Companion to Greek Government*, ed. Hans Beck (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 368. These institutions included, for example, the gene, from which the Eleusinian priests were drawn and the phratry, a social "brotherhood" which united Athenians in the worship of Zeus Phratrios and Athena Phratia. The state also appointed Athenian *exegetai*, who appear in Plato as interpreters of sacred law sanctioned by the oracle at Delphi.

133. Bonnechere, "Religious Management," 367.

134. Herodotus, *Histories* 2.178.1. See also: Denise Demetriou, *Negotiating Identity in the Ancient Mediterranean: The Archaic and Classical Greek Multiethnic Emporia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 7: "All these examples show that the polytheistic nature of Mediterranean religions with their highly differentiated divinities created a space in which there was a universal religious language shared by the various groups inhabiting this region."

religious cult and links the Attic Pelasgians to the development of Greek civic and ethnic identity.

Beyond the Pelasgians' link to ancient Attica, the Pelasgians also appear among the early habitants of Asia Minor and the Peloponnese. Along the coast of Asia Minor, Herodotus first locates the "Pelasgid city" of Antandrus (Ἀντανδρον τὴν Πελασγίδα) near the region of Aeolis – a region named after its Aeolian migrants from the Attic regions of Thessaly and Boeotia.¹³⁵ Here, Herodotus specifically names the Aeolians a Pelasgian people, (Αἰολέες...πάλαι καλεόμενοι Πελασγοί) linking Pelasgian Antandrus to the Pelasgian Aeolians of Attica and Asia Minor.¹³⁶ According to Herodotus, the Athenian-Ionian colonists of Asia Minor, even those drawn from the Prytaneion of Athens, share this Pelasgian origin, again affirming the Athenian and Ionians' hybrid ethnicity as Hellenized barbarians.¹³⁷ Herodotus also identifies an alternative group of Pelasgians along with the ethnically Pelasgian Panionian colonists of Asia Minor, namely, a group of autochthonous "Arcadian Pelasgians." Apparently, Herodotus draws from Hesiodic tradition that links an autochthonous Pelasgus to the Arcadians via his son Lycaon. Yet he nowhere references this autochthonous Pelasgus, revealing the functional independence of the concept of autochthony and the idea of earth-born ancestors. Instead, Herodotus simply names the Arcadian Pelasgians as autochthonous inhabitants of the Peloponnesus, who together with the autochthonous Kynourians "remain settled in the same places they inhabited in ancient times."¹³⁸ Herodotus also says that these autochthonous Kynourians were originally of Ionian stock, and this further links the Pelasgian Ionians to the native habitants of the Peloponnesus.¹³⁹ Moreover,

135. Herodotus, *Histories* 7.42, tr. Godley.

136. Herodotus, *Histories* 7.95, tr. Godley.

137. Herodotus, *Histories* 1.146.

138. Herodotus, *Histories* 8.73, tr. Godley: τούτων δὲ τὰ μὲν δύο αὐτόχθονα ἔοντα κατὰ χώραν ἵδρυται νῦν τε καὶ τὸ πάλαι οἶκεον, Ἀρκάδες τε καὶ Κυνοῦριοι.

139. Herodotus, *Histories* 8.73.

Herodotus attributes the origins of the twelve divisions of the Ionians of Asia Minor to the region of Achaea in the Peloponnesus where a group of Pelasgian Ionians originally lived in twelve groups before the Achaeans drove them out.¹⁴⁰ Finally, the Ionians of Asia Minor remain clearly linked to an ancient group of “Pelasgian Aigialees” in Achaea in the Peloponnesus who, as Herodotus attests, took the name “Ionian” upon the arrival of Ion, grandson of Hellen, in the Peloponnesus. This again links the Ionians to various Pelasgian groups of the Peloponnesus.¹⁴¹

In connection with the Pelasgian habitants of the Peloponnesus, Herodotus attributes the origin of the Hellenic practice of the Thesmophoria rite of Demeter to the native Arcadian habitants of the Peloponnese; this rite was apparently transmitted from the Egyptians to the Peloponnesian Pelasgians by the daughters of Danaos. The arrival of the Danaids in the Peloponnese and their stirring plea to Pelasgus, king of Argos, for protection from their Egyptian cousins serves as the dramatic focus of Aeschylus’ *Suppliants* (c. 460 BCE). While Herodotus’ account appears later than the *Suppliants*, his story dates the event to early Greek history and connects it with the Pelasgian habitants of the Peloponnesus, a region ruled in the *Suppliants* by King Pelasgus. Herodotus thus attests that the Danaids transmitted the mysteries of the Thesmophoria to the “Pelasgian women” (Πελασγιώτιδας γυναῖκας) of the Peloponnese in early antiquity.¹⁴² With the displacement of the original populations from the Peloponnese by the Dorians, however, the ritual eventually died out, remaining in active observance only among the autochthonous Arcadians. The Pelasgians and Arcadians, linked in the Archaic tradition by Pelasgus’ son Lycaon, thus reappear in Classical accounts intimately linked via their permanent,

140. Herodotus, *Histories* 1.145.

141. Herodotus, *Histories* 7.95, tr. Godley.

142. Herodotus, *Histories* 2.171, tr. Godley.

or autochthonous, habitation of Greece, their mutual interactions with the Pelasgian Ionians, and their common inheritance of the Thesmophoria rite in the Peloponnese.¹⁴³

Based on these numerous accounts, the Pelasgians boast multiple links to the Ionians of Asia Minor and the native habitants the Peloponnesus, including the Ionian Kynourians, Pelasgian Aigialees, and Pelasgian Arcadians. While one group of Arcadian Pelasgians migrated to dwell among the Ionian colonists of Asia Minor, they remain linked to the autochthonous Arcadian Pelasgians of the Peloponnesus. This illustrates the wide dispersal of the Pelasgians as well as their integral role in the foundation of Ionian and Arcadian communities in Asia Minor and the Peloponnesus.¹⁴⁴ Despite the close links between Pelasgian and Ionian populations in the Peloponnese, the Arcadian Pelasgians, an autochthonous group living along with the equally autochthonous, but originally Ionian Kynourians, emerge in Herodotus' *Histories* as both genealogically non-Hellenic and distinctly non-Ionian ethnic elements intermixed with the colonists of the Panionian.¹⁴⁵

As for the originally barbarian Pelasgian Athenians, it is only the adoption of the Ionian name after Ion that effectively situates them in the Hellenic genealogy. This became the final step in the process of their Hellenization, which saw the Athenian ethnonym shift from "Cranai" referring to Pelasgians in Attica, to "Cecropidae" under the rule of king Cecrops, to "Athenians" under the rule of king Erechtheus, and finally to "Ionians" under the military command of Ion.¹⁴⁶ This link to the eponymous Ion served to legitimize the Athenians' political ties to the Ionian colonies of Asia Minor and other Ionian territories throughout the Mediterranean. Historian M.

143. Herodotus, *Histories* 2.171.

144. Ephorus elaborates on this connection by identifying the Pelasgians as an Arcadian tribe. See: Strabo, *Geography* 5.2.4.

145. As autochthons, whether by descent from Pelasgus or from an unnamed autochthonous ancestor, the Arcadians are by definition genealogically non-Hellenic. So too are the primeval Pelasgians with whom the Arcadians are consistently connected.

146. Herodotus, *Histories* 8.44.2, tr. Godley.

Sakellariou holds that the Ionian-Athenian link to the Ionian colonies of Asia Minor was intentionally “invented” following the Ionian revolt against Persia (499 BCE) by Athenians “...who were eager to base claims of sovereignty over the Ionian cities by means of kinship,” thereby extending Athenian influence across the Aegean.¹⁴⁷ Herodotus appears to be acutely aware of the powerful sentiment invested in this Ionian-Athenian link and its role in shaping Athenian political policy and ambitions. In Book 9 of the *Histories*, the Athenians resist “vehemently” (ἀντιτεινόντων δὲ τούτων προθύμως) the Peloponnesians’ plan to remove all the Greeks from Ionia, refusing to allow the Peloponnesians to “determine the lot of the Athenian colonies” (οὐδὲ Πελοποννησίοισι περὶ τῶν σφετερέων ἀποικιέων βουλεύειν).¹⁴⁸ Herodotus corroborates this Ionian-Athenian link in his account of the Athenians’ role in the settlement of the Panionion. In this story, however, he also emphasizes the reality of ethnic diversity and intermixing among the Ionian colonists of Asia Minor, underplaying claims of “pure” Athenian-Ionian ethnicity (κάλλιον τι γέγονασι) among the Panionian colonists:

for it would be foolishness to say that these [Panionian Ionians] are more truly Ionian or better born than the other Ionians; since not the least part of them are Abantes from Euboea, who are not Ionians even in name, and there are mingled with them Minyans of Orchomenus, Cadmeans, Dryopians, Phocian renegades from their nation, Molossians, Pelasgian Arcadians, Dorians of Epidaurus, and many other tribes; and as for those who came from the very town-hall of Athens and think they are the best born of the Ionians, these did not bring wives with them to their settlements, but married Carian women whose parents they had put to death.

ἐπεὶ ὥς γέ τι μᾶλλον οὗτοι Ἴωνες εἰσὶ τῶν ἄλλων Ἰώνων ἢ κάλλιον τι γέγονασι, μωρὴ πολλὴ λέγειν: τῶν Ἀβαντες μὲν ἐξ Εὐβοίας εἰσὶ οὐκ ἐλαχίστη μοῖρα, τοῖσι Ἰωνίης μέτα οὐδὲ τοῦ οὐνόματος οὐδέν, Μινύαι δὲ Ὀρχομένιοι σφι ἀναμεμίσχεται καὶ Καδμεῖοι καὶ Δρύορες καὶ Φωκέες ἀποδάσμιοι καὶ Μολοσσοὶ καὶ Ἀρκάδες Πελασγοὶ καὶ Δωριεὺς Ἐπιδάυριοι, ἄλλα τε ἔθνηα πολλὰ ἀναμεμίσχεται: οἱ δὲ αὐτῶν

147. W.R. Connor, “The Ionian Era of Athenian Civic Identity,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 137.2 (1993): 196, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/986729>; Michael Sakellariou, *Between Memory and Oblivion. The Transmission of Early Greek Historical Traditions* (Athens: Research Center for Greek and Roman Antiquity, National Hellenic Research Foundation/de Boccard, 1990), 137.

148. Herodotus, *Histories* 9.106, tr. Godley.

ἀπὸ τοῦ πρυτανηίου τοῦ Ἀθηναίων ὀρμηθέντες καὶ νομίζοντες γενναιότατοι εἶναι
Ἰόνων, οὗτοι δὲ οὐ γυναῖκας ἡγάγοντο ἐς τὴν ἀποικίην ἀλλὰ Καείρας ἔσχον, τῶν
ἐφόνευσαν τοὺς γονέας.¹⁴⁹

Herodotus also reports Athenian general Themistocles' claim to kinship between the Athenians and Ionians in his inscription at the Artemision in northeastern Euboea urging the Ionians "born of us [the Athenians]" (μεμνημένοι ὅτι ἀπ' ἡμέων γεγονάτε) to defect from the Persians.¹⁵⁰ More tellingly, however, Herodotus reports the Athenians' rejection of their Ionian kinship, indicating that the Athenians were "ashamed" of the Ionian name (ἐπαισχύνεσθαι τῷ οὐνόματι).¹⁵¹ In this vein, Herodotus retrospectively explains the reorganization and renaming of the ten Athenian tribes by the Athenian reformer Cleisthenes (late sixth century BCE) to his enduring "attitude of contempt toward the Ionians" and his attendant wish to "assure that the names of the Athenian tribes would not match those of the Ionians."¹⁵² In his reflections on the Ionians and the Athenians, Herodotus affirms their connections by asserting the groups' mutual Pelasgian descent, yet his work also reveals that the link between them is historically unstable in Athenian identity discourses. In other words, Herodotus' account of Pelasgian, Ionian, and Athenian identity illuminates the permeability and adaptability of ethnic boundaries and affinities in which the social construction of "[b]eing Ionian (or Dorian, or Aeolian)...was a decision...not an automatic inheritance from one's ancestors."¹⁵³

With the Ionians' loss of prestige in the course of the Greco-Persian wars, the Athenians' final repudiation of their Ionian kinship reflects a strategic "severing of mythical, ideological, and societal ties with the broader Ionian community" coincident with the Athenians' shift to a

149. Herodotus, *Histories* 1.146, tr. Godley.

150. Herodotus, *Histories* 8.22.2, tr. Godley.

151. Herodotus, *Histories* 1.143.3, tr. Godley.

152. Herodotus, *Histories* 5.69, tr. Godley.

153. W. R. Connor, "The Ionian Era," 198.

reliance on myths of autochthony as powerful assertions of Athenian primacy and exceptionalism.¹⁵⁴ The Athenians linked Archaic myths about their ancient earth-born king Erechtheus, who appears as an earth-born founder of Athens as early as Homer's *Iliad*,¹⁵⁵ with myths of their permanent habitation of Attica. The merging of chthonic associations of the story about Erechtheus with the idea of their autochthonous (permanent) living in Attica helped the Athenians create their distinct myth of autochthony.

Herodotus affirms the Athenian's claims to permanent habitation in Attica in his account of the Athenians' descent from the primeval Attic Pelasgians and Ionians who, as he asserts, never migrated from their homeland. He also affirms their powerful claims to being superior in their "Greekness" – the claims were rooted in the concept of "noble birth" (εὐγένεια) traced from a lineage of ancestors "distinguished for virtue."¹⁵⁶ In Book 7 of the *Histories*, Athenians boast "the longest lineage of all" as a people "who have never changed [their] place of habitation" in attempt to justify their refusal to yield their superior military forces to the command of the Syracusans.¹⁵⁷ The historian nowhere describes the Athenians specifically as "autochthonous," however, nor does he trace their descent from earth-born Erechtheus. Instead, Herodotus calls the Athenians permanent habitants of Attica only by descent from the native, originally *barbarian* Pelasgians.¹⁵⁸ Herodotus also notes that the Athenians were incorporated into the Hellenic *ethnos* later, after the incorporation of the comparably ethnically "pure" Dorian Spartans. These stories

154. Rosivach, "Autochthony and the Athenians," 297. According to Rosivach, Athenian claims to autochthony in Classical discourses functioned "not simply [as claims] of difference, but [as claims] of superiority." See also: Rosalind Thomas, *Herodotus in Context: Ethnography, Science and the Art of Persuasion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 117.

155. Homer, *Iliad* 2.547, tr. Murray: Ἐρεχθῆος μεγάλητορος, ὃν ποτ' Ἀθήνη θρέψε Διὸς θυγάτηρ, τέκε δὲ ζεῖδωρος ἄρουρα.

156. Aristotle, *Art of Rhetoric* 1360b, tr. J. H. Freese, Loeb Classical Library 193 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926).

157. Herodotus, *Histories* 7.161, tr. Godley.

158. Herodotus, *Histories* 1.56.

about Pelasgians help Herodotus rationalize and qualify statements about Athenian identity and autochthony adapted and promoted during the rise of the Athenian empire with the goal to legitimize the increasing hegemony of Athenians and their political priority in Greece and around the Aegean.

