CHAPTER THREE

ETRUSCAN ORIGINS AND THE ANCIENT AUTHORS

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One aspect of the Etruscan mystery and the fascination that they evoke in the public, in addition to the persistent obscurity of their language, is the question of their origins. Massimo Pallottino designated this as “l’annosa questione delle origini etrusche”\(^1\) (“the age-old question of Etruscan origins,” see Chapter 2). This is in fact one of the classic issues that arise concerning the Etruscans: we do not know how this people was formed, or whence its formative elements and characteristic features were derived; its language, as Dionysius of Halicarnassus noted (1.30.2), was like no other known. Any treatise on Etruscology will include a section dealing with the question of origins: one can only note that the debate remains open and that contradictory theories have been proposed, none of which can claim to be convincing. Three main theses have been advanced in the history of Etruscan studies that may be considered to be based on scientifically admissible arguments. Two were inherited from Antiquity: that which maintains that the Etruscans came from the East and that which considers them an extension of the oldest established populations of the locales where we know them in historic times, that is to say by making them autochthonous, natives of Italy. A third was added in modern times, first by the Frenchman Nicolas Fréret, in his *Recherches sur l’origine et l’ancienne histoire des différents peuples de l’Italie* (“Researches on the origin and history of various ancient peoples of Italy”) published in 1753. It was reprised by the big names of German learning of the nineteenth century, such as B. G. Niebuhr and T. Mommsen in their histories of Rome, published respectively in 1811 and 1856: this was the requirement that the ancestors of the Etruscans came over the Alps from the north, in the region where we know the Rhaetians. Their name had appeared to evoke the name *Rasenna* that, according to Dionysius of Halicarnassus, the Etruscans gave themselves in their own language (1.30.3); inscriptions show that the Rhaetians actually spoke a language related to Etruscan.

This is not the place to resume consideration of the issue or analyze the various theories advanced. This paper will consider how the “age-old question of Etruscan origins” had arisen for ancient authors. On this point, modern scholars have only resumed a debate that already existed in Antiquity: at the time when the Greeks, Etruscans and Romans rubbed shoulders, they could not but be struck by the singularity of their language, and
had already posed the question, where did this people come from? But even then there
was no unequivocal answer: the ancient authors were already advancing opposing views,
of autochthony or of their coming by sea, the latter appearing in two distinct versions,
one, by far the most widespread, expressed by Herodotus, that the first Etruscans were
colonists from Lydia, yet also linking them to the Pelasgians, an extinct population at
the time, but one that Greeks represented as having preceded themselves on the soil of
Hellas. In a sense, the modern problem of Etruscan origins only prolongs a discussion
that existed in ancient times, so it is useful to understand why this discussion took place
and what the issues were. It is not irrelevant to note that the debate had not, despite
appearances, a truly scientific character, but that the positions taken vis-à-vis the origin
of the Etruscans expressed a perspective of rapport with this people – and thus had an
ideological significance.

We have already twice invoked the testimony of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, the Greek
rhetorician who settled in Rome at the time of Augustus, and wrote the _Roman Antiquities_
to raise Greeks’ awareness of the origins and early history of the city, which had then
extended its empire across the Mediterranean world. This is a key source because, unlike
Livy who adopts a narrowly Romanocentric view and tells us virtually nothing about
other peoples with whom the Romans were in contact, Dionysius became interested
in Etruscans – who, as we know, played a very important role in the early days of the
existence of Rome, to the point where it was ruled in the sixth century BC by the Etruscan
dynasty of the Tarquins. Concerning Etruscan origins, Dionysius has devoted five chapters
of his first book (1.26–30), to a long excursus on the Etruscan issue.

There is nothing like it elsewhere in Greek and Latin literature and that is why Dionysius
was often considered the first Etruscologist. He had his own opinion on the origin of
the Etruscans, who were to him natives of Italy. But that did not stop him considering
the existence of other doctrines, the Lydian thesis and the thesis that recognized them as
descended from the ancient Pelasgians. He exposes the whole range of theories, with a
completeness and objectivity in presenting the views of his predecessors that we would
recognize in a modern scientist. He often specifically quotes his predecessors, such as
Xanthus of Lydia (1.28.2), Hellanicus of Lesbos (1.28.3) and Herodotus (1.29.3), and
his testimony is all the more precious because, except for Herodotus for whom we have
a text, the authors he cites are no longer accessible except for a few fragments. For
instance, if we did not have his quotation from the _Phoronis_ of Hellanicus of Lesbos, we
would be at a loss to know the Pelasgian doctrine as presented by this historian of the
fifth century BC. Although Dionysius was a rhetorician, not a scholar, and probably did
not conduct exhaustive research into the works of the authors he mentions, his view
has merit: it is likely that he used information that had been collected by his slightly
older contemporary, the great Roman scholar Varro, who recorded it in his great work
of scholarship, _The Antiquities_. We no longer have the work of Varro and Dionysius has
at least taken care, a rarity among ancient historians, to make a full statement on a
controversial issue and not simply to state his own position.

Moreover, his approach was comparable to that found in modern presentations of the
issue, since it is not confined to repeating the views of his predecessors with a bookish
erudition. Today, an essential aspect of the problem of origins includes a review of the
evidence of language and culture. Dionysius was already well aware of the importance in
the debate of the linguistic data: the comparison he drew between Etruscans and Pelasgians

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or Lydians did involve the traits of language (for the Etruscans and Pelasgians (1.29.2), “their languages are different and preserve not the least resemblance to one another,” for the Etruscans at 1.30.1, “they do not use the same languages”) thus finding that the Etruscan language could not be reduced to either of these or even to any other known language. Dionysius reported in 1.30.2, “it is found to be a very ancient nation and to agree with none other in its language,” indicating a correctness of observation that has been virtually proved by contradiction, in the failure of countless attempts at decipherment which have engaged generations of more or less enlightened spirits who sought to explain the Etruscan language by comparison to the most diverse languages. As for cultural data, again he took care not to neglect it, noting that the Etruscans “neither worship the same gods as the Lydians nor make use of similar laws or institutions, but in these very respects they differ more from the Lydians than from the Pelasgians” (1.30.1). The method of exposition therefore seems impeccable: we can say the same about how Dionysius conducts the discussion and advances its conclusion, leading to the selection of the autochthonist theory. One does not find in his work a peremptory statement of the doctrine, which he prefers, but an approach that reaches this conclusion only after a systematic discussion and criticism of the arguments submitted. It is through the subsequent rejection of other doctrines that the author demonstrates the validity of the theory of autochthony.

