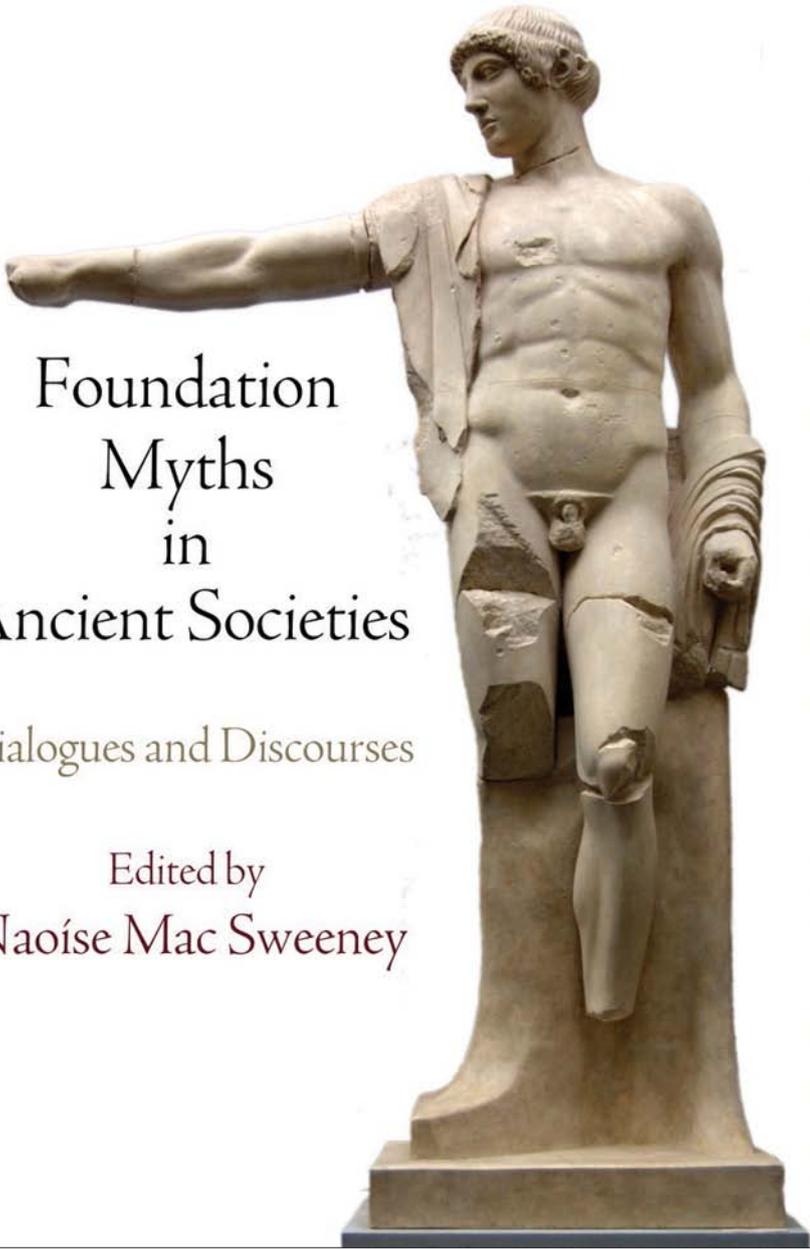# Foundation
# Myths
# in
# Ancient Societies

Dialogues and Discourses

Edited by
Naoíse Mac Sweeney

Foundation Myths
in Ancient Societies

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# Foundation Myths
# in Ancient Societies

Dialogues and Discourses

Edited by

## Naoíse Mac Sweeney

**PENN**

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Abbreviations for classical texts, corpora, and journals are those used in *L'Année philologique* or *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed. S. Hornblower and A. Spawforth, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996). Abbreviations for Near Eastern reference works and corpora are those used in B. Mathieu, *Abréviations des periodiques et collections en usage à l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale* (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 2010), or the *Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative*. In addition to the more commonly used abbreviations, the following are also used in this book:

| | |
|---|---|
| *AE* | *L'Année epigraphique* |
| *ACO* | E. Schwartz (ed.). 1922–74. *Acta consiliorum oecunenicorum.* Berlin-Leipzig: de Gruyter. |
| *ANET* | J. B. Pritchard (ed.). 1969. *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament.* 3rd ed. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. |
| *ARV* | J. D. Beazley. 1963. *Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters.* 2nd ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press. |
| *BMC* | G. F. Hill. 1910. *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Phoenicia.* A Catalogue of Greek Coins in the British Museum 23. London: Trustees of the British Museum. |
| *CIL* | *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* |
| *CJ* | *Codex Justiniani* |
| *CTA* | A. Herdner. 1963. *Corpus de tablettes cunéiformes alphabétiques.* Mission de Ras Shamra 10. Paris: Imprimerie Nationale. |
| *ETCS* | J. A. Black et al. 1998–2006. *The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature.* Oxford: Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Oxford (http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk). |
| *FGrH* | F. Jacoby et al. (eds.). 1923–. *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker.* Berlin: Wiedmann. |

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|---|---|
| *FHG* | C. F. W. Müller (ed.). 1841–70. *Fragmenta historicorum graecorum*. Paris: Editore Ambrosio Firmin Didot. |
| *ID* | 1926–50. *Inscriptions de Délos.* 6 vols). Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres. Paris: Champion. |
| *IG* | 1873–. *Inscriptiones Graecae* |
| *IGLSyr* | 1929–. *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie.* Beirut: Institut français d'archéologie du Proche-Orient. |
| *IGLTyr* | J.-P. Rey-Coquais. 2006. *Inscriptions grecques et latines de Tyr.* Bulletin d'Archéologie et d'Architecture Libanaises, special issue 3. Beirut: Ministère de la Culture Direction Générale des Antiquités. |
| *IGRR* | R. Cagnat et al. 1906–27. *Inscriptiones Graecae ad res Romanas pertinentes.* Paris: Librarie Ernest Leroux. |
| *IGUR* | *Inscriptiones Graecae Urbis Romae* |
| *I.Didyma* | A. Rehm. 1958. *Didyma II: Die Inschriften.* Berlin: Mann. |
| *I.Ephesos* | 1979–. *Die Inschriften von Ephesos.* Bonn: Habelt. |
| *I.Magnesia* | O. Kern. 1900. *Die Inschriften von Magnesia am Maeander.* Berlin: Spermann. |
| *I.Pergamon* | 1890–. *Die Inschriften von Pergamon.* Berlin: Spermann. |
| *IRT* | J. M. Reynolds and J. B. Ward-Perkins (eds.). 1952. *The Inscriptions of Roman Tripolitania.* Rome: British School at Rome. |
| *KTU* | M. Dietrich, O. Loretz, and J. Sanmartín. 1995. *The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and Other Places.* 2nd ed. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag (abbreviation derives from title of 1st ed.: *Die keilalphabetische Texte aus Ugarit* 1. Neukirchen, 1976). |
| *LIMC* | 1981–. *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae.* Düsseldorf: Artemis Verlag. |
| *OGI* | W. Dittenberger. 1903–5. *Orientis Graeci inscriptiones selectae.* Leipzig: S. Hirzel. |
| *PIR* | *Prosopographia Imperii Romani Saeculi I, II, III.* 1st ed., E. Klebs and H. Dessau (1897–98); 2nd ed., E. Groag et al. (1933–). Berlin: de Gruyter. |
| *PPM* | *Pompei: Pitture e Mosaici* |
| *RPC* | 1992–. *Roman Provincial Coinage.* London: British Museum. |
| *SEG* | 1923–. *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* |

Foundation Myths
in Ancient Societies

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# Introduction

NAOÍSE MAC SWEENEY

Beginnings are important. The beginning sets the agenda, the tone, and the standard. Throughout antiquity, there was considerable interest in stories about beginnings, especially in those about the origins of cities, states, and peoples. Foundation myths were told across the ancient world in many different forms and through many different media. They can be found in poetry and prose, represented visually in monumental and decorative art, and played out in civic and religious rituals. Stories of origin were sometimes recounted in their entirety, forming the central narrative in a text. But even more frequently, foundation myths were alluded to obliquely or used as reference points for narratives on other subjects. Stories of beginnings and myths of foundation were ubiquitous in classical antiquity.