In addition to this crucial link between Pelasgians and Athenians, Herodotus also records a tradition of Pelasgian-Athenian conflict in Attica and on the island of Lemnos. This demonstrates the alternative – namely, oppositional – role that the Pelasgians played in the construction of Athenian identity. Drawing on accounts from Archaic historian Hecataeus of Miletus and the Athenians themselves, Herodotus says that the Athenians once allowed a group of presumably barbarian Pelasgians to settle in Attica at the foot of Mount Hymettos just southeast of Athens as payment to the Pelasgians for their construction of the wall around the Athenian Acropolis.¹⁵⁹ According to Hecataeus, the Athenians eventually grew envious of the Pelasgians’ superior agricultural skills and fertile plow-land at the foot of Mount Hymettos and opted to “unjustly” (ἀδίκως) expel the Pelasgians from Attica. According to Athenian tradition, however, attested in Herodotus, the Athenians justly expelled the Pelasgians from Attica for their repeated attacks on the Athenians at the “Nine Springs” (ἐννεάκρουνον) near Mount Hymettos. The Athenians used to gather water there and regularly encountered violent Pelasgians who “violat[ed]” the Athenians out of sheer “contempt.” When the Athenians finally discovered a Pelasgian plan to attack the city of Athens directly, they opted to “justly” expel the Pelasgians from Attica, forcing them to flee across the Aegean to northeastern island of Lemnos.¹⁶⁰ At Lemnos, the slighted Pelasgians sought revenge for their expulsion from Attica by kidnapping unattended Athenian women at the festival of Artemis at Brauron. Held hostage as concubines

159. Herodotus, *Histories* 6.137.

160. Herodotus, *Histories* 6.137, tr. Godley.

on the island of Lemnos and forced to bear children to the Pelasgian-Lemnians, the kidnapped Athenian women staunchly resisted assimilation into the Pelasgian-Lemnian community by teaching their children “the language of Attica and the customs of the Athenians” (γλῶσσάν τε τὴν Ἀττικὴν καὶ τρόπους τοὺς Ἀθηναίων).¹⁶¹ With these powerful ethno-cultural links to their Athenian heritage, the Athenian children distinguished themselves from the Pelasgians, “determin[ing] to help one another in opposition to [the Pelasgians]” and “deem[ing] it their “right to rule over and dominate” the Pelasgians (ἐβοήθεόν τε πάντες καὶ ἐτιμώρεον ἀλλήλοισι: καὶ δὴ καὶ ἄρχειν τε τῶν παίδων οἱ παῖδες ἐδικαίουν καὶ πολλῶ ἐπεκράτεον).¹⁶² Fearing the power of the ethnically and culturally unified Athenian children, the Pelasgian men opted to slaughter the Athenian children and their mothers, a “savage” act enduringly associated with Lemnian brutality.¹⁶³ In this account, clear ethnic divisions emerge between the Athenians and the Pelasgians at Attica and Lemnos, presenting the barbarian Pelasgians in opposition to specifically Athenian and broader Greek identity.¹⁶⁴

The conflict between Pelasgians and Athenians in Attica and Lemnos was probably familiar to Athenian general Miltiades who framed his conquest of Lemnos as a way to “punish” the Pelasgians for their offenses. This punishment appears sanctioned by the gods, since after the Pelasgians murdered the Athenian women and children at Lemnos, their community was struck by famine and plague. Desperate for a turn of fate, the Pelasgians traveled to consult the oracle at Delphi, who insisted that the Pelasgians should pay a penalty to the Athenians for their offenses. The Pelasgians, however, refused to pay the penalty the Athenians demanded from them,

161. Herodotus, *Histories* 6.138, tr. Godley.

162. Herodotus, *Histories* 6.138, tr. Godley.

163. Herodotus, *Histories* 6.138.4, tr. Godley. This tale is one source for the Greeks’ “Lemnian crime” proverb for acts of cruelty.

164. Herodotus, *Histories* 6.137–6.140.

namely, to relinquish Lemnos to Athenian control. Instead, the Pelasgians held that they would only relinquish Lemnos “when a ship sails with the north wind and completes the journey from your land to ours in the same day.” Years later, Miltiades indeed arrived on the island of Lemnos within a single day, and this journey fulfilled the prophecy. When the Pelasgians of Myrina, a city on Lemnos, again refused to relinquish their island, Miltiades besieged and captured the island.¹⁶⁵ The role Lemnian Pelasgians played as enemies of the Greeks legitimizes the capture of the island by Athenians under Miltiades. This was presented as a penalty for their prior offenses. The Athenian annexation of the island during the Greco-Persian wars was thus rationalized as a consequence of historical Athenian-Pelasgian tensions.

In another brief account, Herodotus mentions the Pelasgian settlement at Lemnos in connection with the expulsion of the sons of the Argonauts, the crew of the ship *Argo* who sailed with Jason in the hero’s quest for the Golden Fleece.¹⁶⁶ The *Pythian Ode* 4 (462 BCE) by the Greek poet Pindar is probably the earliest attestation to the visit of Argonauts to Lemnos. This happened during their journey and prior to the migration of Pelasgians to the island. When the *Argo* was docked at Lemnos, the Argonauts impulsively sired children with the murderous Lemnian women. Herodotus mentions these sons of the Argonauts in his account.¹⁶⁷ In his story, the sons of the Argonauts, driven from Lemnos by the Pelasgians, travel to Lacedaemon (Sparta, Laconia) and settled on Mount Taygetos. When questioned by the Spartans about their origins, the Lemnians say that they are Minyans descended from the Argonauts; they also mention their expulsion from Lemnos by the Pelasgians and claim that they had now returned to Laconia, the land of their fathers. The Spartans ultimately accept the Minyans’ genealogical and territorial

165. Herodotus, *Histories* 6.140, tr. Godley.

166. Herodotus, *Histories* 4.145–4.146.

167. Pindar, *Pythian Odes* 4.250–55; See also: Homer, *Odyssey* 12.39 and Strabo, *Geography* 1.2.40.

claims based on kinship, recalling that the sons of Tyndareus, a legendary king of Sparta, had indeed participated in the voyage of the *Argo*. This account thus presents the Minyans of Laconia as migrants of Lemnos, while the Pelasgians happened to be useful to explain this migration. This episode also illustrates the ways in which Pelasgians became instrumentalized in historicizing narratives about migrations of various ethnic groups throughout the Greek world.¹⁶⁸

Finally, Herodotus credits the Athenian tradition of constructing the Hermes tribute statues in ithyphallic style to a group of Samothracian Pelasgians. Apparently, this group of Pelasgians introduced the Hermes when they came to settle among the Athenians.¹⁶⁹ The island of Samothrace is located in the northeastern Aegean adjacent to Lemnos where the Pelasgians fled when expelled by the Athenians from Attica. Herodotus seems to connect the Pelasgians on Samothrace with the Pelasgians on Lemnos. At Samothrace, as Herodotus mentions, the Pelasgians introduced the mysteries of the Cabeiroi to the Samothracians, an obscure cult dedicated to the twin sons of Hephaestus. The cult is local to the island of Lemnos with which Hephaestus is closely associated.¹⁷⁰ Herodotus' attestation to a Pelasgian settlement in Attica, on the island of Lemnos, and on the nearby island of Samothrace delineates a certain path of Pelasgian migration, linking them to both Attica and the northeastern Aegean. Since Samothrace with its legendary Pelasgian settlement is just off the Thracian coast, the suggestion that the city of Creston "above the Tyrsenians," where Herodotus places contemporary Pelasgians, is located in Thrace receives an indirect confirmation. As we will see, the Tyrsenians were a group connected with both the Pelasgians and the Lemnians in later Classical, Hellenistic, and Roman era accounts.

168. Herodotus, *Histories* 4.145–4.146.

169. Herodotus, *Histories* 2.51.

170. For a discussion of the Cabeiroi see Strabo, *Geography* 10.3.21. For a discussion of Hephaestus at Lemnos see Homer, *Iliad* 1.590 and Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica* 1.3.5.

2.1.2 CONCLUDING REMARKS ON HERODOTUS

In Herodotus' *Histories*, various Greek identities emerge at the intersections of Pelasgian barbarity and a burgeoning Hellenism ushered in by the Greek-speaking Dorians, a conceptually *hybrid* space in which the boundaries between barbarian and Greek become vitally negotiable.¹⁷¹ As primeval inhabitants of Attica, the Pelasgians feature as barbarian ancestors of the Ionians and the Athenians, groups Hellenized by their adoption of the Greek language and their nominal link to the Hellenic Ion. With the Ionian-Athenians unilateral movement from a space of linguistic barbarity to a space of linguistic Hellenism with the adoption of the Greek language, Herodotus exposes the utility and significance of language change for the process of hybridization and the consolidation of Greek ethnic identity. For Herodotus, hybridization and the movement toward linguistic unity were integral components in the overall process of Hellenization and the growth of the Hellenic ethnos. While the Pelasgians played a vital role in the establishment of Greek religious cult due to their adoption of the Egyptian names for the Greek gods, they also, according to Herodotus, contributed significantly to the construction of a unified Greek ethno-cultural identity. After the Greco-Persian wars, the Greeks championed this postulated linguistic and religious unity of different Greek groups as an invaluable factor of collective Hellenic identity – a collectivity which embraced an important, though dubious ideological statement that *all* the Greeks were united against the barbarian Persians.

In the post-war period, the Athenians tried to establish their hegemony over the Aegean. In doing so, the Athenians attempted to strategically underplay their kinship with the Ionians and Pelasgians as they forged their specific myths of autochthony. The fact that Herodotus chose to

171. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*; Meredith, "Hybridity in the Third Space."

elaborate on the traditions of the Athenians' descent from the Pelasgians, however, reveals certain inclinations to undercut the Athenians' claims to political priority and ethnic superiority in the Aegean. In this context, the Pelasgians played a key role in Herodotus' attempts to rationalize and qualify statements about Athenian identity. On the other hand, Herodotus' stories about Pelasgian-Athenian conflicts in Attica and on the island of Lemnos demonstrate an alternative role that the Pelasgians played in the construction of Athenian ethnic identity – namely, the role the Pelasgians played in opposition to the Athenians. Herodotus' account of Pelasgian-Athenian conflict on Lemnos also appears to legitimize, if not divinely sanction, the capture of the island by the Athenian general Miltiades as penalty for the offences the Athenians had earlier suffered from the Pelasgians. Contrary to the previous observation, Herodotus here seems to justify the Athenians' hegemonic extension into the Aegean in the post-war period.

Finally, Herodotus' account about a displaced group of native habitants of Lemnos descended from the adventuring Argonauts arriving in Laconia shows that the Pelasgians also were instrumentalized to explain the diverse ethnic composition of various regions throughout the Greek world. The echoes of their presence in the northeastern Aegean, including the island of Samothrace, and the fact that Herodotus places the contemporary Pelasgians at Creston, a city most likely located in Thrace, are important pieces of information. Herodotus describes Pelasgians at Creston as neighbors to the Tyrsenians, an equally ambiguous ancient group famous for their connections with Italy.¹⁷²

172. Herodotus, *Histories* 1.94; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.28, 1.30.

2.2.1 HELLANICUS OF LESBOS

Born in Mytilene on the island of Lesbos around 480 BCE, Greek logographer Hellanicus of Lesbos (c. 480–c. 395) was a contemporary of Herodotus.¹⁷³ Hellanicus' works fall primarily into three categories: mythographic, ethnographic, and chronographic. Some thirty fragmented works attributed to him survive, including the *Atthis*, a history of Attica outlining major events between 683 BCE and the close of the Peloponnesian war (431–405 BCE),¹⁷⁴ as well as the *Troica* and *Persica*, histories of Troy and Persia.¹⁷⁵

The Pelasgians first appear in a fragment of Hellanicus' *Phoronis* — a genealogical account of the Argive culture hero Phoroneus who is connected to the Pelasgians in both Archaic and later Hellenistic and Roman era accounts — recorded in the *Roman Antiquities* by Dionysius of Halicarnassus (60 BCE–7 BCE). Here, Hellanicus connects the Pelasgians of Thessaly to the Tyrrhenians (τυρρηνοὺς), a non-Greek, piratical people associated with Lemnos and Italy.¹⁷⁶ For Herodotus, these Tyrrhenians are known as the “Tyrsenians” (Τυρσηνῶν), whom appear in Herodotus' *Histories* as neighbors of the Pelasgians at Creston, presumably in Thrace. According to Herodotus, the Tyrsenians were a Lydian people, part of whom migrated earlier to Umbria in Italy under the leadership of Tyrsenos (Τυρσηνόν), the son of king Atys.¹⁷⁷ According to Hellanicus, however, the Tyrrhenians were a Pelasgian people from Thessaly whom the Greeks forced from their homeland during the reign of king Teutamides. The Pelasgians then migrated to Italy under the leadership of Nanas, a great-grandson of Thessalian king Phrastor, who in turn

173. Frances Pownall, “Hellanikos of Lesbos (4),” In *Jacoby Online*, ed. Ian Worthington, Stefan Schorn, Hans-Joachim Gehrke, Felix K. Maier, Veronica Bucciattini (Leiden: Brill, 2007), <https://scholarlyeditions.brill.com/bnjo/>.

174. Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.97.

175. Robert Louis Fowler, *Early Greek Mythography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 2:684.

176. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.28.

177. Herodotus, *Histories* 1.94, tr. Godley.

was a descendant of Pelasgus by Mennipe, daughter of the river Peneios in Thessaly.¹⁷⁸ In Italy, the Pelasgians captured the city of Croton and colonized the region of Tyrrhenia before adopting the Tyrrhenian name.¹⁷⁹ Apparently drawing from the account by Hellanicus, Dionysius of Halicarnassus connects the Pelasgians to the group known as Aborigines, ancestral habitants of Italy associated in later tradition with the Latins and participating in a war against the Italian Sicels.¹⁸⁰ According to Hellanicus, the Sicels, formerly known as the Ausonians, migrated from Italy to Sicily “in the third generation before the Trojan War” to escape attacks by the allied Aborigines and Pelasgians in Italy.¹⁸¹ Based on Hellanicus’ account, Dionysius depicts the Pelasgians alongside the aboriginal inhabitants of ancient Italy. The tradition connecting the Pelasgians to Italy reappears with particular salience in Hellenistic and Roman era accounts as writers sought to clarify the links between the Greeks and Romans and to explain the close connections between the Greek and Roman worlds. The Tyrrhenian–Pelasgian link introduced by Hellanicus appears as an intriguing feature of late Classical tradition instrumentalized strategically in on-going discussions of identity.¹⁸²

Another fragment attributed to Hellanicus by Greek grammarian Harpocration (second century CE) in his *Lexicon on Ten Attic Orators* corroborates the information about Pelasgians living in Thessaly cited above by Dionysius of Halicarnassus. In this fragment, Harpocration also describes the division of Thessaly into four parts, or *tetrades* (τετράσι), and says that, according to Hellanicus, the parts were named “Thettaliotis, Phthiotis, Pelasgiotis, and Hestiaiots”

178. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.28; 1.30.3.

179. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.28.3.

180. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.22.1–5, 1.45.1, tr. Earnest Cary, Loeb Classical Library 319 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1937): “This settlement they called Rome, after Romulus, who was the leader of the colony and the seventeenth in descent from Aeneas.”

181. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.22.1–5.

182. Strabo, *Geography* 5.2.3.

(Θετταλιῶτιν Φθιῶτιν Πελασγιῶτιν Ἑστιαῖῶτιν) by a certain Pelasgus.¹⁸³ Again drawing on Hellanicus' testimony, Dionysius mentions that this Pelasgus migrated from the Peloponnesus to Thessaly in the sixth generation following the death of Phoroneus.¹⁸⁴ A later fragment of Hellanicus recorded in the *Scholia Argonautica* (fifteenth century CE) also refers to the division of Thessaly and suggests an additional link between the Pelasgians and Pelasgiotis by locating a city of Larissa, one of several named after the obscure daughter of Pelasgus, in the region of Pelasgiotis, Thessaly.¹⁸⁵

A late fragment attributed to Hellanicus by Eustathius of Thessalonica (1115 CE–1195 CE) links the Pelasgians to Argos in the Peloponnesus, recalling Archaic and earlier Classical stories about the Argive and Arcadian origins of the Pelasgians. According to Eustathius, Hellanicus describes Pelasgus as the eldest son of Argive culture hero Phoroneus and credits him with the founding of an Argive city of Larissa near the Erasinos River.¹⁸⁶ An obscure fragment of Hellanicus' *On Argos* recorded by the anonymous authors of the *Scholia to the Iliad*, however, attests to an alternative tradition that identifies Pelasgus as a son of the Argive king Triopas,¹⁸⁷ but again places him in Argos at his settlement of Argive Larissa near the river Erasinos.¹⁸⁸ Two distinct Argive Pelasguses thus appear in fragments attributed to Hellanicus, while a third Thessalian Pelasgus appears as a founder of Pelasgiotis.

183. Hellanicus, *Fragment* 52, in *Die Fragmente*, ed. Jacoby.

184. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.40–1. This division, mythical or historical, is dated by a fragment of Aristotle's *Constitution of Thessaly* to end of the sixth century BCE around the time of Aleuas the Red, legendary red-haired king of Thessaly. See: Bruno Helly, *L'État thessalien: Aleuas le Roux, les tétrades et les tagoi*, (Lyon: Maison de l'Orient Méditerranéen, 1995), 170–5.

185. *Scholia on Apollonios of Rhodes' Argonautica* 1.40–1. See also Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 2.24.1 for the information about Larissa, daughter of Pelasgus, according to Hellanicus.

