

KADMOS THE PHOENICIAN AND THE ILLYRIAN LANDSCAPE. SOME RECENT MYTHOLOGICAL APPROACHES

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*As I was unable to find anything new about these men,
I adopt the story that makes their name result
from the way in which they came into being¹*
Paus. IX 5, 3

Herennius Philo, from Byblos in Phoenicia, was an ancient writer who lived in the time of the emperor Hadrian (2nd century AD). He wrote, in Greek, several books, about grammar, lexicology, history and geography; but most have got lost. Many titles of his oeuvre are known, while fragmentary passages survive, quoted by later authors. For example, Eusebius of Caesarea (260/265-339/340 AD), in his Preparation for the Gospel (*Praeparatio Evangelica*), quotes polemically many abstracts from his most famous work Phoenician History, or τὰ Φοινικικά, that Philo claims to have translated from the writings of one Sanchuniathon, a purported Phoenician sage, priest and scholar. And Eusebius draws some quotations of Philo's *Historia Phoenicia* from Porphyry's *Contra Christianos*, 3rd century AD². Similarly, Aelius Herodianus (2nd century AD), wrote a summary of another of Philo's works ('On Cities and their Famous Men'), which was then one of the chief authorities used by the lexicographer Hesychius of Alexandria (probably 5th century AD) in his Alphabetical Collection of all Words, and by Stephanus of Byzantium (6th century AD) in his great geographical dictionary entitled *Ethnica*. Stephanus, in particular, cites about thirty quotations from Philo³, and two of them concern Illyria.

¹ I sincerely thank Aleksandra Lalatović-Džaković and Božena Miljić for their precious assistance in the translation of this paper.

² See TROIANI 1974; EBACH 1979; BAUMGARTEN 1981; ATTRIDGE, ODEN 1981.

³ Philo follows in this work the eponymic system, for which every city or people took its name from an ancient hero. This method dates back to the origins of Greek historiography, especially seen with Hecataeus of Abdera, but it is also found in the 'Table of Peoples' of *Genesis* 1, 10. See TROIANI 1974, 13-15.

The first one relates to the modern city of Durrës, in Albania. Stephanus quotes the ancient appellations (Ἐπίδαμνος, Δυρράχιον) of this Illyrian city, called Epidamnus after a hero of the same name, whose daughter was Melissa. Her son, and Poseidon's – says the grammarian of Constantinople – was Dyrrhachios; and a place in Epidamnus where Poseidon enjoyed her, is called after her the Melissonian place. Stephanus mentions some ancient writers as sources for designations and mythical data: Strabo, Philo of Byblos, and Eratosthenes. Thus we have acquired some more information about the cities of Lissos, Acrolissos, and Epidamnus/Dyrrhachion (as a foundation of the Cercyreans), as well as about the rivers Drilon and Aaos, 'around which are shown the graves of Kadmos and Harmonia'⁴.

As for the second quote, Stephanus mentions Philo on the settlement of Buthoe, modern Budva (Montenegro) that was named after the pair of 'oxen' who drove 'quickly' Kadmos's carriage to Illyria⁵. The geographer also knows of other explanations of this name