One notable characteristic of ancient foundation myths is their plurality. In many instances, several stories existed simultaneously to explain the origin of a single city or group of people. One foundation could have a range of myths attached to it, with several different accounts or alternative versions of a given story. In the classical period, for example, the Athenians were simultaneously said to be autochthonous and also to be descended from the Ionian branch of the Hellenic genealogy.[1] The existence of such alternative stories can present an interpretive challenge as from a modern perspective, these two accounts of Athenian beginnings may seem to be mutually exclusive. In antiquity, however, such apparent inconsistencies seem not to have been as problematic. Alternative versions of foundation myths were common, often circulating simultaneously among similar audiences, in similar social contexts,

and sometimes even showcased alongside one another in direct recognition of their divergence. In one particularly well-known example, Herodotus recounts two conflicting stories about the foundation of Cyrene: one told by the Therans, who claimed to have founded Cyrene; and one by the Cyrenaicans themselves (Hdt 4.145–69).[2] Herodotus does not seek to integrate or rationalize the stories into a single narrative—indeed, he is happy to present the alternative versions, side by side (Hdt 4.154). In general, contrary stories and differing variants rarely seem to have been a cause for concern in antiquity; indeed, they seem to have been the rule rather than the exception.

This book addresses the variation in ancient foundation myths and proposes a new approach to interpreting this variation. Previous approaches have focused on individual myths or variants, considering how they fit together, support one another, or contradict one another. In contrast, this book argues for a shift of focus. Instead of concentrating on individual foundation myths, we suggest that much may be learned from considering complete foundation discourses. By this, we mean the sum total of several different myths together and the various relationships between the stories and variants. Individual myths, particular variants, and specific stories may all have their own social significance when considered separately. The myth of Athenian autochthony, for example, constructs a relationship between the Athenians and the land that they inhabited. The myth of Athenian descent from the Ionian branch of the Hellenes, in contrast, constructs a relationship between the Athenians and other Greek groups. Both these stories, therefore, have their own particular significance when approached individually as foundation myths. However, as both stories were in circulation simultaneously, something may also be learned from considering them together as elements in a wider foundation discourse.

The choice to tell one of these stories rather than the other is significant—it is a choice that entails not only selection of the story told but also rejection of the story not told. In recounting the myth of Athenian autochthony, not only is a certain type of relationship constructed with the land of Attica, but also a certain type of relationship with other Greeks is explicitly denied. The story serves to isolate the Athenians, not so much by the positive claim that it makes to the land, but more by the negative claims that it makes about wider bonds of Hellenic kinship. The myth of autochthony is therefore significant not only in itself, but also because it is emphatically not a myth of Hellenic origins. The simultaneous existence of an alternative myth that celebrates precisely these Hellenic origins highlights the significance of this point. Taken together, the different foundation myths of Athens suggest a fundamental plu-

rality in the way Athenians conceived of their civic identity: a schizophrenic desire for splendid isolation and Athenian particularism on the one hand; and simultaneously for engagement with a wider Hellenic community on the other. The variety of the Athenian foundation myths implies a variety of perspectives about Athenian identity in the classical period, an uncertainty about what Athens was and what it should be. This uncertainty, and the existence of alternative views and identities, tells us something about classical Athens that we would not learn by looking at any one of the myths in isolation. Athens was neither simply autochthonous nor simply Hellenic. It was both simultaneously—not just despite, but also because of, the ambiguity that this allowed. By considering the Athenian foundation discourse as a whole, important insights may therefore be gained.

Foundation discourses include all the foundation myths relating to a particular city, state, or group of people in circulation at a given time. However, a foundation discourse consists not only of the full range of different stories and versions of stories, but also of the various ways in which they were told and the diverse social contexts of their telling. Crucial to this is the interaction between different foundation myths. Alternative versions of myths did not exist in isolation from or parallel with one another, but rather coexisted in the same social and cultural space. Alternative stories must therefore have interacted: feeding off one another, borrowing ideas and motifs from one another, contradicting or adding nuance to one another. This interaction or dialogue between individual myths means that any given foundation discourse is more than simply the sum of its individual mythic parts. Rather, it is a discourse in the fullest sense, comprising not only a range of mythic components but also the dialogue, interactions, and relationships between them. Before expanding on the theme of foundation discourses and the dialogues between individual myths further, it is necessary to consider existing approaches to classical foundation myths and current interpretations of mythic variation in antiquity.