186. Eustathios of Thessalonica, *Commentary on Homer's Iliad* 3.75 (under “Hellanikos of Lesbos”), in *Jacoby Online*, ed. Ian Worthington, Stefan Schorn, Hans-Joachim Gehrke, Felix K. Maier, Veronica Bucciattini (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

187. According to Diodorus Sicilius, *Library of History* 5.81.2, Triopas was king of the Pelasgians in Argos.

188. *Scholia Iliad* 3.75 (under “Hellanikos of Lesbos”), in *Jacoby Online*, ed. Ian Worthington, Stefan Schorn, Hans-Joachim Gehrke, Felix K. Maier, Veronica Bucciattini (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

Accounts of this myth recorded by later writers help to explain Hellanicus' references to multiple Pelasguses. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, for example, mentions two distinct Pelasguses in his account of the origins of the Argive and Thessalian Pelasgians: the first was a king of Argos born to Zeus and Niobe, daughter of Phoroneus, and the second one descended from the first, but lived sixth generations later. He was a son of Poseidon and Larisa and migrated to Thessaly. After he expelled the "barbarians" from Thessaly, Pelasgus-son-of-Poseidon divided the region into three parts, naming one, Pelasgiotis, after himself.¹⁸⁹ Pausanias (c. 110–180 CE), in turn, names Argive king Triopas a descendant of Phoroneus and the father of a son named Pelasgus whose daughter was Larisa.¹⁹⁰ These various accounts help to draw genealogical connections between the first Pelasgus attested in Hellanicus — Pelasgus, a son or grandson of Phoroneus and the founder of an Argive city of Larissa — and his descendants: Pelasgus, son of Triopas and father of Larisa, and Pelasgus, son of Poseidon and Larisa, who was a founder of Pelasgiotis in Thessaly and lived in the sixth generation after Phoroneus.¹⁹¹

According to commentator Frances Pownall, the last Pelasgus seems to be a literary invention functioning as a character distinct from the Argive Pelasgus, a son or grandson of Phoroneus (or a son of Triopas), who migrated to Thessaly to found the district of Pelasgiotis. As Pownall summarizes: "Hellanikos appears to have reconciled the rampant confusion surrounding the founding of the Argive and Thessalian cities [of Larissa] by resorting to his usual device of the duplication of names to reconcile the various traditions, and invented a second Pelasgos, who emigrated to Thessaly... It is this Pelasgos...after whom the Thessalian district of Pelasgiotis is

189. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.17.

190. Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 2.22.1–2.24.1.

191. Hellanicus, *Fragment* 52, in *Die Fragmente*, ed. Jacoby; *Scholia Iliad* 3.75 (under "Hellanikos of Lesbos"), in *Jacoby Online*, ed. Ian Worthington, Stefan Schorn, Hans-Joachim Gehrke, Felix K. Maier, Veronica Bucciattini (Leiden: Brill, 2007); Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.40–1.

named.”¹⁹² Despite the variability of testimonies about Pelasgus’ parentage and migrations, a clear tradition of Pelasgian habitation in both the Peloponnesus and Thessaly emerges in fragments attributed to Hellanicus.

2.2.2 THUCYDIDES

Written at the end of the fifth century BCE, Athenian historian Thucydides’ monumental account of the Peloponnesian War (431 BCE–404 BCE) records vital details surrounding the pivotal conflict between the Delian League (478 BCE–404 BCE),¹⁹³ led by Athens, and the Peloponnesian League (c. 550 BCE–336 BCE) led by Sparta. The Athenians and the Spartans emerge in Thucydides’ *History of the Peloponnesian War* starkly divided on issues of tyranny and democracy, each vying for power over the Greek world. While the Spartans dominated the Peloponnese and parts of the isthmus in alliance with Mantinea, Tegea, Corinth, Megara, and Boeotia, the Athenians exerted powerful influence over the Delian League, an anti-Persian coalition of over 200 Greek city-states throughout Greece, Asia Minor, and the Aegean islands. Delian League members included Ionian settlements in Asia Minor. According to Thucydides, the Ionians thus appealed directly to their Athenian “kinsmen” for help against the enduring Persian threat and, more urgently, against Spartan aggression in Ionia.¹⁹⁴

Ethnic considerations play a central role in the dynamics of political affinities and divisions in the conflict of the Peloponnesian War. While Herodotus’ *Histories* provided some foundation for claims of ethnic distinctions between the Athenians and Spartans, rooting

192. Frances Pownall, “Hellanikos of Lesbos (4),” in *Jacoby Online*, ed. Ian Worthington, Stefan Schorn, Hans-Joachim Gehrke, Felix K. Maier, Veronica Bucciattini (Leiden: Brill, 2007). <https://scholarlyeditions.brill.com/bnjo/>; Fowler, *Early Greek Mythography*, 2:94–5; Lionel Pearson, *Early Ionian Historians* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1975), 161.

193. In 454 BCE, the Delian League symbolically transitioned to the Athenian Empire with Pericles’ relocation of the League treasury from Delos to Athens.

194. Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.95.1.

Athenian ancestry in Ionian and barbarian Pelasgian descent and Spartan ancestry in Hellenic Dorian descent, the Athenians greatly intensified these distinctions in the late fifth century BCE by appealing to myths of autochthony. According to scholar Jacquelyn Helene Clements, Classical Athens “promoted autochthony first as a means of building empire and then as a[n] instrument to provide comfort and understanding...of Athenian ancestry as tied to the land threatened by Spartan invasion during the Peloponnesian Wars.”¹⁹⁵ This is particularly evident, according to Clements, in Athenian iconography of the period which regularly featured the figure of Erechthonius, earth-born ancestor of the Athenians and a key figure in the myth of autochthony – the myth that asserted the Athenians’ claims to permanent habitation of Attica. In the context of this “landscape of autochthony,” Thucydides follows Herodotus’ lead in subverting assessments of Athenian superiority, emphasizing instead the fluidity and hybridity of Hellenic identity rooted in descent from the Pelasgian habitants of Greece.¹⁹⁶

For Thucydides, the whole of Greece prior to the arrival of eponymous Hellen was a Pelasgian nation. With the growth of the Hellenic ethnos under Hellen in the region of Phthiotis, the Pelasgians adopted the name and language of the Hellenes and gradually became integrated with them.¹⁹⁷ This account of the Hellenization of the Pelasgians parallels a similar story in Herodotus emphasizing the importance of shared Greek language for the consolidation of Hellenic identity.¹⁹⁸ Much like Herodotus, Thucydides says that the Athenians have always lived

195. Jacquelyn Helene Clements, “Visualizing Autochthony: The Iconography of Athenian Identity in the Late Fifth Century BCE” (PhD diss., Johns Hopkins University, 2015), iii.

196. Clements, “Visualizing Autochthony,” iii.

197. Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.3.1–2, tr. Crawley: “For before the Trojan war nothing appeared to have been done by Greece in common; nor indeed was it, as I think, called all by that one name of Hellas; nor before the time of Hellen, the son of Deucalion, was there any such name at all. ... But Hellen and his sons being strong in Phthiotis and called in for their aid into other cities, these cities, because of their conversing with them, began more particularly to be called Hellenes; and yet could not that name of a long time after prevail upon them all.”

198. In connection, Thucydides emphasizes shared language and customs as the basis for political alliances among independent Greek poleis during the Peloponnesian war. Athenian general Nicias (c. 470 BCE–413 BCE), for one,

in Attica and thus remain linked to the primeval Pelasgian habitants of Greece after whom the whole of Hellas was originally named.¹⁹⁹ In an account of the history of Athens, Thucydides describes the plot of land below the acropolis as “Pelasgian,” further connecting the Pelasgians to the ancient history of Attica. Thucydides also recalls the Delphic oracle that warned the Athenians against settling on the “Pelasgian parcel,” which was “forbidden by a curse.”²⁰⁰ According to McInerney, this area of land was known as the Pelargicon, a sacred site enclosed by the Pelasgian walls.²⁰¹ A reference to the Pelasgian walls appears also in Herodotus’ account of the Athenians’ expulsion of their Pelasgian neighbors from Hymettus. According to Herodotus, it was at Hymettus where the Athenians originally allowed the Pelasgians to settle as payment for their construction of the walls.²⁰² These references attest to an ancient connection between the Pelasgians and the Athenians wherein the former feature as both direct predecessors and early enemies of the latter. By mentioning the Pelargicon and confirming the Pelasgians’ presence in ancient Attica, Thucydides thus signals his familiarity with Herodotus’ account of the expulsion of the Pelasgians from Attica to Lemnos and implicitly affirms its historicity. This affirmation is significant, for this account appears to function in Herodotus’ work as justification for the eventual capture of the island by Athenians. Yet despite the presence of Athenians in Attica from time immemorial, Thucydides does not use the term “autochthonous” to describe them. This looks like an intentional downplaying of the political salience of the Athenian myth

urges the Athenian allies at the battle of Syracuse (413 BCE) who “through knowledge of our language and imitation of our customs were always considered Athenians” (οἱ τέως Ἀθηναῖοι νομιζόμενοι καὶ μὴ ὄντες ἡμῶν τῆς τε φωνῆς) to defend the Athenian empire (ἀρχῆς) against competing Spartan and Syracusan forces at Sicily. See: Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 7.63.

199. Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War* 1.3.

200. Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 2.17, tr. Crawley.

201. McInerney, Pelasgians and Leleges, 35; On regulations governing the use of the Pelargicon see Attic inscription IG I³ 78, 54–57 as cited in McInerney, “Pelasgians and Leleges,” 35: “...The Basileus is to set the boundaries of the sanctuaries in the Pelargicon, and in future, let no one build altars in the Pelargicon except by order of the Council and the People; nor is stone to be cut from the Pelargicon, nor is soil or stone to be removed from it.”

202. Herodotus, *Histories* 6.137.2.

of autochthony with which Thucydides, an Athenian himself, was certainly familiar.

On the other hand, the lack of explicit references to Athenian autochthony in Thucydides may reflect, as historian Christopher Pelling suggests, the fact that “autochthony-thinking” had been already deeply embedded in the Athenian historical imagination.²⁰³ Thucydides’ remark on the continuous habitation of Athenians in Attica may have thus effectively functioned for his audience as a subtle allusion to the myth of Athenian autochthony. Alternatively, the lack of explicit references to autochthony may reflect Thucydides’ conscious attempts to avoid “romance” (μυθώδης), i.e., “legendary” or “fabulous” stories, in his work. If this were his goal, Thucydides’ lack of references to autochthony may mean that he tacitly relegates Athenian claims to autochthony to the realm of myth.²⁰⁴ On the other hand, it also may mean that whenever Thucydides refers to actual Pelasgians and their settlements in Greece and the Aegean, this information can be taken as more historically reliable.

Thucydides locates a group of contemporary Pelasgians in the Acte headland of the easternmost promontory of Chalcidice where he describes them as a Tyrsenian (Τυρσηνῶν) people “who once inhabited Lemnos and Athens” (Πελασγικόν, τῶν καὶ Λῆμνόν ποτε καὶ Ἀθῆνας Τυρσηνῶν οἰκησάντων).²⁰⁵ This remark matches the information provided by Herodotus about Pelasgians previously being expelled from Athens and living on Lemnos and about a contemporary settlement of Pelasgians “above the Tyrsenians in the city of Creston” probably in the northeastern Aegean region of Thrace.²⁰⁶ While Herodotus’ attestation simply locates the Pelasgians “above the Tyrsenians,” however, Thucydides identifies the Pelasgians with the

203. Christopher Pelling, “Bringing Autochthony Up-to-Date: Herodotus and Thucydides,” *The Classical World* 102.4 (2009): 471–83, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40599879>.

204. Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.2.2, tr. Crawley.

205. Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 4.109, tr. Crawley.

206. Herodotus, *Histories* 1.57.

Tyrsenians (Τυρσηνῶν) and associates them with Greek territories in the northeastern Aegean. Thucydides places the Pelasgians at Chalcidice and Lemnos, and this gives additional credit to Herodotus' stories about cultural exchange between the Pelasgians and the habitants of Samothrace, the Pelasgians' migratory history, and their influence on the northeastern Aegean region. Finally, Thucydides' statement that the Pelasgian and Tyrsenians are the same people reminds us of Hellanicus who describes Pelasgians as migrants to Italy who ultimately adopted the name of Tyrrhenians (Tyrsenians).²⁰⁷

Thucydides thus endorses the idea that the Pelasgians were ancestors of the Greeks, particularly the Athenians, and that the Pelasgians and Tyrsenians are the same or related peoples — an important link elaborated later in Roman era accounts about Pelasgian settlements in Italy. By stating that the Pelasgians were predecessors of the Greeks, Thucydides also undermines speculations about the differing ethnic origins of the Athenians and the Spartans attested in Herodotus and emphasizes instead the fluidity and hybridity of Greek identity rooted in their common descent from the pre-Hellenic Pelasgians. Thucydides' emphasis on the centrality of shared language and cultural forms for the consolidation and expression of Hellenic identity corresponds to the same ideas about what constitutes the basis of Hellenic identity expressed by Herodotus. This further demonstrates the significance of linguistic and cultural dimensions for Greek identity in the Classical period.

207. Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 4.109. Archaeological recovery of the Stele of Kaminia (1884) also suggests a linguistic link between the Lemnians, a group associated with the Pelasgians for their settlement on the island in Athenian antiquity, and the Etruscans, a possible Tyrsenian–Pelasgian people.

2.2.3 EPHORUS OF CYME

Around 400 BCE, the Greek historian Ephorus (c. 400 BCE–330 BCE) was born in Cyme, Aeolia on the coast of Asia Minor. A student of Greek rhetorician Isocrates (c. 436 BCE–c. 338 BCE), according to Strabo, and a contemporary of Greek historians Xenophon (c. 405 BCE–c. 330 BCE) and Theopompus (c. 380 BCE–c. 315 BCE), Ephorus composed his major work, the *Histories*, in around thirty books tracing the main events of Greek and non-Greek history beginning with the legendary Return of the Heraclidae and ending with the Siege of Perinthus by Philip of Macedon in 340 BCE. Because of the broad chronological and geographical scope of Ephorus' *Histories*, Greek Hellenistic historian Polybius (c. 200 BCE–c. 118 BCE) describes Ephorus as the first “general” or “universal” historian (τὰ καθόλου γράφειν).²⁰⁸ Ephorus' monumental *Histories* has survived only in fragments, however, quoted primarily in works by Hellenistic and Roman era writers such as Polybius and Strabo (c. 63 BCE–c. 23 CE).

While recoverable fragments of Ephorus regarding the Pelasgians are brief, these fragments primarily recall Archaic and earlier Classical traditions linking the Pelasgians to various locations throughout Greece and the Aegean, including Arcadia, Thessaly, Dodona, the northeastern Aegean near Thrace, and further east along the coast of Asia Minor and the Sea of Marmara. A fragment attributed to Ephorus by Greek geographer Strabo defines the Pelasgians as a tribe of Arcadians after whom the whole of the Peloponnesus was named Pelasgia.²⁰⁹ Having taken up a “military way of life” (στρατιωτικὸν βίον), the Pelasgians migrated extensively throughout Greece and the Aegean, imparting their name to many territories they

208. Polybius, *Histories* 5.33, in *The Histories of Polybius*, 2 vols., tr. Evelyn S. Shuckburgh (London: Macmillan, 1889).

209. Strabo, *Geography* 5.2.4.

occupied.²¹⁰ The link between the Pelasgians and Arcadia reminds us of Hesiod's remark that Arcadian culture hero Lycaon was a son of Pelasgus. By identifying the Pelasgians as a tribe of Arcadians, Ephorus sides with those Archaic and Classical writers who describe the Arcadians as autochthonous habitants of the Peloponnese. As a people from whom the Pelasgians originated, Arcadians in this story remain genealogically pre-Pelasgic and pre-Hellenic habitants of the Peloponnese. Ephorus' reference to Pelasgian migrations and giving their name to different territories around Greece echoes Herodotus' statement that the whole of pre-Hellenic Greece was called "Pelasgia."²¹¹

Other fragments attributed to Ephorus and embedded in Strabo's account of the Pelasgians' invasion of Boeotia link the Pelasgians to Dodona. According to Strabo, the Pelasgians, together with a group of Thracians, invaded and expelled a group of Phoenician settlers from Boeotia, driving them northward into Thessaly where they resettled alongside the Arnaians.²¹² Allied with the Orchomenians, a group known to Homer as the Minyae,²¹³ the Phoenicians later returned to Boeotia to expel the Thracians to Mt. Parnassus just north of Delphi and the Pelasgians to Athens where they settled below Hymettus.²¹⁴ Following their expulsion from Boeotia, the Thracians and their Pelasgian allies again launched a war against the Phoenicians of Boeotia. In the midst of this conflict, Pelasgian and Boeotian ambassadors travelled to Dodona to consult the oracle regarding their fates. According to Strabo, Ephorus cannot relay the response given by the oracle to the Pelasgians. Instead, Ephorus attests that the

210. Strabo, *Geography* 5.2.4, tr. H. L. Jones: νομίζουσιν δὲ φησὶν Ἐφωρος τὸ ἀνέκαθεν Ἀρκάδας ὄντας ἐλέσθαι στρατιωτικὸν βίον, εἰς δὲ τὴν αὐτὴν ἀγωγὴν προτρέποντας πολλοὺς ἅπασιν τοῦ ὀνόματος μεταδοῦναι...