The excursus is too long to quote verbatim, but a summary in outline form clearly demonstrates the rigor of Dionysius’ method:

- Introduction (1.26.2): presentation of two views of the origin of the Etruscans, as natives of Italy and one as immigrants (“some declare them to be natives of Italy, but others call them foreigners”).

I) Statement of opposing arguments:
- A) Short presentation of the thesis of autochthony (1.26.2), relative to authors who are not named (“those who make them a native race”) and to which Dionysius is our only witness. This thesis advances a precise explanation of the name of the Etruscans in Greek, “Tyrrhenians,” formerly “Tyrsenians,” from the name of the towers, turseis, that this people had built and in which they lived.
- B-1) Detailed presentation of the doctrine of the Etruscans as immigrants, in both forms, the first using the Lydians (1.27–28.1), concluding a discussion quoting Xanthus the Lydian (1.28.2); then one involving the Pelasgians (1.28.3–4). In detail, the statement of Dionysius is as follows:
  a) Presentation of a first version of the legend of Tyrrhenos, son of Atys king of Lydia, then called Maeonia, whose son Lydos inherited his father's kingdom and gave it the name of Lydia, while his brother Tyrrhenos left to colonize Etruria, which owes its Greek name, Tyrrhenia, to him (1.27.1–2).
  b) The form of the legend differs from that which is then reported (ascribed to Herodotus) in that there is no mention of a famine that would have forced a portion of the population to leave the country for Italy (1.27.3–4).
  c) Brief presentation of two other variants of the theory of Lydian origins, amending the genealogy of Tyrrhenos and undoubtedly based on late re-workings of the legend (1.28.1). In the first, the hero is given as the son of Heracles and his Lydian mistress, Omphale. In the second, his father is Telephus; according to some texts actually he is the father of both Lydos and Tyrrhenos.6
d) Reference to Xanthos, the fifth-century BC Lydian author (1.28.2). In fact this passage is already used to criticize the Lydian thesis: Dionysius likes to point out that the Lydian historian “who was well acquainted with ancient history as any man and who may be regarded as an authority second to none on the history of his own country” was ignorant of the tradition of emigration to Italy by Lydians led by a son of Atys called Tyrrenos.

- B-2) Presentation of the doctrine involving the Pelasgians (1.28.3–4).
  a) Thesis presented by a contemporary of Herodotus, Hellanicus of Lesbos, in his genealogical work, the *Phoronis*, devoted to the descendants of Phoroneus, in a passage quoted verbatim by Dionysius (1.28.3).
  b) Another tradition on the Pelasgians, not really about Etruscan origins, explains how Tyrrhenians (so the Etruscans by their Greek name) would have done the opposite course, travelling from Italy to Greece, and receiving because of their migration, the name Pelarges, that is to say “storks” in Greek, an ancient form retained in the name of the “Pelargic/Pelasgian Wall” of the Athenian Acropolis. This tradition of Athenian origin is attributed to an author of a *History of Attica*, Myrsilus, who lived in the third century BC (1.28.2).?

II) Discussion and rejection of doctrines that do not follow Dionysius, this time the order is reversed: first a critique of the Pelasgian thesis (1.29), followed by that of the Lydian theory (1.30.1).

- A) Discussion of the Pelasgian thesis.
  a) Potential for confusion between the Etruscans and Pelasgians because they were established near each other; examples of confusions that have occurred, notably in Italy where in the past Greeks indiscriminately designated as Tyrrhenians not only the Etruscans themselves but also the Latins and Umbrians, to the point of considering Rome an Etruscan city (*polis Tyrrhenis*, 1.29.1–2).
  b) A reference to a passage in Herodotus (1.57.3), quoted verbatim, on the language spoken by the Pelasgians of Placia and Sylace and the people of Cortona in Tuscany (according to the reading adopted in the *Roman Antiquities*). In this text, the language of the Pelasgians of Cortona is distinct from that of their neighbors who are Tyrrhenians, therefore Etruscans: it follows that Pelasgians and Etruscans do not speak the same language and are to be perceived as two distinct peoples (1.29.3–4).

- B) Discussion of the Lydian theory: this was already initiated by the citation of Xanthos (1.28.2), by whose authority Dionysius questioned the merits of tradition on Tyrrenos, as well as the authority of Herodotus (1.57.3), allowing him to conclude that their language and ethnic character distinguished Pelasgians from Etruscans. As noted, Dionysius stresses the cultural and linguistic differences between Lydians and Etruscans, but without going into detail (1.30.1).

- Conclusion: accuracy of the autochthonist thesis (1.30.2). This conclusion is presented with the most explicit modesty: “those probably come nearest to the truth who declare that the nation migrated from nowhere else, but was native to the country.” Dionysius does not extend the arguments which can be invoked in his favor (that is, the isolation of the Etruscans by language and cultural traits) and the justification of the doctrine of the Etruscans as an indigenous population of Italy is in its reasoning a rejection of the other two theses.
Dionysius’ ultimately negative demonstration of the autochthony of the Etruscans is not satisfying. He may be accused of insufficiently developing positive aspects, including issues of language or civilization, which in the eyes of modern Etruscologists are obviously the most decisive. It must be said that his brief statement on the unique character of the Etruscans seems rather to beg the question, but let us not be overly critical. Dionysius is right on this point and, although he did not have available the means of modern linguistic analysis, we should at least give him credit for fully perceiving the peculiar nature of the Etruscan language and its heterogeneity in relation to Indo-European languages like Greek and Latin. In total, if one refers to the type of debate possible in his time, one cannot fail to admire how the rhetorician of Halicarnassus conducted his inquiry, which remains one of the finest examples of analysis and scientific discussion that Antiquity has bequeathed to us.

However, the seriousness and the (to our eyes) scientific approach of Dionysius, as in this passage, actually raise other questions. For if we take into account the personality of the orator of Halicarnassus, it seems paradoxical to regard him as a true scholar – as do the Etruscologists when they make him the first representative of their specialty. We know that his purpose in writing the Roman Antiquities was to defend a thesis which can hardly be regarded as scientifically founded: that the Romans were Greeks and had even become, over time, the best representatives of Hellenism. This paradoxical (if not absurd, to us) thesis he claimed to demonstrate in Book I: once the Siculi, indigenous barbarians who had at one time inhabited Latium, had disappeared, the soil of Rome had only received people of Hellenic descent. He serialized the traditions of the arrival in the region of first, the Aborigines, arbitrarily considered to be Arcadians (1.10–16), of the Pelasgians, defined as Greeks despite the express statement of Herodotus (1.57) that they were “barbarophones” and spoke a barbarian language (1.17–30), of the Arcadians of Evander (1.31–33), of the companions Heracles left behind upon his return from the expedition to capture the herds of Geryon (1.34–44), and then of the Trojans of Aeneas (1.45–69), with a genealogical demonstration to suggest that “the Trojans too were a nation as truly Greek as any,” allowing us to move on to the embarrassing fact that the two nations clashed in the Trojan War. To this accumulation of various traditions, complacently reinterpreted as needed, he added the linguistic argument, actually supported by some ancient authors, that Latin was Greek (1.90), in its Aeolian variant (which corresponds to the fact that the Arcadians of Evander were regarded as speaking a dialect of this group). And, throughout his history, he constantly compares Roman institutions to those of Greece, the notion that Rome was at its origin Hellenic.