## Interpreting Foundation Myths

Foundation myths have long been a focus for research, and in recent decades the subject has attracted substantial scholarly attention. While myths in general are often discussed in the context of ritual and cult,[3] foundation myths are frequently considered separately, outside a ritual context. Instead, foundation myths are often considered as a form of historiography. By claiming to

describe the origins of cities, states, and groups of people, foundation myths are fundamentally concerned with the past and necessarily engage at some level with historical explanation. Traditional approaches to foundation myths, therefore, have tended to consider them as a form of historiography, locating them at the intersection between myth and history. The distinction between myth and history in antiquity is itself the subject of much study, and will not be considered here.[4] However, for the purposes of this book it is significant that foundation myths have often been studied from a historical perspective. It is suggested that these myths contain kernels of historical truth, preserved and handed down over the generations through social memory and the oral tradition.[5] Over time, stories may be elaborated on and revised as part of this process, with imaginative additions, the changing of names, and poetic exaggeration. However, it is argued that at its core, a foundation myth is likely to preserve some historical facts concerning the foundation in question. Many traditional approaches to foundation myths therefore focus on attempting to strip away the layers of later invention to establish the historical kernel and uncover useful information about origins. For example, this approach has dominated the study of the "Ionian Migration." The idea of the Ionian Migration emerges from several of the best-known foundation myths of the Ionian cities of Asia Minor. These stories recount that the cities were established following a migration from Athens, name a range of founding heroes, and recount different stories about conflict and conquest upon arrival. It has often been assumed that these myths are, at their core, historically accurate and that a migration from Attica to Asia Minor did occur in the early Iron Age, resulting in the expulsion or suppression of indigenous groups and the establishment of the Ionian cities.[6]

In the last few decades, this approach to foundation myths has been criticized for being overly positivist. Instead, it was argued that foundation myths should be seen as social and literary constructs and should be situated in the time in which they were written and circulated.[7] This approach argued that foundation myths were shaped much more by the needs and agendas of those telling them in the historical present than by the objective facts of the historical past. It was argued that myths were altered, manipulated, and even created, for use in a strategic and political way. To return to the example of the Ionian Migration, instrumental interpretations of these myths have also been proposed. It is suggested that the idea that the colonists of the cities were originally migrants from Athens was promoted by Athens itself, as a means of justifying

its expansionist ambitions in the eastern Aegean. If Athens could claim to be the mother city of the Ionians, this would give it a greater claim to influence over them.[8]

The contrast between these two approaches is perhaps not as great as might be suggested by some of the more polemical literature on the subject.[9] Most proponents of positivist approaches are careful to factor strategic and political concerns in when they consider the distorting influences on foundation myths. Similarly, most proponents of constructivist approaches would deny any possibility of some historical elements in the myths. Indeed, several scholars have now argued in favor of a compromise between the two extremes. A more pragmatic approach would recognize that strategic invention and instrumental manipulation must certainly have been crucial factors in shaping both the content and the expression of foundation myths, but these were necessarily constrained by popular expectation, generic conventions, and plausibility.[10] Investigating the audiences of myth, as well as the popular reception of foundation stories, is important to contextualize the literary or artistic expressions of these myths.

The two main schools of thought concerning ancient foundation myths—the positivist and the constructivist—may no longer determine all approaches to foundation myths, given the increasing interest in this more pragmatic third way. However, our understanding of variation in foundation myths is still dominated by these two schools. The existence of alternative myths and variants on individual stories is still usually explained in one of two ways. From a positivist perspective, different stories are interpreted as different fragments of collective memory from the distant past. The various stories can be seen as representing particular episodes within history, which can be stitched together to form one overarching historical narrative. For example, a wide range of foundation stories was told for the city of Miletus in Asia Minor.[11] The city was variously said to have been founded by Cretans under Sarpedon;[12] Ionians from Athens under the Codrid prince Neileus;[13] and an eponymous hero called Miletus, who, in some accounts, is a Cretan and in others is an autochthon.[14] In addition, some stories mention a settlement of Carians or Leleges predating the Greek foundation, while others do not. From a positivist perspective, each of these stories is considered to contain kernels of historical truth, and each is assumed to represent a different episode in the city's history.[15] Corroboration can therefore be sought for various elements within these individual stories, using archaeological evidence from the early Iron Age as well