211. Herodotus, *Histories* 2.56, tr. Godley.

212. Strabo, *Geography* 9.2.3.

213. Homer, *Iliad* 2.511.

214. Strabo, *Geography* 9.2.3. Here, Strabo also mentions a region of Athens named the "Pelasgicon" after the Pelasgians. This is apparently the same region mentioned by Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War* 2.17 as the cursed "Pelargicon."

Boeotians, keenly aware of the Pelasgian origins of the oracle, eventually attacked and murdered the oracle for his response. The Boeotians believed that the oracle had given them a falsely dire prediction out of favoritism toward the Pelasgians with whom it shared *sungeneia*, “kinship” (συγγενής).²¹⁵ With this remark, Ephorus reifies the connections between Pelasgians and the priests of Dodona by reference to their *sungeneia*, thus elaborating on the previous accounts by Homer and Herodotus. In another account, Ephorus describes the oracle at Dodona as “a foundation of the Pelasgians.”²¹⁶ This once again affirms the connections between the Pelasgians and the oracle in the Archaic and early Classical traditions.²¹⁷

Finally, a dubious fragment attributed to Ephorus in the fifteenth-century CE *Scholia on Apollonius of Rhodes Argonautica* states that the Doliones, a people on the coast of the Sea of Marmara, ruled by King Cyzicus, were a Pelasgian people.²¹⁸ According to the *Scholia*, Ephorus claims that the conflict between the Argonauts and the Doliones on the coast of Marmara broke out on account of the long-lasting enmity between the Pelasgian-Doliones and the Thessalians. This is because the Argonauts were Thessalians, and the Thessalians were those who drove the Pelasgians out of Thessaly.²¹⁹ The story about the expulsion of the Pelasgian-Doliones from Thessaly attested in the *Scholia* on the authority of Ephorus is similar to Archaic and Classical accounts of Hecataeus and Herodotus about the expulsion of the Pelasgians from Attica by the Athenians. The story also explains the enmity between the Thessalian Pelasgians and the Greek habitants of Thessaly. The Pelasgian-Doliones link remains an idiosyncratic feature of the

215. Strabo, *Geography* 9.2.4, tr. H. L. Jones. On *sungeneia* see: Sarah Bolmarcich, “Communal Values in Ancient Diplomacy,” in *Valuing Others in Classical Antiquity*, eds. Ineke Sluiter and Ralph Rosen (Leiden: Brill, 2010): 126.

216. Strabo, *Geography* 7.7.10, tr. H. L. Jones: ἔστι δ’ ὥς φησιν Ἐφορος, Πελασγῶν ἱδρυμα (sc. τὸ μαντεῖον τὸ ἐν Δωδώνῃ).

217. Strabo, *Geography* 7.7.10; Herodotus, *Histories* 2.56.

218. *Scholia on Apollonios of Rhodes’ Argonautica* 1.1037.

219. *Scholia on Apollonios of Rhodes’ Argonautica* 1.1037.

Ephorean tradition, however. Apollonius of Rhodes' account of the conflict recorded in the *Argonautica* (third century BCE) eschews this link entirely, positioning the Pelasgians instead as threatening neighbors of the Doliones on the northwestern coast of Marmara.²²⁰

2.2.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS ON HELLANICUS, THUCYDIDES, AND EPHORUS

The Pelasgians emerge in late Classical accounts as an integral link between the pre-Hellenic and Hellenic worlds. They are also instrumental in connecting the Greek and Italian worlds and for the development of a Greek-Italian kinship ideology which provided the foundation for linking the Greeks and Romans. This discursive development may also reflect increasing Greek-Italian interchange in the Classical period. Greek colonies in southern Italy and Sicily – the territory of the so-called Magna Graecia – offered stable points of contact between Greece and Italy which facilitated the transmission of Hellenic culture, genealogies, and mythopoeic traditions. With the systemization of Greek mythological genealogies by Hellanicus and his emphasis on an innovative Pelasgian-Italian link, the historian provides the Greeks and Italians with a crucial basis to elaborate on and to develop a kinship ideology connecting the ancient Greek and Italian peoples as descendants of the Pelasgians. Ephorus promotes the connection between the Pelasgians and Italy further by speaking about the migration of Arcadians to Italy — Arcadians who are linked to Pelasgus via his son Lycaon, an Arcadian culture hero.

Moreover, Thucydides identifies the Pelasgians with the Tyrsenians in northeastern Chalcidice – just as Hellanicus does in his account of Pelasgian migration to Italy. This corroborates Herodotus' remark about a settlement of Pelasgians near Thrace “above the

220. Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica* 1.1012.

Tyrsenians in the city of Creston” and undergirds Hellanicus’ connection between the Pelasgians and the Italian Tyrrhenians.²²¹ Ephorus’ reference to the Arcadian origins of the Pelasgians and his account of their migrations also bolsters the link between Greece and Pelasgian immigrant communities in Italy attested in Thucydides and Hellanicus. It is in Italy that Hellenistic and Roman writers locate the Pelasgians and associate them with the Aborigine ancestors of the Romans. Classical accounts of the Pelasgians’ origins in Greece and their migrations to Italy thus provide a foundational link between the Greek and Roman worlds.

2.3.1 GREEK DRAMA: AESCHYLUS

In Greek tragedy, as in Greek epic and history, explorations of barbarian identity served as “exercise[s] in self-definition” for the ancient Greeks.²²² In the midst of Persian expansionism, the Greco-Persian wars, and the rise of the Athenian empire, the Classical Athenian tragedians effectively “invent[ed] a rhetoric around the antithesis of Greek and barbarian” characterized by an emphasis on Greek–barbarian linguistic and ethno-cultural difference and a “ubiquity of allusions to the other, inferior, world beyond Hellas” dominated by despotism and tyranny.²²³ Beyond this basic polarity, numerous works of Greek tragedy also explore the enduring hybridity of Greek and barbarian identities, illuminating the “inextricable intertwining of Greekness and barbarity” and revealing the fundamental kinship between Greeks and barbarians.²²⁴ In this context, the Pelasgians, as proximally Greek and non-Greek elements of ancient Greek epic and history, feature as ethnically ambiguous links between the pre-Hellenic, Hellenic, and barbarian

221. Herodotus, *Histories* 1.57, tr. Godley.

222. Edith Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition Through Tragedy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 1.

223. E. Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian*, 1.

224. Lynette G. Mitchell, “Greeks, Barbarians and Aeschylus’ ‘Suppliants’,” *Greece & Rome* 53.2 (2006): 205–23, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4122471>.

worlds.

Accordingly, in Aeschylus' *Suppliants*, produced around 460 BCE, King Pelasgus serves as an intermediary between the Argives and the Danaid women from Egypt, thereby linking the Greek and barbarian worlds. In the *Suppliants*, the Danaids arrive in Argos seeking refuge from forced marriage to their Egyptian cousins. Pelasgus greets the Danaids on the shores of Argos where they at once question his identity. In reply, Pelasgus describes himself as the offspring of earth-born Palaechthon (τοῦ γηγενοῦς γάρ εἰμ' ἐγὼ Παλαίχθονος ἱνὶς Πελασγός) and the king of the Pelasgians. Pelasgus' descent from earth-born Palaechthon parallels Archaic traditions that describe Pelasgus as an earth-born ancestor of the Arcadians. The story also reflects Aeschylus' views on the Pelasgians as a group that originated in ancient Greece. Next, Pelasgus outlines the scope of his kingdom, a broad territory bordered by the Paeonians in the north, the Strymon river in the east, and Dodona and the Pindus mountains in the west. The fact that Pelasgus meets the Danaids in the city of Argos extends the southern border of his kingdom into the Peloponnese; thus the Pelasgian territory encompasses nearly the whole of Greece and a significant portion of the Peloponnesus.²²⁵ In this way Aeschylus incorporates all the territories that the Archaic tradition identifies as Pelasgian, including Thessaly (the region of Homer's Pelasgian Argos), Dodona (the seat of Homer's Pelasgian Zeus), and Arcadia (the region ruled by autochthonous Pelasgus' son Lycaon) into an Argive-Pelasgian kingdom ruled by Pelasgus. This affirms the ancient Greek origins of the Pelasgians as well as their wide-spread settlements throughout central Greece and the Peloponnese.

King Pelasgus also expresses his bewilderment at the Danaids' foreign appearance and

225. Aeschylus, *Suppliants* 249, in *Aeschylus*, tr. Herbert Weir Smyth, Loeb Classical Library 145–146 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926); Par Sandin, *Aeschylus' Suppliants: Introduction and Commentary on vv. 1–523* (Göteborg: Göteborgs Universitet, 2003), 148.

“barbaric” attire (πέπλοισι βαρβάροισι), likening them to the foreign women of Libya and the “flesh-devouring Amazons.”²²⁶ The Danaids confirm their geographical, physical, and linguistic foreignness as migrants from Egypt, describing themselves as a “dark, sun-burnt race” (μελανθὲς ἡλιόκτυπον γένος) of “foreign speech” (καρβᾶνα δ’ αὐδᾶν).²²⁷ Yet the Danaids also claim to be of Argive descent from the Argive priestess Io, a consort of Zeus whom Hera jealously transformed into a cow and drove out of Argos, through Asia, and into Egypt.²²⁸ From Io, the Danaids trace the descent of their father Danaus, the son of Io’s great-great grandson Belus.²²⁹ On the basis of this kinship and their rights as suppliants protected by Zeus, the Danaids plead for Pelasgus’ protection from the injustice and impiety of forced marriage to their Egyptian cousins (sons of Danaus’ brother Aegyptus). Despite his earlier skepticism, King Pelasgus eventually accepts the Danaids’ story about their descent from Io, insisting only that the final decision on their fate should be delegated to the assembly, which can definitively grant to the Danaids the right to settle in Argos.²³⁰ Once the approval of the assembly is received, Pelasgus sanctions the settlement of Danaids in Argos as *astoxenoi* “citizen-strangers” (ἀστοξενος)²³¹ of Argos based both on their rights as Argive kin and as suppliants protected by Zeus. Shared blood (ὄμαιμόν), rather than shared language or customs – two categories in which the foreign Danaids noticeably differ from the Argives — thus features as the primary criterion for Aeschylus’ assessment of Greekness in the *Suppliants*.

The piety of the Danaids and their reverence for Zeus and the other Greek gods, however, — the reverence shared by Pelasgus and the Argives — also plays an important role in bolstering

226. Aeschylus, *Suppliants* 234, 277–291, tr. Smyth.

227. Aeschylus, *Suppliants* 154, 117, tr. Smyth.

228. Aeschylus, *Suppliants* 539–564.

229. Aeschylus, *Suppliants* 292–320.

230. Aeschylus, *Suppliants* 605–624.

231. Mitchell, “Greeks, Barbarians and Aeschylus’ ‘Suppliants’,” 216.

the Danaids' claim to kinship with the Argives. The Danaids call upon Zeus and other "gods of [the Greek] race" for protection immediately upon their arrival in Argos.²³² This is an expression of piety and Greek cultural kinship that clearly distinguishes them from their barbarian Egyptian cousins. Accordingly, the Danaids urge Pelasgus to "hear [his suppliants] with a benign heart" lest he provoke the wrath of Zeus.²³³ After his acceptance of the Danaids' Argive heritage, it is Pelasgus' fear of Zeus' wrath and the assent of the Argive citizens which together "compe[l]" him to accept the Danaids as settlers in Argos.²³⁴ By contrast, the Danaids describe the sons of Aegyptus as "overweening, maddened with unholy rage, shameless dogs (κυνοθρασεῖς) who do not respect the gods."²³⁵ The Danaids also describe their Egyptian cousins as violent, lewd, and bestial, all stereotypes traditionally associated with barbarian men.²³⁶ Moreover, the Egyptian herald who arrives in Argos to attempt to force the Danaids back to Egypt is arrogant, insolent, and willfully ignorant of Greek customs that govern the conduct of strangers visiting the city.

232. Aeschylus, *Suppliants* 77, tr. Smyth.

233. Aeschylus, *Suppliants* 347, tr. Smyth.

234. Aeschylus, *Suppliants* 478, tr. Smyth.

235. Aeschylus, *Suppliants* 755, tr. Smyth. The Greek κυνοθρασεῖς, "shameless as a dog," corresponds to κύων, "dog" in the following lines of the *Suppliants*. Modern translators such as Robert Fitzgerald and Robert Fagles regularly translate the Greek κύων and its various forms (κύντερος, κυνώπης, κυνώπιος, etc.) as "bitch" in instances where the terms refer to women. In the *Iliad*, Fitzgerald and Fagles thus translate κύων as "bitch" in Iris' speech to Hera and Athena (*Iliad* 8.415–425) and in Apollo's address to Artemis (*Iliad* 21.481). They also translate κύντερος as "bitch" in Zeus' condemnation of Hera (*Iliad* 8.483) and κυνώπιος as "bitch" in Hephaestus' speech against Hera (*Iliad* 18.396). Fagles again translates κυνὸς as "bitch" in Helen's speech to Hector (*Iliad* 6.356). Conversely, Fitzgerald and Fagles translate the same word κύων simply as "dog" where the term refers to men, such as in Achilles' address to Hector (*Iliad* 20.449) and just before Hector's murder (*Iliad* 22.345). In a particularly flagrant instance of bias, Fitzgerald translates κυνώπιος in reference to Helen as "wanton" while Fagles translates the word in the same line as "whore" (*Iliad* 3.180). In Book 1, however, Fitzgerald and Fagles translate the same word κυνώπιος as "dog-face" in Achilles' condemnation of Agamemnon (*Iliad* 1.158). Equalizing this tradition of translation in favor of the harsher connotation typically reserved for women, our translation of the Danaids' condemnation of the sons of Aegyptus as "shameless as dogs," may be instead rendered "bitches." Coincidentally, this translation helps illuminate the stereotypes associated with barbarian and "oriental" men in Greek literature as effeminate, malicious, irrational, and lascivious, connotations readily supplied by translators' choice use of the word "bitch" in instances where dog metaphors are applied to women. For a discussion of dog metaphors in Homeric epic see: Margaret Graver, "Dog-Helen and Homeric Insult," *Classical Antiquity* 14.1 (1995): 41–61, <https://doi.org/10.2307/25000142>; and Ruby Blondell, "'Bitch That I Am': Self-Blame and Self-Assertion in the *Iliad*," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 140.1 (2010): 1–32, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40652048>.

236. Aeschylus, *Suppliants* 757–8.

When the herald meets King Pelasgus and proclaims his reverence for the “gods of the Nile” rather than for the Greek gods, King Pelasgus thus resolves to offer “no hospitality for despoilers of the gods” and reaffirms the Argives’ decision to defend the Danaids from the sons of Aegyptus.²³⁷ The Danaids revel in their newly secured freedom, praising the “city of the Pelasgians” and glorifying the Olympian gods.²³⁸

The Danaid and Argives’ shared piety toward the Greek gods, in addition to their genealogical kinship, unifies them against the barbarian Egyptian threat. Pelasgus’ deference to the assembly and to Zeus, moreover, defines him as an arbiter of Greek order, piety, and justice, and a bulwark against incursive barbarity in Greece. In this way Aeschylus outlines and reifies the conceptual boundaries between Greek and barbarian on the basis of cultural difference embodied by the sons of Aegyptus and the Egyptian herald. The strict categorical boundaries between Greek and barbarian, familiar and foreign, appear permeable, however. The Danaid women are definitely barbarian in their appearance, dress, and language; they are also foreigners in terms of their geographical origins, and yet their shared Argive ancestry and reverence for the Greek gods eventually position them in close relationship to the Greeks and allow them to participate in Greekness. With Pelasgus’ acceptance of the foreign Danaids into the Argive community, Aeschylus reveals the permeability of boundaries between Greek and barbarian and challenges the fixity of categories of otherness and alterity underlying the Classical Greek/barbarian dichotomy. Here, the Danaids are simultaneously foreign and familiar “citizen-strangers” (ἑστώξενοι)²³⁹ whose genealogical and cultural kinship with the Argives permit them to adopt Greek identities. As an exercise in self-definition, Aeschylus’ *Suppliants* thus reifies the

237. Aeschylus, *Suppliants* 920–930, tr. Smyth.

238. Aeschylus, *Suppliants* 1019–1025, tr. Smyth.

239. Mitchell, “Greeks, Barbarians and Aeschylus’ ‘Suppliants’,” 216.

genealogical and cultural basis of Greek identity while complicating the categorical boundaries between Greek and barbarian.