Obviously, the thesis of the Hellenism of the Romans, on which the historic vision of Dionysius was based, has no scientific validity: it responded to the desire, clearly stated at the beginning of his book, to reconcile his compatriots to the fact that they had been subjected to Roman rule, by showing them that they should not, in fact, consider the Romans to be barbarians, “one will find no nation that is more ancient or more Greek than these” (1.89.2). Now it is in the perspective of this totally artificial vision of Rome that we may understand why Dionysius had come to speak of the Etruscans – and adopt the autochthonist theory. The thesis of the Hellenism of Rome carried for him a corollary: the Romans (and those to whom they were related, such as the Latins) were the only ones in Italy who might benefit from such an origin, which lent them prestige among the Greeks; the other Italian peoples were barbarians – and that is why the historian systematically ignores the many traditions that proposed Greek heroes or peoples as the source of this or
that people or city of the peninsula. But the Etruscans posed a particular problem: it was impossible not to mention them; given the role they played in the history of ancient Italy and especially of Rome. Dionysius was obliged to consider that the Etruscans had been the dominant group in Italy, north of the area directly affected by Hellenic colonization, and Greeks often saw Rome as an Etruscan city, in Greek polis Turrhenis (1.29.2), whereas it was for Dionysius a Greek city, polis Hellenis (1.89.1). But traditions like making Etruscans former Pelasgians or Lydians (since they did not speak Greek they were, in the strict linguistic sense of the term, barbarians) had the disadvantage of reconciling them with the Greeks, integrating them into their own world—and so risked jeopardizing the privilege of the Romans to be the only representatives of Hellenism in Italy. To make Etruscans indigenous palliated this difficulty: being indigenous, the Etruscans were no more than the barbarians of Italy, without any relationship with the Greek world and its values. It is in this sense, negative in terms of its implications for ethnic Greek mentality, that we must understand Dionysius’ choice of the autochthonist thesis.

Thus, far from responding to a disinterested approach, to a purely scientific concern the affirmation of the Etruscans’ autochthony by Dionysius, although supported by arguments scientifically relevant to us, was in part ideologically oriented: it continued to depreciate the Etruscans vis-à-vis the Romans, who were themselves at the centre of his historical work. And it seems to have been there from the beginning, its aim to present the Etruscans as Italian barbarians and thus to devalue them in relation to the Greeks.

Dionysius is for us the only witness to this thesis. But the little he tells us is enough to show it was born in a Hellenic milieu (and does not reflect, as has sometimes been suggested, the vision that the Etruscans held of their own origins): it included an explanation of the name of Tyrhenians by *turseis*, “towers,” which corresponds to the name of the people in Greek (presumably in opposition to the explanation of the eponymous hero Tyrrhenos associated with the thesis of Lydian origin). As for the environment in which this was created, one can think of Syracusan historians. That great Greek city of Sicily, which in the time of Hieron (474 BC) had already defeated the Etruscans in the waters off Cumae, had embarked, at the time of Dionysius I (431–367 BC) on a struggle against the Etruscans for control (“thalassocracy”) of the seas bordering Italy. The tyrant especially attacked the shrine of Pyrgi (which name also means “towers”) and had justified the looting by the fact that in attacking this external harbor of Caere, he had taken a hideout for pirates, the reputation that attached to the Etruscans in the Greek world. The conduct of the master of Syracuse had attracted the widespread condemnation of the Greeks, and it is likely in this context, seeking to justify his actions, that scholars of the entourage of Dionysius came up with this presentation of the origin of the Etruscans. Far from being descendants of the Lydians, according to the doctrine inherited from Herodotus, or of ancient Pelasgians, according to earlier views espoused by Hellanicus of Lesbos, the Etruscans were only Italian barbarians, clinging to their pirate lairs and living in the towers to which they owed their name. This presentation was clearly derogatory—and it is in this sense too, despite the appearance of a purely scientific treatise, that it has been used by Dionysius.

The creation of the thesis of Etruscan autochthony presumably occurred not in answer to scientific concerns, nor from a desire to give a historically-based explanation as to how this people, undoubtedly one of the largest indigenous populations of Italy, was formed. One had tried to express a position with regard to the Etruscans themselves and in this case to present them unfavorably, by reducing them to mere barbarians, without
anything to recommend them in the eyes of the Greek public for whom this discourse was intended. But if the autochthonist theory, as Dionysius presents it, appears to be an artificial development, responding to political ends, this is not necessarily true of other ideas about Etruscan origins that prevailed in Antiquity. We must now consider the other two doctrines, specifically those that contradict Dionysius of Halicarnassus, one using the Lydians and the other the Pelasgians.

We begin with the thesis of Lydian origin, for which the authority of the father of history, Herodotus, whose description in *Histories* (1.94) ensured a very wide dissemination in Antiquity. It appeared to be commonly accepted doctrine in Roman times – Dionysius, with his adoption of the autochthonist theory, is an isolated dissident figure. Significantly, it was adopted by the Etruscans themselves: Tacitus tells us that, during the reign of Tiberius, the assembly (*concilium*) of the Etruscan people had issued a decree affirming their kinship with the people of Sardis in Lydia, which was home to the temple of the imperial cult whose construction had been decided (*Annals* 4.55). But we should see how this doctrine arose and consult the passage of Herodotus, which is its first presentation (1.94). We will analyze this text, allowing us to see how it could be developed and the concerns – and again not purely scientific ones – to which it responded.