as by retrojecting aspects of ritual and civic practice known from later peri-
ods.[16] The different tales can then be combined into one coherent whole, to
give a historically accurate overview of the Milesian past. It could be argued,
for example, that an original Carian settlement was first conquered by Cre-
tans, and later by migrants from Athens. The diverse foundation myths can
be understood, using this framework, not as simultaneous stories but rather
as sequential episodes. Any variants that do not fit into the sequential frame-
work can be dismissed as the results of poetic invention or mythological hy-
perbole. This approach to mythic variation, therefore, sees alternative stories
as the remnants of distinct historical memories, and aims to organize and
combine them into one overarching narrative.

The second main approach to variation in foundation myths derives from
the constructivist school. This approach casts individual myths as representa-
tive of different political or strategic positions. Alternative stories, it is argued,
are the result of alternative visions of identity and different political stances.
The different myths are seen as mutually exclusive traditions, each in direct
rivalry or competition with the others. To return to the example of Miletus:
under this framework, the different stories would be interpreted as standing for
different factions either within the city or interest groups without. Stories of the
Ionian migrants from Athens under Neileus can be explained as part of Athe-
nian attempts to justify its influence over Miletus, while accounts of an epony-
mous autochthon founding the city may relate to a movement for Milesian
autonomy rooted in localism. Similarly, myths of the Cretan migrants and
Sarpedon may be the result of Milesian attempts to create kinship links with
other groups in Asia Minor such as those in Lycia, while tying themselves in
to heroic genealogies and the myths of the Trojan War. This approach to
mythic variation sees the different stories as operating not sequentially but si-
multaneously. Each is a rival to the other, emphasizing a different aspect of
identity and representing a different strategic viewpoint. The variation among
the myths can be used not to reconstruct a historical narrative of the past but
rather to understand the political and social dynamics of the period in which
they were written and circulated.

Both these approaches to variation in foundation myth aim toward
the singular. In the first approach, the many stories and variants must be
merged into a single "true" account. In the second approach, each myth is
treated singly, as a rival to and mutually exclusive with other accounts.
However, there is potential for approaching mythic variation from yet an-

other perspective—one that is neither positivist nor instrumental, that neither flattens variety nor sees it as oppositional. By adopting an approach based on foundation discourses, rather than on individual foundation myths, there is new scope for interpreting the plurality and diversity of classical foundation myths.

## Approaching Foundation Discourses

The basic idea of a foundation discourse is not new. The individual elements of this concept have long been acknowledged. It has often been recognized that for each foundation in classical antiquity, there was usually a range of stories and variants in circulation. It has also been acknowledged that these alternative accounts would have been told, revised, and retold alongside one another, resulting in the interaction of different myths and the creation of relationships between them. The key elements of foundation discourses—mythic variations and the dialogue between them—are familiar features of existing scholarship on ancient foundation myths. This book does not, therefore, seek to establish a firm definition of a hitherto unrecognized phenomenon. Rather, it argues for a shift in emphasis to bring this phenomenon into sharper focus. It aims to demonstrate that adopting an approach based on foundation discourses allows us to view variation in foundation myths from a new perspective. Instead of privileging the singular, such an approach encourages the acknowledgment of the plural and the acceptance of complexity. Instead of identifying a single "correct" history or a set of discrete strategic stances, the key field of interest is the discourse itself—the ongoing process of mythopoesis and the continual dialogue between stories, storytellers, and their audiences.

There are many potential aspects to this dialogue. These include the way that different stories become more or less popular in relation to one another at different times, and among different audiences. It may be informative to consider which of the alternative stories are expressed in which media—in literature, in visual art, in civic iconography, in local cult, in onomastic practices—and also the changing patterns of this over time. Also relevant is how new versions or new stories incorporate elements of older myths, as well as how they rework, reimagine, and reject them. This intertextuality is a crucial element in the dialogue between myths—individual stories

may corroborate, nuance, or contradict one another, but they would not have been told in a vacuum. The audiences of these myths would usually have been aware of a diverse range of alternatives and would have constructed the social meaning of any given story in relation to their understanding of these others.