Given that the play was an Athenian production, the figure of primeval Pelasgus also features as a “model king” of a “democratic city that closely resembles the Athenian ideal.”²⁴⁰ Pelasgus’ piety and his respect for the citizens as those who do the decision-making in a community help to present Pelasgus as a “model of [Greek] democratic comportment” responsible for resolving issues of violence and injustice in accordance with the will of the gods and the assembly. Pelasgus summarizes the relationship between piety and the Athenian democratic ideal while explaining to the Danaids why he must defer to the assembly to resolve their issue: “It is not my own house at whose hearth you sit. If the state is stained by pollution [impiety] in its commonalty, in common let the people strive to work out the cure. For myself, I will pledge no promise before I have communicated these events to all the citizens.”²⁴¹ Furthermore, as the son of earth-born Palaechthon, Pelasgus recalls Athenian myths of autochthony rooted in stories about the Athenians’ earth-born ancestors. This affirms Pelasgian and Athenian primacy as permanent habitants of Greece. The Pelasgians thus emerge in this ideological and political context both as an important link between the Greek and barbarian worlds and as integral ancestral figures embodying the values central to both Athenian democracy and ideal Greekness.

240. Froma I. Zeitlin, “Thebes: Theatre of Self and Society in Athenian Drama,” in *Nothing to Do With Dionysos? Athenian Drama in its Social Context*, eds. J. J. Winkler & F. I. Zeitlin (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 130.

241. Aeschylus, *Suppliants* 365, tr. Smyth.

2.3.2 GREEK DRAMA: SOPHOCLES AND EURIPIDES

In addition to Aeschylus' *Suppliants*, brief references to the Pelasgians appear in tragedies by Sophocles and Euripides. According to Roman era historian Dionysius of Halicarnassus, a fragment of a lost work by Sophocles entitled *Inachus*, traditionally dated between 468 and 406 BCE, refers to the "Tyrrhene Pelasgians" as the primeval habitants of Argos.²⁴² Taken as a genuine attestation to the Classical tradition, this fragment of Sophocles offers an early testimony to the link between the Tyrrhenians and the Pelasgians, groups which Herodotus and Thucydides locate together in Thrace. Two of Euripides' works entitled *Phoenician Women*, produced around 409 BCE, and *Orestes*, produced around 408 BCE, do not touch upon this Pelasgian-Tyrrhenian link. They do, however, agree with Aeschylus and Sophocles by locating the Pelasgians in the city of Argos – the center of Pelasgus' kingdom, according to Aeschylus' *Suppliants*. Both tragedies also describe the whole territory inhabited by Pelasgians as "Pelasgian Argos" (Ἀργὸς Πελασγικόν), recalling "Pelasgian Argos" of Thessaly in Homer, but transferring this definition to the territory of the Peloponnesus.²⁴³ According to Strabo, moreover, a lost play of Euripides entitled *Archelaus* further elaborates upon the myth of the Danaids and Pelasgians explored by Aeschylus in his *Suppliants*. Here, Euripides mentions that Danaus, father of the Danaids, was a migrant to Argos who eventually became a ruler of this kingdom. Once a king, Danaus enacted a law changing the name of the original habitants of Greece and the Peloponnese from "Pelasgiotæ" to "Danai,"²⁴⁴ thereby nominally linking the foreign Danaids kin to the Greek Pelasgians. These fragments attributed to Sophocles and

242. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.25.4, tr. Cary.

243. Euripides, *Phoenician Women* 255; *Orestes* 1280, 1597.

244. Strabo, *Geography* 5.2.4, tr. H. L. Jones.

Euripides affirm the Greek origins of the Pelasgians while highlighting their relationship to the foreign Danaids, a relationship introduced and explored in depth in Aeschylus' *Suppliants*.

2.3.3 CONCLUDING REMARKS ON GREEK DRAMA

Explorations of ancient Greek identity in the works of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides incorporate the Pelasgians into Argive genealogy as primeval habitants of the Peloponnese. Here, the Pelasgians serve as an intermediary link between the Greek and barbarian worlds. The role that Pelasgians play in Greek tragedy helped the Greeks to conceptualize their relationship to the pre-Hellenic past as well as their relationships to surrounding foreigners and barbarians. Both within and beyond the immediate Athenian democratic context, Greek tragedy offered an enduring “pleasure, complex, emotional, and particular” for Greek audiences witnessing their “shared beliefs and values satisfyingly restated, refurbished, revealed again as capable of explaining the complexity of the world and events.”²⁴⁵ The Pelasgians thus emerge in Greek tragedy as ancestral arbiters of shared Greek values of order, piety, and justice. This position allows them to perform important identity functions in Greek tragic narratives — narratives in which writers explored the complex relationship between Greekness and barbarity by reference to adaptable beliefs about Pelasgian origins and identity.

245. Jasper Griffin, “The Social Function of Attic Tragedy,” *The Classical Quarterly* 48.1 (1998): 60, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/639750>.

Chapter 3: Pelasgians in Greek Literature of the Hellenistic and Roman Periods

In November 333 BCE, Macedonian King Alexander the Great led soldiers of the Hellenic league, a military confederation of Greek states formed under Philip II, against Darius III, ruler of the Persian Achaemenid empire, to a decisive victory at the Battle of Issus.²⁴⁶ With his victory at Issus, Alexander continued his excursions south along the coast of Asia Minor, capturing the city of Tyre in 332 BCE before arriving in Egypt, where he founded the city of Alexandria. In 331, Alexander defeated Darius III at the Battle of Guagamela and afterwards boldly declared himself the king of Asia. At the time of Alexander's death in 323 BCE, his extensive conquests throughout Asia and Egypt had prompted the transmission of Hellenic culture across the ancient world, ushering in the Hellenistic era of Greek history. In 31 BCE, Roman leader Octavian defeated the combined forces of Mark Antony and Cleopatra of Egypt at the Battle of Actium, marking the end of the Hellenistic era and ushering in the Roman era with the rise of the Roman empire.

This chapter will examine the developments and innovations regarding Pelasgian identity introduced by Hellenistic and Roman writers who continued to explore rhetorical and ideological possibilities of utilizing Pelasgians in their narratives. The Hellenistic era (323 BCE–31 BCE) witnessed further discussions of Pelasgian identity in the work of Apollonius of Rhodes (born c. 295 BCE), a famous author of the epic poem, *Argonautica*, based on mythological accounts of Jason's adventures to recover the Golden Fleece. An important development here was a further elaboration on the assumed connection between the Pelasgians and the Tyrrhenians, a non-Greek people traditionally located in Italy — a connection introduced earlier in the Classical period.²⁴⁷ Remarks on the link between the two, similar to those previously made by Hellanicus of Lesbos,

246. Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander* 2.10.1

247. Herodotus, *Histories* 1.57; Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 4.109.

a fifth century BCE elder contemporary of Herodotus, appear in Myrsilus of Methymna, a third-century BCE writer referenced by Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Strabo.²⁴⁸ The increasing interest in peoples and ethnic groups other than those inhabiting Greece and attendant attempts to accommodate them in a holistic picture of the world reflect a dramatic expansion of Greek cultural horizons amid the Greeks' increasing interactions with foreigners in the Hellenistic era ushered in by the conquests of Alexander the Great. The Roman era writers, from the late first century BCE to second century CE, — Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Strabo, Pausanias, and Pseudo-Apollodorus — came from different locations and cultural backgrounds. We will analyze how Pelasgians started to appear in the Roman tradition and how the idea of their connection to Italy and the Aborigines provided a foundation for Roman identity as expressed in imperial discourse.

3.1 APOLLONIUS OF RHODES

Born in the early third century BCE either in Alexandria or Naucratis and later exiled to the island of Rhodes, Greek poet and grammarian Apollonius of Rhodes emerges in history as a celebrated scholar at the library of Alexandria and author of the sole surviving Hellenistic epic known as the *Argonautica*.²⁴⁹ Set a generation before the Trojan War, Apollonius' *Argonautica* recounts the adventures of Jason and the Argonauts in their quest to recover the Golden Fleece. According to historian Anatole Mori, the political significance of the *Argonautica* rings in the poem's allusions to contemporary concerns during the rise of the Ptolemaic dynasty (305–30 BCE), direct political heirs of Alexander the Great (356 BCE–323 BCE). Moreover, the “loosely

248. Strabo, *Geography* 5.2.4.

249. Strabo, *Geography* 14.2.13; William Smith, *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology* (London: Spottiswoode and Co., 1873).

selective parallelism” between the adventures of Jason and Alexander the Great in Apollonius’ *Argonautica* reflects the author’s interest in exploring and celebrating the political legacy of Alexander’s expansive conquests of the Mediterranean in the historical setting of Ptolemaic Egypt. The vast chronological scope of the work also offers a sweeping “[e]tiology of the world” which includes an “exploration of the archaic origins of cults, customs, and the Greek presence in North Africa.”²⁵⁰ This etiological account of Greek origins in North Africa further demonstrates the enduring significance of Alexander’s conquests of Egypt and the centrality of a consolidated Greek-Egyptian identity for the “ideological construction of Ptolemaic kingship and Hellenic identity in [third-century BCE] Egypt.”²⁵¹

Information about the Pelasgians in the *Argonautica* appears primarily in references to the ancient history of Greece; Apollonius describes the Pelasgians as ancient predecessors of the Greeks in Thessaly. In Book 4, Argus, a son of Argive Arestor and the builder of the Argonauts’ famous ship *Argo*, locates an ancient “Pelasgian land” once ruled by the sons of Deucalion in the region of Thessaly.²⁵² This reference to a “Pelasgian land” in Thessaly seems to correspond to the Thessalian region of Pelasgiotis, one of the four divisions, or *tetrades*, of Thessaly according to Hellanicus.²⁵³ This region also encompasses Jason’s home city of Iolcus which Apollonius describes as “Pelasgian Iolcus.”²⁵⁴ Jason and the Argonauts set sail for their adventures from the “misty land of the Pelasgians” (ἡερίη...αἶα Πελασγῶν),²⁵⁵ and on the heroes’ return home, the goddess Hera ushers Medea, a daughter of King Aeetes of Colchis and the consort of Jason, from

250. Jaqueline J. H. Klooster, “Apollonius of Rhodes,” in *Time in Ancient Greek Literature: Studies in Ancient Greek Narrative*, eds. Irene J.F. de Jong and René Nünlist (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 66; Anatole Mori, *Politics of Apollonius Rhodius’ Argonautica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 20.

251. Mori, *Politics of Apollonius Rhodius’ Argonautica*, 4.

252. Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica* 4.253–4; 1.112, tr. Robert Cooper Seaton, Loeb Classical Library 1 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1912); *Scholia on Apollonius of Rhodes’ Argonautica* 1.40–1; 5.266.

253. Hellanicus, *Fragment 52*, in *Die Fragmente*, ed. Jacoby.

254. Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica* 1.899, tr. Seaton.

255. Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica* 1.580, tr. Seaton.

the region of Colchis on the coast of the Black Sea to “the Pelasgid land” (Πελασγίδα γαῖαν) of Iolcus.²⁵⁶

Apollonius also names Thessaly a “Pelasgian land” in his story about the nymph Philyra, daughter of Oceanus, who gave birth by Chronus to the centaur Chiron, a sage healer and teacher of many Greek heroes, including Achilles, Ajax, Patroclus, and Theseus. According to this account, Philyra gave birth to Chiron on the “mountain ridges of the Pelasgians” (οὔρεα μακρὰ Πελασγῶν), a site located in Thessaly along the slopes of Mount Pelion.²⁵⁷ By naming Thessaly a “Pelasgian land,” Apollonius connects those inhabiting Thessaly in the time of the Argonauts to the ancient Pelasgians who preceded them as settlers of the region. The link between the Greeks and their Pelasgian predecessors appears also in Apollonius’ reference to the Greek goddess Hera, whom he calls “Pelasgid Hera” (Ἥρης δὲ Πελασγίδος).²⁵⁸ According to Herodotus’ *Histories*, the Pelasgians were the first to adopt the names of nearly all the Greek gods from the Egyptians. The names of Hera and Hestia, however, originated directly from the Pelasgians, rendering these goddesses distinctly Pelasgian deities.²⁵⁹ Herodotus’ story about ancient Pelasgian origins of Hera’s name helps to explain Apollonius’ remark about “Pelasgid Hera.” Taken together with references to the “Pelasgian land” of Thessaly, this remark also suggests that the Pelasgians, as ancient predecessors of the Greeks, left a long-lasting cultural effect on Thessaly and beyond.

Yet, the Pelasgians are not the most ancient people to inhabit Greece according to the *Argonautica*. Instead, its account of Pelasgian Thessaly indicates that the “Apidanean Arcadians”

256. Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica* 1.14, tr. Seaton.

257. Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica* 2.1239. Chiron was the teacher of many Thessalian heroes, including Achilles, Ajax, Patroclus, and Theseus. In Homer’s *Iliad* 19.387 Chiron has gifted Achilles’ father with a spear made of “Pelian ash...from the peak of Pelion...” confirming Chiron’s connection via Philyra to Mt. Pelion.

258. Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica* 4.241, tr. Seaton.

259. Herodotus, *Histories* 2.50. The Pelasgians adopted the name of Poseidon from the Libyans.

were the first people of Greece “who lived even before the moon.”²⁶⁰ An anonymous author of the *Scholia on Apollonius of Rhodes’ Argonautica* traces the name of the Apidaneans to the figure of Apis, an ancient king of Argos and grandson of Inachus by Phoroneus.²⁶¹ In the Archaic tradition, Apis is connected to Pelasgus via Phoroneus in various ways. According to Hecataeus and Acusilaus, for example, Phoroneus was the father of Niobe, mother of Pelasgus by Zeus. According to a fragment of Hellanicus, however, Pelasgus was the eldest son of Phoroneus, a connection that makes Apis and Pelasgus brothers.²⁶² The Pelasgians and the Arcadians also appear connected in the Archaic and Classical traditions, most notably in accounts by Ephorus, who describes the Pelasgians as a tribe of the Arcadians. Coupled with the etymological link to Apis that the scholiast assumes, Apollonius’ reference to the Apidanean Arcadians as the first habitants of Greece suggests that the Arcadians were genealogically related to the Pelasgians and became their direct predecessors. The purported link between Apis, son of Phoroneus, and the Apidanean Arcadians also connects the Arcadians and the Pelasgians to the Inachid Danaids and Aegyptids, groups that appear in Aeschylus’ drama *Suppliants*. According to historian Susan Stephens, “[t]he name Apidanees, therefore, conveys not only antiquity, it adumbrates an ancestral relationship between mainland Greece and North Africa [via the Inachid line],” an ancestral relationship particularly significant for the Ptolemies of Egypt.²⁶³

In the final reference to the Pelasgians, Apollonius recalls Ephorus’ story about the conflict between the Argonauts and the Doliones on the island of Cyzicus located just off the

260. Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica* 4.263, tr. Seaton.

261. *Scholia on Apollonius of Rhodes’ Argonautica* 4.263.