1.94 (2): According to what they themselves [the Lydians] say, the pastimes now in use among them and the Greeks were invented by the Lydians: these, they say, were invented at the time they colonized Tyrrhenia. This is their story: (3) In the reign of Atys son of Manes there was great scarcity of food in all Lydia. For a while the Lydians bore this with what patience they could; presently, when there was no abatement of the famine, they sought for remedies, and divers plans were devised by divers men. Then it was that they invented the games of dice and knuckle-bones and ball, and all other forms of pastime except only draughts, which the Lydians do not claim to have discovered. (4) Then, using their discovery to lighten the famine, they would play for the whole of every other day, that they might not have to seek for food, and the next day they ceased from their play and ate. This was their manner of life for eighteen years. (5) But the famine did not cease to plague them, and rather afflicted them yet more grievously. (6) At last their king divided the people into two portions, and made them draw lots, so that one part should remain and the other leave the country; he himself was to be the head of those who drew the lot to remain there, and his son, whose name was Tyrrhenus, of those who departed. Then one part of them, having drawn the lot, left the country and came down to Smyrna and built ships, whereon they set all their goods that could be carried on shipboard, and sailed away to seek a livelihood and a country; till at last, after sojourning with many nations in turn, they came to the Ombrici [Umbrians], where they founded cities and have dwelt ever since. (7) They no longer called themselves Lydians, but Tyrrhenians, after the name of the king’s son who had led them thither.

This text is of course of paramount importance to the controversy over Etruscan origins, and the proponents of the theory of oriental origin, whether ancient or modern, have not failed to refer to it as evidence of a tradition of showing that those whom the Etruscans of the historical period recognized as their ancestors had come from beyond the seas, and specifically from Lydia. But, before drawing any conclusions whatsoever, it should be analyzed as it occurs. This is indeed a relatively long text, complex in composition and using a number of elements that need to be examined in detail. The idea of Lydian colonists sent to Italy and there founding Etruria would appear only after a long process, which involves many other considerations. One should be aware that this text does not
appear in the context of a discussion of this particular problem. This is only mentioned in passing. Herodotus happened to speak about the migration of Lydian colonists to Etruria in covering another point: the question of the origin of the games, which the Lydians flattered themselves as having invented. The historian discusses the problem of Etruscan origins only because of the general circumstances surrounding the invention of the games, the sending of a Lydian colony to Italy. Added to that the narrative is presented as Lydian: at no time did Herodotus attribute it to the Etruscans nor did he say they themselves represented the birth of their nation in this way.

The question of the invention of the games is thus pivotal in this passage. But it is based on an idea that does not appear explicitly in the text, rather, as L. Pareti has shown, it only helped justify attributing to the Lydians the invention of games: their ethnic name was near the linguistic base of the Latin word *ludus* (“game”), but which exists in other Indo-European languages (for example in the Greek verb *loidorein*, “play,” “mock”) and meaning “play.” By their name, then, the Lydians appear to be those to whom the creation of games was attributed. We must realize that indeed, in the form of narrative that Herodotus gave, unlike the version that was released later under his name (which I have qualified as the “vulgate,” and which Dionysius presents at 1.27.3–4), Tyrrhenos had no brother and there was no Lydos, whose name would explain the appearance of the ethnic name, Lydians: in this form of the tradition, the ancient Maeonians received their name from Lydos, son of Atys. In Herodotus, however, Lydos did not appear: but he did not have to appear, and the substitution of the name Lydians for Maeonians was explained in another way, by their invention of games.

In fact, this assertion of the invention of games by the Lydians, advanced by the Lydians themselves, was opposed to a Greek doctrine that maintained the games were the work of Palamedes,20 one of the army of the Achaeans, who, during the Trojan War, was the first inventor, the *protos heuretes* of the games.21 The history that Herodotus collected from his Lydian informants is indeed clear on this point, an imitation of the legend of Palamedes: it was also during a famine (depending on the version, either when the Greek fleet was blocked at Aulis, or during the siege of Troy itself) that the Greek hero imagined games with the same intention: to help his companions forget in the excitement of the game, that they had nothing to eat. The Lydians, considering their name as the “people of the games,” had to grasp and insert it into their national traditions, placing the famine which justified the invention of games in the reign of King Atys, son of Manes, who, already in the local tradition reported by Xanthos (quoted by Dionysius 1.28.2), appeared to be the king to whom was related the transition from the old ethnic name of Maeonians into Lydians.22

Thus, the Herodotean story seems dependent on a complex development process that goes far beyond what would have been the mere recording of historical memory of the departure of Lydian colonists for Etruria. By this question of the invention of games, it bears the mark of a scholarly construction, making use of motifs drawn from the repertoire of Hellenic traditions taken up by the Lydians (since there is no reason to doubt the assertion of Herodotus that he reports a story of Lydian origin). One can make the same observation about other points of the story: for many reasons it appears to be a Lydian parallel to the narrative of Greek colonization (Tyrrhenos and his companions even embark at the Greek port of Smyrna). The Lydians were moved to send a colony abroad as a means to address the famine that had struck them (the games-solution, which had worked for eighteen years, proved insufficient?): famine was often advanced as justifying the Greek colonization enterprises, whether in a general history (situation of *stenochoria*,
“lack of land”) or as a reason for the creation of this particular colony (for example, the foundation of Chalcidian Rhegion or the founding of Cyrene from Thera). The Lydians leaving for Italy were designated by lot (and are thus not volunteers): the same method of selecting those who have to leave their homeland, combined, where appropriate, with the Delphic theme of a human tithe, was also cited for Rhegion and Cyrene, as well as Magnesia on the Maeander, close to Lydia. It seems that the Lydians had already developed a similar story about the Mysians, to whom they were related, explaining the origin as the result of sending settlers chosen in a time of crisis. The story we read in Herodotus 1.94 is entirely a Greek story of colonization.

That the narrative form modeled on Hellenic parallels is not proof of non-historicity: the Lydians may very well have clothed their folk-memory of a migration, which in ancient times sent some of them to Italian shores, with Greek motifs of the foundation of colonies in such circumstances. But we may be facing a totally artificial reconstruction, without any reference to any historical reality. And that is where another type of account intervenes, one that has less to do with the historical background: a question which must remain open and that consideration of such a text cannot decide, than with the function it was to fulfill in the Lydian atmosphere in which it was elaborated.

The text of Herodotus is not limited to the passage of emigrants from Lydia to Italy where they would have laid the groundwork for the future Etruria. It takes account of the name of this people, by using the convenient method of the eponymous hero who gave his name to the nation. There is therefore a personalized aspect in this relationship between Lydians and Etruscans, and that at the highest level, since Tyrrhenos is presented as the son of the Lydian king. The linking of Lydians and Etruscans thus passes as ties of kinship. The eponymous hero to whom the new people in the West owe their ethnic name has a genealogical connection with Lydia. But this is a mode of expressing a relationship between two human groups that we meet very often. For example, the unity of the various components of the Greek world was expressed by the fact that the heroes who gave their names to each of its major subdivisions were all descendants of the eponymous Greek Hellen, son of Deucalion, to whom they were either the sons; like Doros and Aiolos, respectively eponymous for Dorians and Aeolians, or the grandsons (born to Xuthus, the third son of Hellen, the brother of Doros and Aiolos); like Athis and Ion, eponymous ancestors of the inhabitants of Attica and the Ionians. The Lydians in turn had developed this mode of expression, which perceived entire peoples as kinsmen. Xanthos, in the passage quoted by Dionysius of Halicarnassus (1.28.2), explained that the Lydians and the Torebians spoke closely related languages because they descended from two brothers, sons of King Atys, Lydos and Torebos. Herodotus knew another tradition that presented Car, Lydos and Mysos, respectively eponymous of Carians, Lydians and Mysians, as brothers (1.171): thus he explained the fact that Lydians and Mysians were allowed to attend the temple of the great national god of the Carians, Zeus of Mylasa, who bore as an epithet the very name of their people.