To return to the many myths of Miletus, the different surviving stories can be seen to relate to one another in several complex ways. For example, Ephorus of Cyme in the fourth century BC claimed that Miletus had first been occupied by Leleges, before being officially founded by Cretans under Sarpedon, and later fortified by Neileus and his Attic Ionian followers (*FGrH* 70 F127). In his story, Ephorus seems to have picked up on several previous versions of the myth. The reference to military action and the fortification of the city by Neileus resonates with Herodotus' tale of the Ionians' violent arrival to the city (Hdt 1.146), while the story of Sarpedon's flight from Crete echoes the account found in Herodorus (*FGrH* 31 F45). Ephorus, then, brings together two separate stories that could be told independently of each other. This rationalization of variant myths perhaps involves a similar process to that undertaken by modern scholars adopting positivist approaches to mythic variation and may indeed be unsurprising, given Ephorus' wider aim of writing Universal History.[17] However, it also illustrates the dynamism of foundation myths and the interaction of different stories. The same narratives could be told separately, or they could be combined. They could be placed in a relationship of opposition to each other (Miletus *either* as a Cretan foundation *or* as an Ionian one), or they could be placed in a relationship of complementarity (Miletus first founded by Cretans but first fortified by Ionians). While different scholarly approaches may favor one of these interpretations over the other in a static form, the example of Ephorus indicates that both were possible in antiquity. The changing relationship between the stories—oppositional in some contexts, complementary in others—is an important part of the dialogue between them. It is also significant that in Ephorus' tale, the original inhabitants of the land prior to the Cretan arrival are Leleges. This directly contradicts a long-established tradition that held the original inhabitants of Miletus to be Carians, including not only Herodotus and Herodorus but also Homer (*Iliad* 2.867).[18] The substitution of Leleges for Carians was not an innovation of Ephorus himself (see Pherecydes *FGrH* 3 F155), but Ephorus' choice to follow this variant of the myth would not have gone unnoticed by his ancient audience. The rejection of a well-known and long-established part of the

story is another aspect of the relationship between the myths. The decision to deviate and possibly to innovate is another element in the mythic dialogue.

The example of Ephorus demonstrates that over time, the variety and nature of Miletus' foundation myths changed, as did the relationships between them. While some of these developments can be glimpsed through the literary sources such as those considered here, a far more nuanced picture can be gained by also considering contemporary archaeological, epigraphic, and iconographic evidence. For example, Ephorus' rejection of the Carian origins of Miletus gains additional significance when we consider epigraphic evidence for the use of the Carian language and script, along with the continuing practice of choosing Carian names, in classical Miletus.[19] At the time that Ephorus was writing, not only was there a long-held tradition of Miletus' Carian prehistory (going back to Homer; see above), but Carian language and culture were an established part of Milesian life. In this context, Ephorus' mythic variation can be seen as going even more notably against the accepted grain. Even through dedicated interdisciplinary research, however, a complete understanding of these complex and changing relationships is unlikely to ever be possible. Nonetheless, it is these shifting mythic relationships and interactions, only partially discernible in the surviving sources, that constitute the central dynamic heart of Miletus' foundation discourse. The individual accounts of Herodotus, Herodorus, and Ephorus do not, by themselves or collectively, constitute a foundation discourse. Rather, the foundation discourse also embraces the relationships between these accounts and between these literary accounts and other forms of mythic representation, such as in the visual arts, social practices, and cult.

The case of Miletus cannot be taken as a pattern for other foundation discourses elsewhere in classical antiquity. In different circumstances, this dialogue between myths will necessarily take different forms, and the overall shape of each foundation discourse must necessarily be unique. It is not an aim of this book, therefore, to establish a fixed methodology for the investigation of variation in foundation myths, or for identifying the parameters or development of a foundation discourse. Instead, the chapters in this volume offer a selection of examples, exploring a variety of foundation discourses in action. By examining a broad range of different cases, we hope to demonstrate the potential for adopting an approach based on foundation discourses. We also hope to illustrate both some of the many forms that foundation discourses can take, and the many ways in which foundation discourses can function. In

this book, as with foundation myths in classical antiquity themselves, variety and plurality are key.