262. Eustathios of Thessalonica, *Commentary on Homer’s Iliad* 3.75 (under “Hellanikos of Lesbos”), in *Jacoby Online*, ed. Ian Worthington, Stefan Schorn, Hans-Joachim Gehrke, Felix K. Maier, Veronica Bucciattini (Leiden: Brill, 2007)

263. Susan Stephens, “Writing Alexandria as the (Common)place” (Princeton/Stanford Working Papers in Classics, 2012), 7, <http://www.princeton.edu/~pswpc/pdfs/stephens/011202.pdf>.

coast of Marmara.²⁶⁴ The Doliones, mistaking the Argonauts for “Pelasgian war-men of the Macrians,” launched an attack on the Argonauts, resulting in the death of Dolione King Cyzicus.²⁶⁵ According to Apollonius, the Phaeacian island of Corfu was originally named Macris after the nurse of Dionysius who fled there from the Greek island of Euboea to escape Hera’s wrath.²⁶⁶ Greek Hellenistic poet Callimachus (c. 310 BCE–240 BCE), however, calls the island of Euboea “Abantian Macris” because Macris had previously lived there.²⁶⁷ The Pelasgians also appear on the island of Euboea in an account by Dionysius of Halicarnassus. According to Dionysius, the Pelasgians settled on Euboea after their expulsion from Thessaly by Deucalion, son of Prometheus.²⁶⁸ Historian Georg Niebuhr argues in favor of the Macrians’ connection to the Pelasgians and the Macrians’ original settlement on Euboea. He suggests that the Macrians were a “race of [Pelasgian] stock” from Euboea.²⁶⁹ Later they settled with the Pelasgians on the island of Cyzicus, the home of Apollonius’ Doliones, at some point before the island was captured by the Milesians (c. 751 BCE).²⁷⁰ With their settlement at Cyzicus alongside the Macrians and the Doliones, the Pelasgians of Thessaly appear connected both to the Argonauts of Thessaly and to the Macrian enemies of the Doliones at Cyzicus. According to Myres, a scholiast to Apollonius’ *Argonautica* also assumes a connection between the Doliones and Jason,

264. Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica* 1.1024.

265. Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica* 1.1024, tr. Seaton: Μακρίεων εἶσαντο Πελασγικὸν ἄρεα κέλσαι.

266. Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica* 4.538.

267. Callimachus, *Hymn to Delos* 4.20, in *Callimachus: Hymns and Epigrams. Lycophron: Alexandra. Aratus: Phaenomena*, ed. Jeffrey Henderson, tr. A. W. Mair, G. R. Mair, Loeb Classical Library 129 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1921).

268. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.18.1.

269. Barthold Georg Niebuhr, *The History of Rome*, tr. Julius Charles Hare and Connop Thirlwall (Cambridge: John Taylor, 1828), 1:32–34.

270. *Scholia on Apollonios of Rhodes’ Argonautica* 1.1024; Frederick Hasluck, *Cyzicus: Being Some Account of the History and Antiquities of that City, and of the District Adjacent to it, with the Towns of Apollonia Ad Rhyndacum, Miletupolis, Hadrianutherae, Priapus, Zeleia, etc.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910), 163–164; Niebuhr, *The History of Rome*, tr. Hare and Thirlwall, 1:32–34.

linking the Pelasgians, Macrians, Doliones, and Jason and the Argonauts in a complex web of kinship.²⁷¹

In his account of the Argonauts' conflict with the Doliones on Cyzicus, moreover, Apollonius makes evident the divine mandate that sanctions the Argonauts' journey. In Book 1, Jason prays and offers sacrifice to Apollo asking for divine sanction; during the Argonauts' clash with the Doliones, King Cyzicus is slain for having mistakenly violated the divine oracle warning the Doliones "never to attack a godly army of heroes."²⁷² In the Hellenistic period, this divine sanction of the Argonauts' journey emerges in striking parallel with the divine sanction of Alexander's conquests of the Mediterranean and his colonization of Egypt — a connection that Ptolemaic ideology also tried to promote.²⁷³ Further, Mori cites the Argonauts' encounter with the Lemnian women with whom they father sons who later colonize the island of Thera, a geographical "waypoint for the Greek colonization of Cyrene," as an example of the Argonauts' divinely sanctioned connection to North Africa and the relevance of their story to the contemporary Ptolemaic political agenda.²⁷⁴ The "[d]ivine sanction for the Greek presence in North Africa is thus encoded in the story of the Argonauts' encounter with the Lemnian women," transforming the *Argonautica* into, "among other things, an epic redaction of Greco-Macedonian colonial expansion."²⁷⁵

By casting the Argonauts' journey in parallel to Alexander's conquests of the Eastern Mediterranean and North Africa, the *Argonautica* thus promotes Ptolemaic rule in North Africa

271. *Scholia on Apollonius of Rhodes' Argonautica* 1.1037 following historian Deilochus cited in Myres, "Pelasgian Theory," 224.

272. Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica* 1.351–62, 1.402–59; 1.961–70, tr. Seaton.

273. Mori, *Politics of Apollonius Rhodius' Argonautica*, 151: "...[particularly] the rituals [which conferred divine sanction] of the Argonauts are, structurally speaking, more reminiscent of Alexander than they are of Egyptian or Ptolemaic cult – the simplest explanation for this being that the *Argonautica* is, among other things, an epic redaction of Greco-Macedonian colonial expansion."

274. Mori, *Politics of Apollonius Rhodius' Argonautica*, 112; Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica* 4.1755–64.

275. Mori, *Politics of Apollonius Rhodius' Argonautica*, 151.

as an extension of divinely sanctioned Greek rule. In this way, the parallels between the Argonauts' journey through the east into North Africa and Alexander's journey into Egypt functionally "dovetail with the desire of the first Ptolemies to be celebrated as the heirs to Alexander's empire," an empire steeled by both a powerful military and the "ideological promotion of the dynasty as both pious and divine in its own right."²⁷⁶ Apollonius' accounts of the Argonauts' origins from the "Pelasgian land" of Thessaly and the ancient Pelasgians' connection to the primeval Apidanean Arcadians, moreover, help to clarify and affirm the ancient Greek origins of Ptolemaic rule by adumbrating a genealogical relationship between the ancient Greeks and the ancient Egyptians — a relationship particularly relevant to the needs of Ptolemaic political agenda.²⁷⁷

3.2 MYRSILUS OF METHYMNA AND ANTICLIDES OF ATHENS

Myrsilus was a Greek historian and paradoxographer born in the early third century BCE in Methymna, Lesbos. Brief fragments attributed to Myrsilus appear primarily in works by Antigonus of Karystos (flourished c. 225 BCE), Dionysius of Halicarnassus (c. 60 BCE–c. 7 BCE), and Strabo (c. 64 BCE–24 CE). The fragments that contain references to the Pelasgians, however, appear almost entirely in Dionysius of Halicarnassus' account of the migration of the Pelasgians to Italy.²⁷⁸ According to Dionysius, Myrsilus calls the Pelasgians "Tyrrhenians" (Τυρρηνοίς). Myrsilus also claims that the Tyrrhenians were called "Pelargoi," meaning "storks," because of their extensive migrations from their homeland of Tyrrhenia in Italy throughout the Mediterranean where "they swarmed in flocks both into Greece and barbarian

276. Mori, *Politics of Apollonius Rhodius' Argonautica*, 8, 10.

277. Mori, *Politics of Apollonius Rhodius' Argonautica*, 4, 8, 19–20.

278. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.23.5.

lands”²⁷⁹ To explain their Italian migrations, fragments of Myrsilus recorded in Dionysius recount a series of “calamities” (συμφορῶν) that befell the Pelasgian-Tyrrhennians in Italy for their failure to offer a promised sacrifice to Jupiter, Apollo, and the Cabeiri.²⁸⁰ Devastated by drought and disease in Tyrrhenia, the Pelasgian-Tyrrhenians sought advice from an unnamed oracle.²⁸¹ Confused by the oracle’s message, an elder advised the Pelasgian-Tyrrhenians to offer human sacrifice to appease the gods, a suggestion that resulted in an outbreak of “discord” (στάσις) among the Pelasgian-Tyrrhenians who vehemently opposed the elder’s interpretation of the oracle.²⁸² To escape suffering and strife in Tyrrhenia, a great many Pelasgians thus fled from Italy and “scattered over the earth.” One group of Pelasgian-Tyrrhenians who remained in Italy settled alongside the Aborigines²⁸³ while another migrant group settled in Athens where the Pelasgians constructed the “Pelargic wall” around the Athenian acropolis.²⁸⁴ As Dionysius attests: “This is the account related by Myrsilus of Lesbos, who uses almost the same words as I do now.”²⁸⁵ Myrsilus thus equates the Pelasgians with the Italian Tyrrhenians, situating them in an extensive migratory tradition and connecting them to an attested Pelasgian settlement in Athens.

A brief fragment attributed by Strabo to third-century BCE historian Anticlides of Athens, about whom little is known, corroborates the connection Myrsilus makes between the Pelasgians and Tyrrhenians and provides a more detailed account of the Pelasgian-Tyrrhenians’ original settlement in Italy. Anticlides names the Pelasgians the first colonists of the islands of

279. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.28.4, tr. Cary: ἐν τῇ πλάνῃ μετονομασθῆναι Πελαργούς, τῶν ὀρνέων τοῖς καλουμένοις πελαργοῖς εἰκασθέντας, ὥς κατ’ ἀγέλας ἐφοίτων εἰς τε τὴν Ἑλλάδα καὶ τὴν βάρβαρον.

280. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.23.1–5, tr. Cary.

281. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.14.5. Possibly the Aborigine oracle of Mars in Tiora, or Matiene near Lista, the “mother-city” of the Aborigines, or the oracle of Delphi in Greece.

282. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.24.2, tr. Cary.

283. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.24.2–4; 1.23.1, tr. Cary.

284. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.28.4, tr. Cary; cf.: Herodotus, *Histories* 6.137.

285. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.23.5, tr. Cary.

Lemnos and Imbros who later migrated from the islands to Italy with “Tyrrhenus, son of [Lydian King] Atys,” after whom they adopted the Tyrrhenian name.²⁸⁶ This attestation finds parallel in multiple Classical accounts. In Herodotus, for example, King Atys’ son Tyrsenos (Τυρσηνόν) led a group of Lydians from the Aegean coast of Asia Minor to Umbria where they adopted the Tyrsenian (Tyrrhenian) name after their leader Tyrsenos. In Hellanicus, the Pelasgians of Thessaly, rather than the Lydians, were expelled by the Hellenes from Greece and migrated westward to settle in Etruria, Italy, where they adopted the Tyrrhenian (Tyrsenian) name.²⁸⁷ Finally, Thucydides locates a settlement of Pelasgians in the Acte headland in the easternmost part of the Chalcidice where he identifies the Pelasgians as “a race of Tyrsenians who once inhabited Lemnos and Athens.”²⁸⁸ The link between the Pelasgians and the Tyrrhenians/Tyrsenians of the northeastern Aegean and Italy endures into Hellenistic accounts, positioning the Pelasgians as intermediaries between the Greek and Italian worlds.

3.3 DIONYSIUS OF HALICARNASSUS

Born in the first century BCE on the Ionian coast of Asia Minor, Greek historian and rhetorician Dionysius of Halicarnassus travelled to Rome around 30 BCE to begin his monumental history of Rome entitled *Roman Antiquities*.²⁸⁹ In his preface, Dionysius decries the ignorance of the Greeks regarding the history of Rome and offers his account of the ancient origins of the city to “prove that [the founders of Rome] were Greeks” and that “Rome from the very beginning...produced infinite examples of virtue in men whose superiors...no city, either

286. Strabo, *Geography* 5.2.4, tr. H. L. Jones.

287. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.28.1–4.

288. Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 4.109.

289. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.7.2.

Greek or barbarian, has ever produced.”²⁹⁰ The apologetic style of the work is therefore explicitly announced, plainly demonstrating Dionysius’ interest in legitimizing the rise of Roman imperial power in the Greek Mediterranean.

In the context of the rise of Rome as an imperial power and the “sudden emergence of deep Roman involvement in the Greek Mediterranean,”²⁹¹ the Pelasgians feature in the *Antiquities* as an essentially fluid entity offering multiple ethnic, cultural, and diplomatic links between the Greek and Roman worlds — links instrumental in the construction of Greek-Italian kinship. By drawing multiple connections between the Greeks and the Romans via myths of their relationship with or descent from the Pelasgians, the *Antiquities* ambitiously endeavors to associate Roman imperial rule with ancient Greek colonists of Italy. Therefore, Dionysius first describes the Pelasgians in military alliance with the Italian Aborigines and connects the origins of both groups to the Peloponnese. Dionysius identifies the Pelasgians as a people of Greek stock (Πελασγῶν γένος Ἑλληνικὸν), autochthonous (ᾠκησαν αὐτόχθονες) to the Peloponnesus, who were ruled by the eponymous King Pelasgus, son of Zeus and Niobe, daughter of Phoroneus.²⁹² Dionysius also identifies the Aborigines as a tribe of Peloponnesian Arcadians known as the Oenotrians, “the first of all Greeks to cross the Ionian sea.”²⁹³ According to Dionysius, these Arcadians migrated to western Italy seventeen generations before the Trojan War under the leadership of Lycaon’s son Oenotrus, a grandson of Pelasgus.²⁹⁴ In Italy, the Arcadians adopted

290. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.5.2-3, tr. Cary.

291. Arthur M. Eckstein, *Rome Enters the Greek East: From Anarchy to Hierarchy in the Hellenistic Mediterranean, 230–170 BC* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), 6.

292. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.17.2, tr. Cary. Dionysius attests to the Pelasgians’ autochthonous origins without a clear statement that Pelasgus himself was earth-born.

293. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.11.2, tr. Cary.

294. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 2.1.2, 1.11.1–4. Dionysius also draws for his account on the authority of second century Roman writers Cato the Elder (c. 234 BCE–149 BCE) and Gaius Sempronius Tuditanus (Roman consul 129 BCE) who link the Oenotrians to the Aborigines of Italy (Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.13.2).

the name of Oenotrians under the rule of Oenotrus. Later, however, the Oenotrians adopted the name of Italians under the rule of King Italus, an Oenotrian by birth, and then the name of Romans under the rule of the legendary king Romulus, a foundational figure of the Roman myth.²⁹⁵ As for their Aborigine identity, Dionysius speculates that the Arcadian Oenotrians were called Aborigines (Ἀβοριγῖνας) in reference to their settlements in mountainous regions of Umbria.²⁹⁶ Thus, the Pelasgians, as ancestors both of the Arcadians via Lycaon, son of Pelasgus and father of Oenotrus, and of the Aborigines via their connection to Pelasgian-Arcadian Oenotrus, appear to have strong links to the Roman descendants of the Aborigines.²⁹⁷ With the alliance between the Pelasgians and the Pelasgian-Arcadian Oenotrians, moreover, the groups successfully expelled the native Sicels from the Italian territory which would later become the site of the city of Rome. This tradition unites the Pelasgians and Pelasgian-Arcadian Aborigines with stories about the foundation of the city.²⁹⁸

Dionysius also provides accounts of the extensive migrations of the Peloponnesian Pelasgians throughout Greece and the northeast Aegean, localizing them in different places throughout the region. From their origins in the Peloponnesus, the Pelasgians migrated to Thessaly, where they divided the area into three regions named Phthiotis, Achaia, and Pelasgiotis in honor of the Pelasgian colonists Achaeus, Phthius, and a so-called “second” Pelasgus, the son

295. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.12.1–3; 1.35.1, tr. Cary: “But in the course of time the land came to be called Italy, after a ruler named Italus. This man, according to Antiochus of Syracuse, was both a wise and good prince, and persuading some of his neighbours by arguments and subduing the rest by force, he made himself master of all the land which lies between the Napetine and Scylacian bays, which was the first land, he says, to be called Italy, after Italus. And when he had possessed himself of this district and had many subjects, he immediately coveted the neighboring peoples and brought many cities under his rule. He says further that Italus was an Oinotrian by birth.”

296. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.13.3. He was probably etymologizing the word “aborigine” as Latin *ab* (“from”), Greek ὄρος (mountain), and Greek γένε (“stock/born”).

297. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.13.1.

298. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.9.1.

of Larisa and Poseidon.²⁹⁹ The Pelasgians eventually fled their Aetolian and Locrian enemies in Thessaly and dispersed throughout Greece where they settled in Boeotia, Phocis, Euboea, and Hestiaeotis. They also settled along the Hellespont and on the Aegean islands of Crete and Lesbos.³⁰⁰ According to Dionysius, many Pelasgians settled among their “kinsmen” in Dodona, the location of the oracle long associated with the Pelasgians.³⁰¹ From Dodona, the Pelasgians migrated across the Ionian gulf into Italy where they founded the city of Spina and became masters of the Ionian sea.³⁰² During their expansion into Italy, the Pelasgians also settled in Umbria among the Umbrians and the Aborigines. Here, the Pelasgians joined the Aborigines in an alliance to expel the Umbrians from the city of Croton and the Sicels from the future location of the city of Rome.³⁰³ The Pelasgians also founded a number of other cities in Italy, including Agylla, Pisae, Saturnia, Alsium, Falerii and Fescennium.³⁰⁴ According to Dionysius, the cities of Falerii and Fescennium continued to boast distinctly Greek cultural elements associated with the “Pelasgian nation” even in his own time.³⁰⁵ These Greek elements included the use of Argolic spears and bucklers and Greek style temples, images of the gods, and religious rituals — features that allegedly evidence the Peloponnesian origins of the ancient Pelasgian habitants of these cities.³⁰⁶ The Pelasgians also occupied the majority of the Campanian plains where they founded a city called Larisa, “named after their [Arcadian] mother-city in the Peloponnese.”³⁰⁷

Following the story of their expansion in Italy, Dionysius recounts the “calamities” that

299. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.17.3.

300. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.18.1.

301. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.18.2, tr. Cary.

302. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.18.2.

303. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.19–1.20.4.

304. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.20.5–1.21.

305. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.21.1–2, tr. Cary.

306. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.21.1–2; 1.17.2.

307. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.21.3, tr. Cary: Λάρισαν, ἐπὶ τῆς ἐν Πελοποννήσῳ σφῶν μητροπόλεως ὄνομα θέμενοι αὐτῇ.

befell the Pelasgians there. According to Myrsilus of Methymna, whom Dionysius cites, the Pelasgians suffered this fate because of their failure to offer proper sacrifice to the gods.³⁰⁸ While many Pelasgians fled these calamities, Dionysius calls those Pelasgians who remained in Italy “fellow citizens” of the Aborigines; the Aborigines and the Pelasgians together “built the city of Rome.”³⁰⁹ With the later arrival of Aeneas and the Trojans in Italy, according to Dionysius, the Pelasgians, Aborigines, and Trojans intermingled and together adopted the name of Latins under the Aborigine king Latinus.³¹⁰ Many centuries after the fall of Troy, Trojan-Aborigine Romulus, legendary founder of Rome, was born seventeenth in descent from Trojan Aeneas.³¹¹ Dionysius’ account of the Trojan-Pelasgian-Aborigine founding of Rome, as well as his story about the birth of Romulus among the Pelasgian-Aborigine habitants of the region thus function to link the Greeks and Romans in kinship. This link also effectively legitimizes Roman hegemony over Greece by representing the rise of the Roman empire as a natural extension of essentially Greek power.

3.4 STRABO, PAUSANIAS, PSEUDO-APOLLODORUS

The Greek geographer and historian Strabo was born around 64 BCE in Amasya in the Pontus region of Asia Minor encompassing the southern coast of the Black Sea. Following the end of the Mithridatic Wars (89 BCE–63 BCE), a series of vicious conflicts fought between the Roman Republic and the Hellenistic Kingdom of Pontus, and the suicide of Pontian king Mithridates VI, a formidable enemy of Rome, Strabo and his family relocated to the Nysa in

308. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.23–1.24, tr. Cary.

309. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.30.5, tr. Cary: “As for the Pelasgian nation, however, those who were not destroyed or dispersed among the various colonies (for a small number remained out of a great many) were left behind) as fellow citizens of the Aborigines in these parts, where in the course of time their posterity, together with others, built the city of Rome. Such are the legends told about the Pelasgian race.”

310. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.60.1.

311. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.45.3.

Caria where he pursued a rigorous education. Strabo travelled extensively throughout the eastern Mediterranean during his career — a career which culminated in his monumental *Geography*, a work in 17 books exploring locations across the ancient world from Spain to India. In his broad geographical survey, Strabo identifies the Pelasgians as “an ancient people spread throughout the whole of Greece” and draws on Archaic and Classical accounts to locate the Pelasgians in Thessaly, Epirus, the Peloponnesus, Lemnos, Lesbos, Ionia, Anatolia, and the Tyrrhenian coast of Italy.³¹²

Strabo attests that the Pelasgians of Thessaly — the founders of the oracle at Dodona in Epirus — inhabited Anatolia and Ionia during the pre-Archaic times.³¹³ This includes the region later invaded by the barbarian-speaking Carians who expelled the Pelasgians to establish their own settlements.³¹⁴ In the Peloponnesus, the Pelasgians appear connected to both the Argives and the Arcadians.³¹⁵ The contemporary habitants of the island of Lesbos, moreover, claim that they were previously ruled by Pylaeus, brother of Homer’s Pelasgian Hippothous, in honor of whom Mount Pylaeus of Lesbos received its name.³¹⁶ The habitants of the island of Chios south of Lesbos also claimed that the Pelasgians of Thessaly founded their settlements.³¹⁷ In Italy, Strabo locates the Pelasgians in the region of Tyrrhenia where they founded the sea-port town of Agylla, or Caerea — the town later inhabited by the Lydian-Tyrrhenians, a people called by the Romans “Etrusci.”³¹⁸ In Strabo’s chronology, the Pelasgian “Thessalians” settled in Agylla before the Lydian Tyrrhenians arrived in Italy. The Lydian Tyrrhenians adopted the name “Caerea” for the city after a Pelasgian resident greeted one of them with “Chaere” (χαῖρε), a

312. Strabo, *Geography* 5.2.4, tr. H. L. Jones; Strabo, *Geography* 13.3.3, 12.3.5.

313. Strabo, *Geography* 7.7.10, 5.2.4.

314. Strabo, *Geography* 14.2.27

315. Strabo, *Geography* 5.2.4.

316. Strabo, *Geography* 13.3.3.

317. Strabo, *Geography* 13.3.3

318. Strabo, *Geography* 5.2.3.

Greek word for “hello.”³¹⁹ After some time living on the coast of Tyrrhenia under the rule of Pelasgian king Maleos, a group of Pelasgians fled from Italy and settled in Athens.³²⁰ The Pelasgians, connected with the Tyrrhenians in Classical accounts, thus remain distinct from the Lydian-Tyrrhenians in Strabo.

According to an account by Roman historian Coelius Antipater (c. 180 BCE–120 BCE) cited by Strabo, the Pelasgians remain indirectly connected to the Romans via their traditional link to the Arcadians. According to Coelius, Rome was originally an Arcadian colony founded by Evander, an Arcadian who offered the first sacrifice to Hercules. This tradition of sacrifice “in the Grecian mode” “continued [in Rome] in honor of Hercules” up to Strabo’s time, evincing the link between the Arcadians and Rome.³²¹ Strabo also cites Ephorus’ account of the Pelasgians’ descent from Arcadian Lycaon, emphasizing the connections between the Arcadians and the Pelasgians.³²² With the Arcadian–Pelasgian link to Rome, Strabo effectively promotes the idea of the kinship of Greeks and Romans and allows the Pelasgians to participate, together with the Romans, in the founding myth of Rome.

Greek historian Pausanias, born around 110 CE (d. c. 180 CE) in Lydia on the coast of Asia Minor, also recalls Archaic and Classical traditions about the Pelasgians and connects the Pelasgians both to Greece and Italy. According to Pausanias, Pelasgus was the first man of the Peloponnesus who introduced key elements of civilization to the Pelasgian ancestors of the Greeks. This included the invention of huts, the making of sheepskin coats, and the eating of acorns.³²³ Pausanias also mentions that Pelasgus’ son Lycaon was founder of the ancient

319. Strabo, *Geography* 5.2.3.

320. Strabo, *Geography* 5.2.8, 9.2.4.

321. Strabo, *Geography* 5.3.3.

322. Strabo, *Geography* 5.2.4.

323. Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 8.1.5–6.

Arcadian city of Lycosura and of the Lycaean Games.³²⁴ Lycaon was also a contemporary of Athenian king Cecrops, a ruler celebrated for introducing the burning of πελάνους cakes on altars to the gods. Lycaon was not so wise, however, and Zeus transformed him into a wolf for his impious offering of infant sacrifice.³²⁵ According to Pausanias, the whole of Arcadia received its name from Arcas, a son of Callisto, Lycaon's daughter. During Arcas' reign, the Pelasgians became known as the Arcadians and learned the art of cultivation from Triptolemus, son of Celeus, who received this knowledge from Demeter.³²⁶ However, as Pausanias remarks, Pelasgus was the first to invite Demeter, the goddess of harvest, into his home in Argos, an event that took place a few generations before agriculture was formally introduced to the Peloponnese during Arcas' time.³²⁷ Pausanias also mentions a sanctuary of Demeter in Argos called "Pelasgian" after its founder Pelasgus, son of Triopas.³²⁸ Finally, Pausanias says that the Argives named the citadel of Argos — as well as two other cities in Thessaly, "one by the sea and one by the river Peneios," — "Larisa" after the daughter of Pelasgus.³²⁹ These attestations embed the Pelasgians in the ancient history of Thessaly and the Peloponnese and affirm their role in the development of ancient Greek culture.

Beyond these attestations, Pausanias locates the Pelasgians at Iolcus, the native Greek city of the Argonauts,³³⁰ and on the eastern Aegean island of Lemnos from which the Pelasgians expelled the Minyans. According to Pausanias, these Lemnian Minyans expelled by the Pelasgians were the sons of the Argonauts, begotten by the Lemnian women, who, according to

324. Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 8.2.1.

325. Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 8.2.2–3.

326. Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 8.4.1.

327. Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 1.14.2; 8.4.1.

328. Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 2.24: See also: Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica* 1.112; 4.263–4; *Scholia Argonautica* 1.40–1.

329. Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 2.24.1.

330. Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 4.36.1.

Herodotus, later settled among the Lacedaemonians of Sparta.³³¹ Pausanias mentions a Pelasgian settlement in Attica, outside the wall of the Acropolis — the wall traditionally called “Pelasgian,” since it was constructed by the Pelasgians.³³² Finally, Pausanias says that Pelasgian Lycaon was the father of Oenotrus, the founder of the Arcadian colony of Oenotria in Italy.³³³ As we have seen above, it is from this colony that Dionysius of Halicarnassus traces the origins of the Italian Aborigines who first adopted the name of the Oenotrians under the rule of Oenotrus, then the name of Italians under the rule of Italus, and finally the name of the Romans under the rule of Romulus.³³⁴ Pausanias’ work therefore corresponds to Archaic and Classical accounts that connect the Pelasgians to the Peloponnese and Italy by postulating their earlier habitation in the Peloponnese and their genealogical relationship with Pelasgian Lycaon and his son Oenotrus.³³⁵

Greek historian Pseudo-Apollodorus (first/second century CE) about whom very little is known, similarly relies upon Archaic and Classical accounts for his references to the Pelasgians in his work the *Bibliotheca*. Scholars often describe the *Bibliotheca* as a “handbook” or “encyclopedia” account of Greek mythology produced during the first or second century CE. In this period, “popular erudition” among Greco-Romans of imperial Rome increased the demand among Greeks for accessible mythological texts.³³⁶ According to historian Joan Pagès, the Greco-Romans of Egypt had also “renewed their interest in ancient [Greek] mythical traditions as a reaction against Roman influence” in this period.³³⁷ A number of “sub-literary”

331. Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 7.2.2; Herodotus, *Histories* 4.145.

332. Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 1.28.3

333. Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 8.3.5.

334. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.12.1–3; 1.35.1, tr. Cary.

335. Niebuhr, *The History of Rome*, 1:21–22.

336. Joan Pagès, “Apollodorus’ *Bibliotheca* and the *Mythographus Homericus*,” in *Apollodoriana: Ancient Myths, New Crossroads*, ed. Jordi Pàmias (Berlin: De Gruyter 2017), 77; Monique van Rossum-Steenbeek, *Greek Readers’ Digests? Studies on a Selection of Subliterary Papyri* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), xiv.

337. Joan Pagès, “Apollodorus’ *Bibliotheca*,” 77.

encyclopediae works and scholia to major literary compositions that appear in first- and second-century CE papyri collections from Egypt³³⁸ thus evince both extensive literacy and the growth of a “‘second-rate’ literary culture” among the Greek-identified Greco-Romans of the Roman imperial period.³³⁹ In this context, Pseudo-Apollodorus’ *Bibliotheca* records fragments of ancient works crucial to our reconstruction of Archaic mythological traditions, including those surrounding the primeval Pelasgians, — fragments specifically relevant to Greek literary culture in the first and second century CE.

Citing the authority of Hesiod and Acusilaus, Pseudo-Apollodorus first locates the origins of the eponymous Pelasgus in the Peloponnese.³⁴⁰ Here, he connects Pelasgus to Arcadian culture hero Lycaon and provides a list of fifty sons of Lycaon. Many of Lycaon’s sons in Pseudo-Apollodorus’ list lend their names to settlements throughout Greece. This includes Thesprotus, for example, whom the fifth-century BCE poet Pindar links to the central Greek region of Thesprotia near Dodona by calling Dodona “Thesprotian Dodona.”³⁴¹ According to Pseudo-Apollodorus, Lycaon’s fifty sons ultimately “exceeded all men in pride and impiety,” however, by offering human sacrifice to Zeus who, disgusted, struck them with thunderbolts.³⁴² These themes of the Lycaonids’ impiety and the implications of human sacrifice parallel those that appear in stories about the multiple calamities that befell the Pelasgians in Italy attested by Myrsilus of Methymna and Dionysius of Halicarnassus. Oenotrus is notably absent from Pseudo-Apollodorus’ list of Lycaon’s sons, however, and this eliminates the link between the Pelasgians, Arcadians, and Oenotrians that features in Dionysius’ account of the Greek origins of Rome.

338. Alan Cameron, *Greek Mythography in the Roman World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) 52–69; van Rossum-Steenbeek, *Greek Readers’ Digests?* xiii–xix.

339. Pagès, “Apollodorus’ *Bibliotheca*,” 77; van Rossum-Steenbeek, *Greek Readers’ Digests?* xiii–xix.

340. Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 2.1.1.

341. Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 3.8.1; Strabo, *Geography* 7.7.11; Myres, “Pelasgian Theory,” 187.

342. Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 3.8.1.

According to the collection of epitomes, or fragments, compiled by James G. Frazer, fragments of Pseudo-Apollodorus further connect the Pelasgians to the Peloponnese. In one of these fragments, the mythological figure Pelops describes the region of Argos as “Pelasgiotis,” transferring the name of one of the four divisions (*tetrades*) of Thessaly from central Greece to the Peloponnese.³⁴³ In connection to Thessaly, Pseudo-Apollodorus recounts the story of the slaying of Medusa by Perseus and the aftermath. To escape being killed by Perseus as well, Perseus’ grandfather Acrisius fled from Argos to the “Pelasgian land” of Thessaly — a land then ruled by King Teutamides.³⁴⁴ Pseudo-Apollodorus also identifies the region of Thessaly as a land inhabited by Pelasgians just after the fall of Troy.³⁴⁵ For it is among the Pelasgians that Antiphus, son of Thessalus, settled upon his return from Troy in the region to which he gave the name Thessaly.³⁴⁶ In another reference to the Pelasgians, Pseudo-Apollodorus mentions that Hippothous, the leader of the Pelasgian contingent of Trojan allies in the *Iliad*, was the son of Pelasgus rather than the son of “Pelasgian Lethus” as in Homer.³⁴⁷ This divergence from Homer’s account links eponymous Pelasgus to the Troad region of Asia Minor. A final reference in the *Bibliotheca* locates the Pelasgians further east along the coast of Marmara, where they are described as a threat to the Doliones, the people ruled by the king Cyzicus. The Pelasgians as a threat to the Doliones also appear in Apollonius’ *Argonautica*.³⁴⁸

Pseudo-Apollodorus’ work thus offers us the fullest picture of mythological traditions regarding the Pelasgians that were in circulation by the first century CE. Given that the *Bibliotheca* dates to the Roman era, Pseudo-Apollodorus’ exclusion of myths about the

343. Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Epitome* E.2.9 in *Apollodorus: The Library*, vol. 2, *Book 3.10-End. Epitome*, tr. James G. Frazer, Loeb Classical Library 121 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1921).

344. Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 2.4.4, tr. Frazer.

345. Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Epitome* E.6.15.

346. Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Epitome* E.6.15, E.6.15b.

347. Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Epitome* E.3.35; Homer, *Iliad* 2.82.

348. Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 1.9.18.