We are dealing with traditions of syngeneia, of “matching.” These were extremely common in Antiquity, both in the Greek world and elsewhere. It was usual for situations where a good relationship existed between two human groups, such as those that sanctioned a treaty of alliance, to be presented as based on a relationship that had united the ancestors of the two groups. This common distant origin justified the good understanding they demonstrated in the present. Greek epigraphy has furnished us with a series of such official claims of kinship: it was a mode of expression expected in
diplomatic practice.” There is an example in the Bible that is almost a caricature, in the first Book of Maccabees (12.20–23), with the letter that Areios the king of Sparta sent in response to the request of alliance and friendship that Jonathan had made of him (there is no reason not to regard it as authentic): Areios supported his favorable response with the fact that “it has been found in writing concerning the Spartans and the Jews that they are brothers and they are the descendants of Abraham.” It is doubtful that such a document existed or that the people of Sparta were actually considered as descendants of Abraham. But this very exaggeration shows how it was customary for the bonds of friendship to be presented as based on very ancient kinship.

With Herodotus’ account of the birth of Etruria as a colony founded by the son of the Lydian king Atys, we are probably dealing with a development of this kind, with elements borrowed from the Greek world – stories of sending colonies, a tradition on the origin of games – to assert a relationship between Etruscans and Lydians. Construction as refined as this (going far beyond the simple assertion that Lydos and Torebos were brothers, as in the fragment of Xanthos quoted by Dionysius) is reminiscent of the atmosphere in the court of kings like the Mermnadai, such as Croesus, who had pursued an active diplomacy. It is probably in such a setting that such a story could be born, to reflect the good relations established between Lydia and the Tyrrhenian world. But we must admit that we can go no further in the analysis of this tradition, since it may refer not to the Etruscans of Italy but to the Tyrrhenians who were established in the islands of the Aegean. We must acknowledge our inability to determine more precisely how such a tradition of syngeneia could have been created: but that Herodotus’ account falls into this category is not in doubt.

In any event, such a narrative, in itself, cannot be regarded as reflecting an ancient historical tradition based on memories of real events. The assertion of a relationship between Jews and Spartans shows that such statements could be completely artificial. But we cannot exclude it either: it is permissible to imagine that in building such a story, those who developed it would have remembered ancient population movements between the Aegean area and the Italian peninsula. However, the composition presented by Herodotus must be judged for what it is, a scholarly development of various elements around the idea of a kinship between Etruscans and Lydians. Whether or not it meets a historical reality cannot be inferred.

With the tradition of the Lydian origin, we are quite far from the Etruscan world itself. We are dealing with a Lydian story and can recognize what is explained in a Lydian context – what this text teaches us about the Etruscans themselves is reduced to very little: they are related to Umbrians, presented as their predecessors in the country they inhabit, and they developed an urban civilization, being organized in cities. But the last tradition we have to consider, that of the Pelasgian origin of the Etruscans, places us in a significantly different context: this time the place of the Etruscans in the shaping of the doctrine can be clearly defined, as well as the function of a story like the one in the fragment of Hellanicus preserved by Dionysius (1.28.3), cited from the Phoronis:

Phrastor was the son of Pelasgus, their king, and Menippe, the daughter of Peneus; his son was Amyntor, Amyntor’s son was Teutamides, and the later son was Nanas. In his reign the Pelasgians were driven out of their country by the Greeks, and after leaving their ships on the river Spines in the Ionian Gulf, they took Croton, an inland city; and proceeding from there, they colonized the country now called Tyrrenia.
As in the legend of the Lydian Tyrrhenos, the origin of the Etruscans is linked to a hero who led the migration of the first representatives of the nation into Italy. But this time it is not an acronym, but a personage, Nanas, whose name, we shall see, refers to local data. Like the Tyrrhenos of Herodotus, it is he who causes the appearance of the name of the Etruscans and its substitution for the former ethnic group. In this tradition, this group consists of Pelasgians – and we find their eponymous source, because Nanas descends from Pelasgos in the fourth generation. He is a Pelasgian, it is to him that the formation of the Etruscan ethnos is attributed, he is the progeny of Pelasgos: we can still ascribe this tradition to the syngeneia legend, because it establishes a genealogical link between Pelasgos who represents the Pelasgians and Nanas who is responsible for the birth of the Etruscans.

This Pelasgos is linked to a Thessalian context. His father, Peneus, husband of Menippe, is a river god, personifying the Peneios that flows in this region. It is also in Thessaly that one must view the eviction of the Pelasgians and their replacement by the Greeks. Another presentation of the vicissitudes of the establishment of the first Greeks in Hellas in historical times, as related by Dionysius (1.17.3), states that after the arrival of Pelasgos in Thessaly, the Pelasgians had lived there for five generations (which corresponds to the computation of Hellanicus if one counts Pelasgos) before being driven out by Deucalion, who we know was considered the common ancestor of all the Greeks through his son the eponymous Hellen, and his grandsons Doros, Aiolos and Xuthus, the last having begotten Athis and Ion. But Pelasgos is not the only hero known by that name: and Dionysius, in the preceding passage (1.17.2), had spoken of a first Pelasgos, son of Zeus and Niobe daughter of Phoroneus, who had lived in Argos in the Peloponnese before his descendant in the sixth generation, another Pelasgos, this time given as the son of Poseidon and Larissa, who corresponds to the Pelasgos evoked by Hellanicus, and who made the decision to emigrate to Thessaly. These complex genealogical constructions (which Hellanicus published according to an ancient form of historiography built around genealogies of heroes, represented by writers like Acousilaos of Argos or Pherecydes of Athens) were necessitated by the fact that the Pelasgian traditions were widespread in several regions of Greece – especially in Thessaly and the Argolid – and therefore several figures of an eponymous Pelasgos were created, between whom he had to imagine bonds of kinship.