## Foundation Discourses Across Classical Antiquity

The contributors to this volume consider examples from across classical antiquity to explore how various foundation discourses operated and what might be learned from them. We make no claim to comprehensive coverage of the ancient world, chronologically or geographically. Neither do we claim to include all the best-known or most widely discussed cases of mythic variation from antiquity. Rather, the contributions highlight the diversity of foundation discourses and mythic variation that may be found in the classical world.

Two chapters take examples from what is often considered the "core" of classical antiquity: fifth-century Athens (Turner) and early imperial Rome (Squire). Other chapters focus on geographical areas that may be considered peripheral to the Greco-Roman world: Bactria (Mairs) and Phoenicia (Hirt). Others consider areas that were incontrovertibly part of the Greco-Roman world but that have often been treated as peripheral in modern classical scholarship: Sicily (Donnellan) and Alexandria (Ogden). One chapter is explicitly comparative in its approach, contrasting a classical and a nonclassical tradition in the form of Greek and Hebrew foundation myths (Malkin). A broad geographical and cultural range is therefore covered in this volume, allowing for a rich variety of foundation discourses to be discussed. The wide geographical and cultural range of the chapters is matched by their chronological range, which spans from the archaic period to the third century AD. The volume is arranged in roughly chronological order, making it easier for the reader to navigate the wide temporal span encompassed in this book. Just as the subject of each chapter is a foundation discourse, encompassing both mythic diversity and the relationship between mythic variants, we aim to achieve something similar with this volume as a whole. We hope that the diversity of the chapters, as well as the comparisons and relationships between the various insights offered, will form a loose discourse on the nature, variety, and functions of foundation myths and discourses in classical antiquity. The final contribution to this volume, the Epilogue (Osborne), revisits some of the themes highlighted in this Introduction, and returns to methodological questions of truth, falsity, and means of approaching foundation discourses.

The central issue of mythic variation is addressed directly in Chapter 1 by Irad Malkin, who compares Greek and Hebrew foundation myths, identifying plurality and variation as a key feature of Greek, as opposed to Hebrew, traditions. The chapter focuses on the motif of the foreign founder, the outsider who arrives from elsewhere and establishes his city on unfamiliar ground. In Hebrew traditions, Malkin notes, the arrival of the foreign founder is incorporated into a single linear foundation narrative, signifying a break with the past and heralding the establishment of a new order. In contrast, it seems that the foreign founders of Greek myth are embedded in plural foundation discourses, where multiple parallel narratives operated on different levels. These levels, Malkin argues, include the natural foundation of place, the origins of the *ethnos* (ethnic group or regional collective), and the political formation of the polis (city-state). The parallel stories of Greek myth, when compared with the more linear narratives of Hebrew foundation accounts, highlight the fundamental importance of plurality and variation in the Greek tradition. The contrast with Hebrew myths suggests, therefore, that foundation discourses were a central structuring principle of Greek mythic traditions.

In Chapter 2, Lieve Donnellan illustrates such a foundation discourse, played out in literary texts, local cult practices, and civic iconography. The chapter deals with the city of Naxos on Sicily and is the only chapter of this volume to address a Greek colonial foundation. Early textual accounts celebrated Theocles and Apollo Archegetes together as the human and divine founders of the city. Later traditions, however, tended to represent either one or the other of the founding figures, building on previous accounts while simultaneously incorporating new elements into the story. This acceptance, rejection, and elaboration of different elements with each new rendering depends on an appreciation of other versions of the story. Crucially, Donnellan explores not only the interaction between different stories told in the literary sources but also the relationships between literary representations of myths and the celebration of foundation stories in civic cult and on coin imagery. The different emphasis evident in the different mythic media allowed for a wider discourse to be developed, one where the full significance of any individual version of the foundation myth can be understood only in relation to the broader foundation discourse.