Pelasgians' connections to Italy and Rome is interesting. While the founding of Rome ultimately falls outside the chronological scope of his work, Pseudo-Apollodorus also excludes multiple other ancient stories about important figures of Greek Heroic mythology, such as Heracles and Odysseus, who had significant connections to Italy.³⁴⁹ Pseudo-Apollodorus does, however, mention Trojan Aeneas, a key figure linking both Troy and the entire Greek cultural space to Italy, whose settlement in Latium led to the founding of the city of Rome several generations later. According to historian K. F. B. Fletcher, Pseudo-Apollodorus' exclusion of myths about the Pelasgians, Heracles, and Odysseus in their connections to Italy plainly reflects the author's conscious choice to "leav[e] Rome off the conceptual map of the Greek world."³⁵⁰ Moreover, Fletcher characterizes this decision as a reaction against Roman "appropriation" of Greek genealogical accounts linking the Romans and Greeks in kinship as a means of "authoriz[ing] [the Romans'] rise to power and influence over the Greeks."³⁵¹ Thus, while some Greek historians, such as Dionysius of Halicarnassus, actively promoted the Greek-Roman link, others, such as Pseudo-Apollodorus, reacted against this broadly accepted notion of Greek-Roman kinship and sought to exclude Italy and Rome from their accounts of Greek mythological past. As Fletcher summarizes, "[t]he Romans, despite being the key players on the Mediterranean stage in

349. K. F. B. Fletcher, "Systematic Genealogies in Apollodorus' *Bibliotheca* and the Exclusion of Rome from Greek Myth," *Classical Antiquity* 27.1 (2008): 59–91, <https://doi.org/10.1525/ca.2008.27.1.59>. As Fletcher summarizes: "According to Dionysius and his sources, Heracles had important links with Italy from when he went there on his return to Greece with the cattle of Geryon. He had sons Pallas, by a daughter of Evander (an Arcadian colonist who provides another link to Greece), and Latinus, by an unnamed Hyperborean girl (RA 1.43.1)" Moreover, "Odysseus, too, had a claim to a share in the mythic history of the area around Rome by the fifth century if not already by the sixth. He was connected with the Tyrrhenians at Theogony 1011–16, where he is also said to be by Circe the father of the suggestively named Latinus. As regards Rome specifically, according to Dionysius, Damastes Sigeus (FGrH 5 F 3 = Dio. Hal. RA 1.72.2) agrees with Hellanicus (FGrH 4 F 84) that Odysseus came with Aeneas to found the city. Other, later authors are more specific: Xenagoras (FGrH 240 F 29 = Dio. Hal. RA 1.72.5) names Rhomus, eponymous founder of Rome, as a son of Odysseus and Circe; Plutarch mentions a Trojan woman named Rhome who marries Latinus, son of Odysseus' son Telemachus, and their child is Romulus (Rom. 2.3). By Apollodorus' time, Odysseus had a clear connection with Italy and Rome for a Greek author wishing to use it" (pp. 81–88).

350. Fletcher, "Systematic Genealogies in Apollodorus' *Bibliotheca*," 84.

351. Fletcher, "Systematic Genealogies in Apollodorus' *Bibliotheca*," 85.

his [Pseudo-Apollorodus'] day, figure not at all in the *Bibliotheca*'s mythic age," reflecting a decisive shift from earlier Hellenistic and Roman accounts.³⁵² This shift illuminates the various political tensions and motivations underlying and shaping Greek accounts of identity and kinship in literature of the Hellenistic and Roman periods.

3.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS ON HELLENISTIC AND ROMAN ERA WRITERS

Hellenistic and early Roman era accounts continue to explore mythological traditions about the Pelasgians and demonstrate various ways in which Greek writers utilized the Pelasgians to negotiate the limits of and mutual connections between Greek, Greco-Roman, and Roman identity throughout these periods. In Apollonius' *Argonautica*, the Pelasgians serve as touchstones for Hellenic identity. They are primeval habitants of Thessaly and Jason's homeland of Iolcus where they feature in connection to Hera and early Greek religious cults. The Pelasgians also appear related to the Danaids and Aegyptaiids of Egypt via their connection to Apis, the son of Phoroneus and eponymous ancestor of the primeval Apidanæan Arcadians. The foundational role of Pelasgians in the *Argonautica* — as ancestors of the Greeks and links to the ancient rulers of Egypt — reveals the negotiability and instrumental potential of Greek traditions of identity in the Hellenistic period. In the Ptolemaic period, the consolidation of Greek identity ultimately proved central to the "ideological construction of Ptolemaic kingship and Hellenic identity in [third-century BCE] Egypt." The role that the Pelasgians play in the *Argonautica* is therefore especially significant for the negotiations of Greek identity in the Ptolemaic era.³⁵³

Writers of the Hellenistic tradition, including Myrsilus of Methymna and Anticlides, elaborate upon Classical accounts linking the Pelasgians to settlements of Tyrrhenians in the

352. Fletcher, "Systematic Genealogies in Apollodorus' *Bibliotheca*," 88.

353. Mori, *Politics of Apollonius Rhodius' Argonautica*, 4.

northeast Aegean and Italy. Various versions of this story appear in Herodotus, Hellanicus, and Thucydides. Dionysius, however, elaborates on the story attested by Ephorus of Cyme about the connection between the Pelasgians and Arcadians; both groups are connected to Italy via the Oenotrians, an Arcadian tribe led by Oenotrus, son of Pelasgian Lycaon, who were the first Greek migrants to Italy. This link between the Arcadians and Pelasgians is well attested among Roman era writers. Pausanias, for example, mentions that Pelasgus was the first man of Arcadia, and that Oenotrus was the son of Pelasgian Lycaon.

While Strabo cleaves to the earlier tradition locating the Pelasgians in Italy alongside the Lydian-Tyrrhenians, he also records an alternative tradition indirectly linking the Pelasgians and Arcadians to Italy via Arcadian Evander, a founder of Rome. This connection with Rome appears well-established in contemporaneous literature. For example, in his account of the history of Rome, Dionysius of Halicarnassus explicitly identifies Rome as a Greek city due to the mutual connections between the Pelasgians, Arcadians, Oenotrians and Aborigines. He also cites Greek and Roman historians in his account of Romulus' descent from Aeneas and Lavinia, daughter of Aborigine king Latinus.³⁵⁴ The Arcadian-Pelasgian link to Italy and Rome thus proves instrumental in early Roman imperial discourse for justifying Roman hegemony across the Greek world — hegemony that has ostensibly “Greek” origins and is therefore legitimized as an extension of Greek power. As Myres states, these various attestations to the Arcadian-Pelasgian presence and influence in Italy by Roman era writers effectively confirm “the Ephoran theory of an Italian ‘eparchy’ of the Pelasgians,” and provide “a good excuse for Roman intervention in the affairs of ‘Pelasgian’ Epirus and ‘Pelasgian’ Greece” during the Roman imperial period.³⁵⁵

354. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.45.3.

355. Myres, “Pelasgian Theory,” 222.

Pseudo-Apollodorus' *Bibliotheca* therefore reflects an alternative approach to mythic accounts of Greek ethnic origins and the Greeks' relationships to the Romans. Pseudo-Apollodorus' deliberate exclusion of the Pelasgian-Roman link attested in earlier writers marks an important shift in traditions connecting the Romans and the Greeks via stories about the migration of various founding figures, including the Pelasgians. By rejecting the ancient mythological origins of Greco-Roman kinship, Pseudo-Apollodorus' work ultimately reads as a reflection of "cultural resistance" consistent with the Second Sophistic literary tradition which "privilege[d] the culturally prestigious pre-Roman past" and "conform[ed] to a very exclusive definition of Hellenic identity, with Roman elements either absent or carefully compartmentalized."³⁵⁶ For the Romans, however, this Second Sophistic "resistance" effectively "represent[ed] the version of Greekness most acceptable to the Romans...[and] refined [Greek cultural heritage] into the product most readily exchangeable [by the Greeks] for a share of [Roman imperial] power."³⁵⁷ Cultural tensions and exchanges between the Greeks and Romans proved to be central to the consolidation and reaffirmation of an idealized Hellenic identity in the Roman period. In this context, the Pelasgian link to the Romans became less salient as the Greeks sought to bolster the "cultural prestige of the Greek past" by obscuring or compartmentalizing its connections with Rome. By refining the "cultural prestige" of the Greek past, the Greeks ultimately rendered this past usable "as a guide for assigning meaning and value to places and communities in the present."³⁵⁸

356. Adam M. Kemezis, "Greek Ethnicity and the Second Sophistic," in *A Companion to Ethnicity in the Ancient Mediterranean*, ed. Jeremy McInerney (Somerset: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 2014), 400.

357. Kemezis, "Greek Ethnicity," 400.

358. Kemezis, "Greek Ethnicity," 399.

Conclusion

The fluidity of the definition of the Pelasgians — those ancient, variably Greek, pre-Greek, and non-Greek habitants of the Greek world — and the utter lack of *emic*, i.e., internal, perspectives on Pelasgian identity mark them as a group ultimately relegated to the realm of myth. Given their mythic significance, however, the Pelasgians also enjoy numerous “afterlives” in identity discourses crafted and explored by various poets, mythographers, historians, authors, and playwrights of the Archaic through Roman periods.³⁵⁹ From voiceless characters of Homeric epic, to vaguely defined “historical” figures linking the Greeks to various groups across the Mediterranean, the Pelasgians consistently feature as a “benevolent *tertium quid* that has bridged the gap between the Greek and the barbarian world.”³⁶⁰

In accounts of Greek writers from Homer (eighth century BCE) to Pseudo-Apollodorus (c. second century CE), the Pelasgians feature simultaneously as pre-Hellenic inhabitants of Greece, predecessors or direct ancestors of the Greeks, and non-Greek barbarians incorporated into the Hellenic ethnos with their adoption of the Greek language. As primeval habitants of Greece, the Pelasgians offer an indispensable link to the distant Greek past; for it is in the distant past that classical writers consistently root their claims to identity and community. The Pelasgians thus serve as a valuable explanatory tool utilized in Greek identity discourses to clarify the mythological and historical relationship between Greeks, non-Greeks, and barbarians in their enduring mutuality and hybridity across time. The Pelasgians also occasionally serve as a point of reference in oppositional constructions of Greek identity helping to define Greekness against the boundaries of alterity and barbarity. While the Pelasgians remain connected to

359. Quinn, *In Search of the Phoenicians*, xxiii.

360. Rosaria Vignolo Munson, *Black Doves Speak: Herodotus and the Languages of the Barbarians* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 19. See also Sourvinou-Inwood, “Herodotus (and Others),” 121–131.

ancient Greece in accounts of their origins, descriptions of their settlements throughout the Mediterranean vary according to the intellectual and political context of each author. In Homeric epic, the Pelasgians first appear as enemies of the Achaeans in alliance with the Trojans. In the Archaic period, writers variously attest to the origins of the Pelasgians in the Peloponnese as the descendants of either an earth-born ancestor or an ancestor born from Zeus. In the Classical period, in the midst of the Persian and Peloponnesian Wars, Greek historians and tragedians elaborate on the Archaic tradition; they started to consider the autochthonous Pelasgians to be ancestors of the Athenians. In the Hellenistic and Roman eras, the Pelasgians reappear as ancestors of the Greeks linked primarily to Arcadia. During the rise of the Roman empire, this Arcadian-Pelasgian link finds further elaboration in accounts linking the Greek Arcadians and Italians in kinship. By positioning the Pelasgians alongside aboriginal Italian groups as the founders of numerous Italian cities, including Rome, Roman writers effectively embed Rome into the tradition of Greek migration and colonization.

From the Archaic through early Roman periods, various contemporaneous intellectual, social, and political concerns ultimately motivated ancient writers to resort to stories about the Pelasgians. In accounts of conflicts, such as Homer's epic account of the Trojan War and Herodotus' story about the clash between the Pelasgians and the Athenians at Lemnos, the Pelasgians featured as oppositional identity-building elements that helped to define the boundaries of Greekness against alterity and barbarity. In accounts of the Greeks' descent from the primeval Pelasgians, however, the Pelasgians serve as important ancestral figures from whom the Greeks inherited, for example, several fundamental elements of Greek religious cult. With the dual characterization of the Pelasgians as pre-Greek and non-Greek, classical writers thus utilize them in multiple ways to bolster a sense of Greek identity — whether on the basis of

kinship with the Pelasgians or in opposition to them. In Roman accounts, moreover, the Pelasgians serve as integral elements linking the Romans to their Greek ancestors localized in the Peloponnesus. These various “uses” of the Pelasgians demonstrate alternating interests in either connecting the Greeks to other groups through the stories about Pelasgian migration throughout the Mediterranean or affirming the Greek origins from the primeval Pelasgians.

The Pelasgians performed several rhetorical and ideological functions in classical accounts. Primarily, the duality of Pelasgian identity helped to destabilize solid opposition between Greeks and non-Greeks. By linking the Greek and barbarian worlds, the Pelasgians embodied the interconnectedness of Greek and non-Greek or barbarian identity. As a hybrid, adaptable link between the Greek and non-Greek worlds, the Pelasgians also helped Greek writers achieve specific goals in specific contexts. In Herodotus, for example, the Pelasgians feature as primeval, if not explicitly autochthonous, ancestors of Athenians, thereby providing a useful, if limited, foundation for Athenian claims to autochthony. In the Roman era, the Pelasgians help to introduce the Greeks into legendary stories about the founding of Rome, thus extending Greek influence into Italy and harmonizing Roman and Hellenic accounts of Rome’s founding myth. More broadly, the Pelasgians enabled Greek writers to trace, define, and explain the origins of ethnic boundaries, political tensions, conflicts, and affinities by providing historical points of reference to explicate contemporary conditions.

By analyzing the roles Pelasgians played in Greek literature across time, the context-specific contours of Greek and non-Greek identities as well as the fundamental features that constituted the definition of Greekness also become clearer. Greek writers often chose to define categories of Greekness and non-Greekness in opposition to one another. In this dynamic, Greek writers promoted Greekness as superior to non-Greekness, a categorical distinction instrumental

for advancing specific ideologies and justifying contemporary cultural and political conditions. While defining Greek identity in terms of collectivity or superiority, moreover, Greek writers always had the option to resort to traditions about Pelasgian ancestors to emphasize the shared legacy of all Greeks as descendants of the autochthonous Pelasgians. By contrast, if the definition of Greek identity was parsed in terms of opposition, Greek writers could employ discourses about the alterity and barbarity of the Pelasgians to underline the distinction between Greek and non-Greek peoples. Consistently, however, Pelasgians appear in Greek literature as links to the Greeks' distant past. In this way, the Pelasgians enabled Greek writers to trace the historical roots of Greek identity, to explain the development of contemporary cultural conditions, and to promote Greek political projects in various political contexts. From the appearance of Pelasgians in Archaic accounts as Trojan allies to their ready incorporation into Hellenistic and Roman era identity discourses, the intentional manipulation of Pelasgian identity in order to produce and promote specific ideologies across different historical periods becomes strikingly clear.

In a parallel development, during the nineteenth- and twentieth-century Albanian National Awakening (*Rilindja*), the deliberate and selective instrumentalization of Pelasgians as ancestors of the ethnically "pure" Albanians in opposition to the Greeks and Ottomans clearly demonstrates the politically-driven processes of manipulation and adaptation inherent in the (re)construction and (re)presentation of both ancient and modern ethnic identities. In the distant past as well as in more recent times, narratives of group identity, including ethnic identity, have been rooted in adaptable and negotiable genealogical, linguistic, and cultural grounds. In this context, ethnic boundaries are reified by the continuous outlining of boundaries between the collective Self and the collective Other. Such is the case, as we have seen, with the Pelasgians.

Through the diachronic analysis and contextualization of identity discourses in ancient Greek literature, we have explored the various conflicts, tensions, and concerns which shaped Pelasgian and Greek identity. We have also discussed specific discursive dynamics that position the Pelasgians in relationship to the Greeks via strategies of opposition, accommodation, harmonization, and elision. The analysis and contextualization of identity discourses in literature remains a valuable approach to the study of ancient identities for its emphasis on the discursive and ideological underpinnings of identity formation and expression. Ancient literary strategies remain the primary “discursive channel[s]” through which identities, including Pelasgian identity, are “actively proclaimed, reclaimed, and declaimed.”³⁶¹ In my assessment, the persistent ambiguity and selective intentional instrumentalization of the Pelasgians in ancient Greek identity discourses ultimately reflect enduring intellectual, social, and political concerns and tensions that accompany identity formation and expression in both the ancient and modern worlds.

361. J. Hall, *Ethnic Identity*, 182.

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