This tradition then made the ancient Pelasgians into the Etruscans. While preserving the fact that, linguistically, the Etruscans were barbarians it thus connected them with a people whom the Greeks represented as having been established on the soil of Hellas even before themselves and constituting the source of several Hellenic populations of later times (especially the Athenians, presented by Herodotus 1.56, as the finest example of a Greek people descended from the Pelasgians). Prior to the Greeks, Pelasgians could only be “barbarophones,” as Herodotus concluded after a survey of Pelasgian populations extant in his time, including the inhabitants of Placia and Scylace on the Hellespont (1.57) – an investigation fortunately conducted not by him but by his predecessor Hecataeus of Miletus and followed up in his Survey. He well understood an aspect that would be a positive in the eyes of the Greeks: being of Pelasgian origin, the Etruscans could be perceived, if not as Greeks in the strict sense (because they did not speak Greek), at least as related to a people with whom the Greeks were linked. In short, considered as ancient Pelasgians, the Etruscans were quasi-Hellenes.

This Pelasgian definition of Etruscans could only have positive consequences as regards the Greeks. Yet it is remarkable that, alone among barbarians, two Etruscan cities, Spina
on the Adriatic and Caere on the Tyrrhenian Sea, were afforded the great privilege of building a treasury in the pan-Hellenic sanctuary of Delphi. It is thought that Spina and Caere had to take advantage of their Pelasgic origin: it is surely no coincidence that it is mainly around these two cities (and also Cortona) that traditions about the Pelasgians were developed.\textsuperscript{31} It is no coincidence either that, around the time that Hellanicus developed the tradition of the Pelasgian origin of the Etruscans (fifth century BC), and probably already at the end of the previous century, with Hecataeus of Miletus who seems to have been the first to report this doctrine,\textsuperscript{32} these two Etruscan cities were centers of active trade with the Greek world. They presented themselves as founded by the Pelasgians, highlighted their \textit{syngeneia} with this nearly Hellenic people, and conferred on themselves a prestigious foundation for the bonds of exchange and commercial partnership which united the Spinetans, Caerites and Greeks.

It is probably the Pelasgian doctrine, as in the fragment of the \textit{Phoronis} of Hellanicus, which best makes us feel the affirmation of a tradition of \textit{syngeneia} about the Etruscans. In the text of Hellanicus the reference to Pelasgians – and specifically the Pelasgians of Thessaly – who were known to have occupied the soil of Greece before the Greeks themselves and who were therefore believed to have gone elsewhere, definitely serves to link people who do not speak Greek but are important to the Greeks as were the Pelasgians and the Etruscans, these barbarians with whom the Greeks of the sixth to fifth centuries BC had established successful trade relationships. This is not scientific inquiry about the identity of a people.

A detail of the text of Hellanicus also enables us to guess how the surviving narrative was developed by Dionysius of Halicarnassus.\textsuperscript{33} The place where the Pelasgians disembarked was defined by the fifth-century historian as the Spinetic mouth of the Po. More explicitly, Dionysius, taking the legend, will present the city of Spina as a Pelasgian foundation (1.18.3–5). In other words, the Pelasgians were well placed, just as the ancestors of the Etruscans were – specifically related to historical Spina the Etruscan city on the Adriatic at the time that the Po valley was being developed between the late sixth century and the beginning of fourth century BC – to promote exchange between Etruscans and Greeks in the Adriatic Sea. It is suggested that the people of Spina were precisely the source of the tradition transmitted by Hellanicus.

Spina was a city inhabited by Greeks as well as Etruscans, although the authority was certainly exercised by the Etruscan element,\textsuperscript{34} which clearly made its mark on the narrative of Hellanicus. The beginning of Hellanicus’ text, with the genealogy of the Pelasgian rulers of Thessaly descended from Pelasgos, is purely Greek. Phrastor and Amyntor, whom we do not otherwise know, bear Greek names, formed with the suffix-of-agent nouns, -\textit{tor} added to the verbs \textit{amuno}, “I forbid,” and \textit{phrazo}, “I explain,” meaning “defender” and “indicator.” As for the name of Teutamides, it is a loan from Homer, describing in \textit{Iliad} (2.840–843) the quota of Pelasgians who came to aid the Trojans, defined as “living in the fertile Larissa;” Homer described as “Teutamid” two leaders, Hippothous and Pylaios the son of Lethos. This is where we find a Teutamid, associated with Larissa in Thessaly, although it is absurd to make an individual name of what was a family name, a patronymic “son of Teutamos.”\textsuperscript{35} But the name that follows, Nanas, introduces us to a completely different context, this time Etruscan.

This Nanas, who led the migration of Pelasgians from Thessaly to Italy, is cited in relation to the town of Cortona, in north-eastern Tuscany which he reached by crossing the Apennines from Spina; he made it his base for conquering the whole of Tuscany.
This city appears to be the capital of Etruria, the center of the \textit{dodecapolis}. Now, we know another tradition that plays a special role in relation to a character presented as established in Cortona and with a name very similar to that of Hellanicus’ Pelasgian king, Nanos. This Nanos is mentioned in a passage of Lycophron’s \textit{Alexandra} (1242–1244), who said that Odysseus died among the Etruscans, at “Gortynaia,” that is to say, in Cortona (805–806). These allusions by Lycophron are illuminated by his scholiasts, where we learn that Nanos was the name given by the Etruscans to Ulysses when, according to certain versions, he returned to Italy.\textsuperscript{46} It is noted that this Ulysses-Nanos would have settled in the same town of Cortona as the Pelasgian-Nanas: it appears that we are dealing with two avatars of the same local legend, rotating about a local hero of Cortona bearing a name of the type Nana/Nanos.