As demonstrated by the case of Naxos, foundation myths represented in different media often communicate different stories, or different "takes" on the same story. However, in Chapter 3, Susanne Turner shows that the portrayals of a foundation myth in two different media can also offer a similar overall vision of civic foundation. In this case, the shared vision of civic foundation

focuses on duality and ambiguity as the central theme of the foundation discourse. Turner's chapter considers the figure of Theseus in classical Athens, specifically concentrating on the competing traditions that claimed that Theseus was simultaneously both the son of Aigeus and of Poseidon. Turner discusses how Theseus' relationship with his two fathers was portrayed in poetry and vase painting, highlighting the fact that scenes relating to both fathers can be found in both types of media. In both types of media and for both potential fathers, the scenes typically focus on the moment of paternal recognition. Crucially, Turner argues, in these scenes Theseus never achieves the official recognition of either father, and is instead eternally caught in the process of being acknowledged. In this way, Theseus is never committed to being the son of either Aigeus or Poseidon, and his ambiguous status is maintained. Contrary to what might initially be assumed, the subject of these scenes is not the recognition by one or the other of Theseus' mythic fathers. Rather, it is the uncertainty of Theseus' dual generation that is itself being emphasized. The indeterminate nature of Theseus' origins, Turner argues, was an essential part of the hero's appeal as a founder. Ambiguous, transformational, and continually on the cusp of achieving a new status, Theseus would have been an ideal civic hero for Athens around the time of its expansion in the Aegean. In the case of Theseus' indeterminate paternity, the very fact of mythic variation has itself become central in the representation of both variants. The dialogue between foundation myths has become a central theme of the discourse.

The reflexivity of foundation discourses, along with their potential to reflect on their own plurality, is also illustrated in the next two chapters, both of which consider Hellenistic examples. In the case described by Rachel Mairs in Chapter 4, it seems that greater variety among the mythic variants and greater complexity in the foundation discourse were desirable ends. The chapter discusses the foundation discourse at Ai Khanoum in Bactria (in modern Afghanistan). In addition to long-standing local and Achaemenid traditions and the conventional ideal of a foundation by Alexander, Mairs suggests that a fourth element was introduced to the foundation discourse in the mid-third century BC. Allusions to a Delphic foundation in the tradition of early Greek colonies were made, framed within the context of existing foundation narratives and civic cult. However, these allusions remained implicit, subtly changing the nature of a ritual space and a discourse previously concerned with civic foundation. Rather than foundation itself, the focus of the ritual space and discourse shifted to include the broader issue of civic origins. The shape

and remit of the discourse at Ai Khanoum appear to have been expanded—perhaps deliberately—to go beyond the strict issue of foundations.

If the discourse at Ai Khanoum was even more expansive than those considered in previous chapters, the example discussed in Chapter 5 by Daniel Ogden lies at the other end of the scale. While Mairs considered a foundation discourse that spiraled out to include ever more stories and an increasingly vague sense of origins, Ogden explores a foundation discourse that spirals inward, pulling diverse traditions and stories into a single composite myth. Ogden argues that the story of Alexander slaying the serpent, the Agathos Daimon, in Alexandria brings together elements of a wide range of foundation traditions. Motifs are borrowed from early Greek foundation stories, Alexander's own personal mythology, Egyptian traditional tales, Jewish sacred imagery, and the conventional stories associated with Alexander's other foundations in the East. In the one story of the Agathos Daimon, Ogden argues that a variety of myths, traditions, and images are brought together. Within this tale, a vast pool of source material has been concentrated into a single coherent narrative, narrowing the foundation discourse into a tight space. Whereas the foundation discourse of Ai Khanoum was expansive and dispersed, that of the Agathos Daimon was focused, the stories and ideas converging into coherence.

Mairs's and Ogden's chapters deal with cases where the parameters of a new foundation discourse are being defined; in Chapter 6, Michael Squire is concerned with the potential flexibility of a foundation discourse when the shape and limits of this discourse have already been imposed. In early imperial Rome, an official foundation discourse was firmly established, which included not only the establishment of the city but also the origins of the ruling Julio-Claudian dynasty. But while the framework of this discourse and its basic components were already laid out, Squire's chapter demonstrates that there was still scope for flexibility and dialogue. Squire concentrates on the *Tabulae Iliacae*, a collection of handheld stone tablets from the first centuries BC and AD, conveying mythical subjects through inscriptions and scenes in relief. Many of the tablets depict stories of Rome's foundation, often focusing on the figure of Aeneas, in line with the official foundation discourse of the time. However, argues Squire, the way that Aeneas is presented on the tablets does not strictly conform to the typical official narrative. Instead, there is considerable space for narrative innovation—there is no clear way to read them from "start" to "finish" and no linear trajectory to the story. By their layout and their use of text and image, the tablets encourage viewers to take alternative routes and come to alternative endings. The tablets, then, actively introduce an

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