Another tradition, more recent, specifies the background of these “Cortonan” legendary developments. In the Augustan age, Virgil in the \textit{Aeneid} resumed a tradition of Etruscan origin implying that Dardanus, the ancestor of Aeneas, came to the Troad from a city of Corythus, which we recognize as Cortona: the journey of a Trojan hero to Italy appears to be the return to the home of his ancestors.\textsuperscript{37} Commentators on Virgil suggest, however, that this Corythus was linked to a mountain, where his tomb would have been.\textsuperscript{38} But for Ulysses-Nanos there is also a question of a tomb located on a mountain: Lycophron (805–806) recounted that “after his death, Perga, a mountain in the country of the Tyrrhenians, welcomed him, reduced to ash, to Gortynaia.” So we assume the existence of a local hero, whose tomb, located on high ground near the Etruscan city, was in the course of history identified with different figures of Greek myth: Nanos the Pelasgian around the sixth/fifth century BC, the time of Hecataeus and Hellanicus, Ulysses, as the Etruscan Nanos in the fourth/third century BC, the time of Theopompus and Lycophron, and Corythus, the ancestor of Aeneas, in Virgil’s time. There have thus been several interpretations of the same legendary local hero, the traditions associated with various ways of relating him to the Greek world. But it is basically the same local reality: the existence of a tomb of a character considered very important for the history of the city, which was probably the object of worship by its inhabitants. We have discovered a reality similar to that in the excavations of the heroon of Aeneas at Lavinium, described by Dionysius (1.64.5), which was originally the tomb of a Latin chief of the early seventh century BC before becoming a cult-place during the sixth century BC, probably for the mysterious figure of \textit{Pater Indiges} even before it was identified with Aeneas.\textsuperscript{39}

Why do we find this tradition of the Pelasgian Nanas, developed in the atmosphere of Greco-Etruscan Spina, attached to Cortona? We must consider that the Etruscans – who are behind the development of Etruria in the Po Valley in the late sixth century BC, transforming the old Villanovan culture maintained in Bologna and giving birth to new cities, colonial foundations of regular grid-plan, such as Marzabotto and Spina – came primarily from north-eastern Tuscany, the region of Chiusi, Perugia, Arezzo: a group of cities which formed a sort of triangle around the religious centre of Cortona. So they were traditions of this area where Cortona was viewed as the ancient metropolis of the whole of Tuscany, the city from which the other cities of the \textit{dodecapolis} were founded – the same way that, for residents of the southern part of Etruria, Tarquinia, the city of Tarchon, played the role of metropolis, a city that gave birth to the eleven other members of the Etruscan federation. By inserting the Cortonan Nanos into the history of Pelasgian migration to Italy, the Spinetans, who had made theirs the port of arrival on Italian soil of the Pelasgian ancestors of the Etruscans, had integrated this relationship with a people
linked to Greece with a truly Etruscan tradition, about the formation of the federation of the twelve cities, which they shared with the inhabitants of north-eastern Tuscany.

The text of Hellanicus that was handed down to us by Dionysius (who presumably reprised a presentation of the birth of Etruria already in Hecataeus) shows that the Etruscans, and specifically those of Spina, have used this form of tradition to clothe in a prestigious prehistory the intense commercial ties that bound them to their Hellenic partners. Again, this type of discourse on Etruscan origins was not neutral: it takes advantage of Pelasgian ancestry to give them an image entirely favorable in the eyes of the Greeks. Once again we are far from purely scientific concerns. The assertion that the Pelasgians were their ancestors had a propaganda value and made these barbarians – and the Etruscans indisputably were barbarians – appear Greek.

Indeed, the positive direction for the Greeks in the reference to Pelasgians, if clearly reflected in the shaping of the tradition we know from Hellanicus, does not explain the primary reason for the identification of Etruscans with Pelasgians. To understand its appeal, one must entertain other considerations. But one area where we admit the existence of Pelasgians in Antiquity was the Aegean, with its islands – especially those in the north, such as Samothrace – whose mysteries were attributed to this ancient population. But this region had also been the theatre of the Tyrrenian pirates, whose depredations had left a lasting impression in the memories of Greeks and were illustrated by famous episodes, such as the metamorphosis into dolphins of pirates who had attacked the ship carrying Dionysus to Samos or the abduction of girls participating in the Athenian cult of Artemis at Brauron.40 Those whom the Greeks called the Tyrrenians had occupied some islands in the northern Aegean Sea, especially Lemnos, where the famous inscription found in Kaminia in 1887 revealed that they spoke a language very close to the Etruscan attested in Italy. Whichever way one explains the presence of these cousins of the Etruscans in the Aegean Sea, an issue that does not concern us directly here,41 we may think that this establishment of Tyrrenians in an area where the Pelasgians had once been known led to the identification of the two ethnic concepts.42 And it is therefore in all probability, that the Greeks were able to identify the Tyrrenians-Etruscans with the Pelasgians, before this relationship, rewarding for them, was taken over by the Etruscans themselves, especially the Etruscans of Spina, but probably also those of other regions, including Caere, a Pelasgian city where tradition has been particularly lively.43

Thus, initially, the identification of the Etruscans with Pelasgians would have resulted from an intellectual process noted in an article by E. Bickermann who has shown its importance for the ethnographic representations of the Greeks.44 Faced with a non-Greek, and thus barbaric, population, they posed the question of identity in terms of origin and, to account for these origines gentium – to borrow from the title of Bickermann’s article – they tended to use their own representations, attaching them to the vast repertoire of their own traditions involving heroes or Hellenic peoples. This is what must have happened in the case of the Pelasgians: the assimilation of the two ethnic concepts probably has not been the deed of the Etruscans. But they nonetheless played a part in awarding a certificate for virtual Hellenism that could only facilitate their profitable trade relations with the Greeks. Of course, it is difficult to assume that such constructions have had any historical foundation.

In fact this impression of a problem that does not meet scientific concerns really seems to characterize the set of doctrines that had been advanced in Antiquity on the question of Etruscan origins. Even when the authors seem to have approached this question with
the detachment and objectivity of the scientist, as with Dionysius of Halicarnassus, it appears that they were responding to other purposes and sought above all to give a picture that could be either positive (with Lydian and Pelasgian theses) or unfavorable, at least from a Greek viewpoint (with the autochthonist thesis). One can probably not totally dismiss the idea that some proper historical memories may have survived through the texts of ancient authors who have discussed this issue (the followers of the Eastern origin of Etruscans believe that the passage of Herodotus in which the Lydians came to Italy could have retained the memory of an ancient population movement between the eastern basin of the Mediterranean and the Italian peninsula). But in any case where these possible historical memories have been fully taken up and integrated in reworked accounts, they are clearly artificial. Whether for the autochthonist thesis, or that identifying the Etruscans with the Pelasgians, or that they derived from Lydian colonists, their primary function was to account for the connections that existed at the time when these traditions were disseminated between the historical Etruscans and the Greeks. The meaning of a doctrine such as this, making the Etruscans natives of Italy, carried the corollary that they were mere Italian barbarians and were unrelated to Hellenism and its values: we recognize a development by hostile Greeks, probably the Syracusans at the time of their struggles against the Etruscans. The other two doctrines were rather favorable presentations: whether that of the Lydian origin, a typical assertion of syngeneia between the Lydians and Etruscans, responding to a kind of narrative power in Antiquity, to which it would be dangerous to assign any historical basis; or that of the Pelasgian origin, identifying the Etruscans as a barbarous people certainly, but one who played an important role in how the Greeks represented their own past. With all this we are far from scientific discourse.

But one cannot fail to be struck by the fact that when the debate was taken up by those who, in modern times, have addressed the issue of the formation of the Etruscan people, it was in the same terms that Massimo Pallottino clearly emphasized in his 1947 book *L’origine degli Etruschi*, that they continued to debate the origins of the Etruscans by contrasting different theories. We owe to this great Italian scholar the awareness that such a debate is insufficient: we cannot reduce a people to a single origin to account for all they have been in history. Every people has been the result of a melting pot, formed by the superposition and mixing of diverse elements. Any attempt to explain in terms of origin is historically simplistic and wrong. But if Etruscologists of modern times have so long strayed into a dead-end and reductionist debate, it is probably because it is the same debate that was conducted in Antiquity. It is important to understand that this ancient debate, which lasted to modern times, responded to issues other than those of pure science.

NOTES


3 There is nonetheless a problem concerning Dionysius’ citation of Herodotus (1.57.3), that the language of the Pelasgians who inhabited Placia and Scylace, two towns on the Hellespont, was similar to that of the Crotoniates (and thus of the inhabitants of Cortona in northwest Tuscany); the manuscripts of Herodotus here do not name the Crotoniates, but the Crestoniates, of the city of Crestone in the Chalchidice. Scholars are divided on whether to follow the Herodotean manuscript tradition and view – that of Dionysius as incorrect – or to follow Dionysius and think that Herodotus wanted to establish a link between the people of the two little Hellespont towns and the Etruscan city. On this subject, see Briquel 1984:104–10 (and 101–68 for the place of Cortona in the tradition of a Pelasgian origin of the Etruscans).


5 This version does not exactly conform to that in Herodotus 1.94. It concerns a pair of brothers: Lydos who remains at home and gives his name to the country until then called Maeonia, and Tyrrhenos, who departs to found Etruria. Herodotus only mentions that Tyrhenos is son of Atys, and does not name any brother Lydos. It seems that in the Hellenistic period, the theory of the Lydian origin of the Etruscans was expanded in this version and referred to Herodotus, in somewhat modified form (which I have called the “Herodotean Vulgate,” see Briquel 1991: 91–123).

6 On this version of the legend see Briquel 1991: 138–54.


9 On the historical work of Dionysius and the meaning of his demonstration, refer to Gabba 1991.

10 On the issues of viewing Rome as either a Greek or an Etruscan city see Vanotti 1999.

11 This meaning of Etruscan autochthony in the work of Dionysius was masterfully treated by Musti 1970. It was disputed by Gabba 1991:104–105: such a negative ethnic perception of the Etruscans is incompatible with their role in the history of Italy, as shown by the fact the Dionysius had planned to write a book especially on the lofty deeds of this people (1.30.4: “In another book, I shall show what cities the Tyrrenians founded, what forms of government they established, how great power they acquired, what memorable achievements they performed, and what fortunes attended them”).

12 The attribution of Etruscan autochthony that made barbarians of them cannot be regarded in the same way as Athenian authochthony (on which see, in part, Montanari 1979–1981, Loraux 1981a, 1981b): for the inhabitants of Attica, literally born from the soil of Greece, an authochthonous origin is obviously positive.


16 For a more detailed study of the question see Briquel 1993.


19 See Pareti 1926: 60. The idea was reprised in Pallottino 1947: 44, Sakellariou 1958: 71.

On the importance of the theme of the first inventor in Greece, Kleingünther 1933, Thraede 1962.


References on these different traditions in Briquel 1991: 51–4 (Rhegion and Cyrene), 56–7 (Magnesia on the Meander), 54–65 (Mysians).

Xanthos, cited by Dionysius, 1.28.2: “He says that Lydus and Torebus were the sons of Atys; that they, having divided the kingdom they had inherited from their father, both remained in Asia, and from them the nations over which they reigned received their names. His words are these: ‘From Lydus are sprung the Lydians, and from Torebus the Torebians. There is little difference in their language and even now each nation scoffs at many words used by the other, even as do the Ionians and Dorians.’” On the Torebians see Briquel 1991: 25–31.

Herodotus, 1.171: “There is an ancient temple of Carian Zeus at Mylasa, in which the Mysians and Lydians share as being brother races of the Carians, for they say that Lydos and Mysos were brothers of Car; these share in it, but those who being of another race have come to speak the same language as the Carians, these have no share in it.”


The catalogue established by Curty (1995) lists 88 epigraphic documents citing decrees relating the ancestry of peoples or cities.


For an accessible analysis of the Pelasgian traditions see Lochner-Hüttenbach 1960.

On the Hecataean origin of this passage in Herodotus see Briquel 1984: 130–3.

See Briquel 1984: 3–30 (Spina), 169–224 (Caere).

Because the doctrine, in the form we know from Hellanicus and with a special role attributed to Cortona (and Spina) was already known to Hecataeus, see Briquel 1984: 125–6, 135–6, 144–5.

We are not necessarily dealing with the first version which links the Etruscans and Pelasgians, see below.

On Spina, see Berti, Guzzo 1994 and Rebecchi 1998.


For more details, see Briquel 1984: 150–60.

On this legend and its Etruscan origin see Colonna 1983.


On the timing of the identification of the recipient of the monument with Aeneas, (and assuming a stage where it would have been considered Latinus, son of Ulysses and Circe), see Cogrossi 1982, Grandazzi 1988. On the important category of figures of legendary “fathers” attached to numerous Italian populations (known in a Pater for Pyrgi, Alba Fucens, Sabina, Reate, besides the Sardinian Sardus Pater), in which you must certainly place the Latin Pater Indiges, a synthesis is unfortunately lacking. For comparison of the evidence from Lavinium and the case of Nanas/Nanos/Corythus at Cortona, Briquel 1984: 166–7.

On the question of Tyrrhenians of the Aegean, in addition to the works cited in note 13, see Torelli 1974, Gras 1976, C. De Simone 1996.

Proponents of each of the ideas about the origins of the Etruscans were able to account for the presence of Tyrrhenians in the Aegean as part of their vision of the origins of this people. At the time of its discovery, Kaminia was used to support the thesis of Oriental origin, as evidence of a group related to the Etruscans who had remained behind when the Etruscans departed from Asia Minor for Italy. Other scholars, based on the autochthonist thesis, believed that there had to be the remnants of two related groups dating back to a pre-Indo-European
substrate who managed to stay on in two different areas of the Mediterranean (M. Pallottino), or, later, as the result of a movement of Etruscan pirates who settled in the Aegean in the early historic period (M. Gras, C. De Simone).

42 For a more detailed study see Briquel 2000.


44 See Bickermann 1952.

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