⁴ Philo Bybl. fr. 35 and 53 Jacoby, ap. Steph. Byz. s.v. Δυρράχιον: Δυρράχιον· πόλις Ἰλλυρικὴ, Ἐπίδαμνος κληθεῖσα ἀπὸ Ἐπιδάμνου. τούτου θυγάτηρ Μέλισσα, ἧς καὶ Ποσειδῶνος Δυρράχιος· ἄφ' ἧς ἐστὶν ἐν Ἐπιδάμνῳ τόπος Μελισσώνιος, ἔνθα Ποσειδῶν αὐτῇ συνῆλθεν, “ὡς Φίλων.> Στράβων δ' ἐν <ζ> φησί· “μετὰ δὲ τὸν Ῥιζονικὸν <κόλπον> Λίσσος ἐστὶ πόλις καὶ Ἀκρόλισσος καὶ Ἐπίδαμνος, Κερκυραίων κτίσμα, ἣ νῦν Δυρράχιον ὁμωνύμως τῇ χερρονήσῳ [πρότερον] λεγομένη, ἐφ' ἧς ἴδρυται” [ὡς Φίλων]. ... Ἐρατοσθένης γ' γεωγραφουμένων “ἐχόμενοι δ' οἰκοῦσι Ταυλάντιοι. πόλις δὲ Ἑλληνιστὴς Ἐπίδαμνος ἐπὶ χερρονήσῳ τῆς καλουμένης Δυρραχίου. ποταμοὶ δὲ Δρίλων καὶ Αἰῶς, περὶ οὓς οἱ Κάδμου καὶ Ἀρμονίας τάφοι δείκνυνται”. ὁμοῦ δὲ νῦν Δυρραχηνοὶ λέγονται. οὗτω γὰρ καὶ Βάλακρος ἐν Μακεδονικοῖς φησί “καὶ τούτων αἱ πόλεις Δυρραχηνοῖς τε καὶ Ἀπολλωνιάταις ἐπιδήρηται”. καὶ Ἐρέννιος Φίλων ἐν τοῖς Ἱατρικοῖς Δυρραχηνὸν ἀναγράφει Φιλωνίδην οὕτως “Ἀσκληπιάδης ἀκουστάς ἔσχε Τίτον Αὐφίδιον Σικελὸν καὶ Φιλωνίδην Δυρραχηνὸν καὶ Νίκωνα Ἀκραγαντῖνον”. καὶ πάλιν “Φιλωνίδης δὲ ὁ Δυρραχηνὸς ἤκουσε μὲν Ἀσκληπιάδου, ἰατροῦσας δὲ ἐν τῇ πατρίδι ἐνδόξως συνετάξατο βιβλία μὲ”. See JACOBY, SCHEPENS, RADICKE 1999, 43. Cf. also Herodian. *de pros. cath.* III 1: Ἐπίδαμνος· πόλις Ἰλλυρίας ἀπὸ Ἐπιδάμνου; <Δυρράχιον> πόλις Ἰλλυρικὴ καὶ Ἐπίδαμνος κληθεῖσα ἀπὸ Ἐπιδάμνου; Const. Porph. *De them.* 9: Ῥητέον δὲ περὶ τῆς ὀνομασίας αὐτοῦ πόθεν καλεῖται Δυρράχιον. “Δυρράχιον πόλις [Ἑλληνικὴ] <Ἰλλυρικὴ> καὶ Ἐπίδαμνος κληθεῖσα ὑπὸ Ἐπιδάμνου τοῦ ἀρχαίου ἥρωος· τούτου θυγάτηρ Μέλισσα, ἧς ἠράσθη Ποσειδῶν καὶ ἄφ' ἧς ὁ Δυρράχιος. “Ἐστὶ τόπος ἐν Ἐπιδάμνῳ Μελισσώνιος, ἔνθα Ποσειδῶν αὐτῇ συνῆλθεν”, <ὡς Φίλων>. “Μετὰ δὲ τὸν Ῥιζόνικον Λισσός ἐστὶ πόλις, καὶ Ἀκρόλισσος καὶ Ἐπίδαμνος, Κερκυραίων κτίσμα, ἣ νῦν Δυρράχιον ὁμωνύμως τῇ Χερρονήσῳ λεγομένη, ἐφ' ἧς ἴδρυται”, ὡς [Φίλων] <Στράβων> γράφει. See also ROLLER 2010, 105.

⁵ Philo Bybl. fr. 32 Jacoby, ap. St. Byz. s.v. Βουθόη: πόλις Ἰλλυρίδος, ὡς Φίλων, διὰ τὸ Κάδμον ἐπὶ ζεύγους βοῶν ὀχοῦμενον ταχέως ἀνύσαι τὴν ἐς Ἰλλυριοὺς ὁδόν. οἱ δὲ τὸν Κάδμον ἀπὸ τῆς Αἰγυπτίας Βουτοῦς ὀνομάσαι αὐτήν, καὶ παραφθαρεῖσαν καλεῖσθαι Βουθόην. ἔχει δ' ἐπὶ τοῦ μυθοῦ Ῥίξονα πόλιν καὶ ποταμὸν ὁμώνυμον. τὸ ἔθνικόν Βουθοαῖος. Cf. also Herodian. *de pros. cath.* III 1: <Βουθόη> πόλις Ἰλλυρίδος ὡς Φίλων διὰ τὸ Κάδμον ἐπὶ ζεύγους βοῶν ὀχοῦμενον ταχέως ἀνύσαι τὴν ἐς Ἰλλυριοὺς ὁδόν. οἱ δὲ τὸν Κάδμον ἀπὸ τῆς Αἰγυπτίας Βουτοῦς ὀνομάσαι αὐτήν καὶ παραφθαρεῖσαν καλεῖσθαι Βουθόην; *Etymologicum Magnum*, *Etymologicum Genuinum*, and *Etymologicum Symeonis* s.v. Βουθόη or Βουθόη.

– after the Egyptian Buto, and how it come to be called Buthoe by a corruption of that name. He cites also Rhizon as an appellation of both a river and a town.

It should be noted that in the fragments that remain of Philo's Phoenician History there is no trace of Kadmos, the hero well known in Greek mythology as an original 'Phoenician' Prince. Nevertheless, these quotations of his work 'On Cities and their Famous Men' allow us to suppose that the antiquarian writer from Byblos knew the Greek tradition in which the region of Illyria was identified as the last place in the adventures of this hero, who comes originally from the land of Phoenicia.

According to Hesiod and many ancient Greek writers, Kadmos was a son of Agenor, the king of Tyre, and was sent by his father in search for his sister Europa who had been abducted from the shores of Phoenicia by Zeus. He followed a tortuous path, which 'marked' the limits of the Greek territory until he came to the region of Boeotia. There Kadmos killed a monstrous dragon and founded Thebes. Then he married Harmonia and generated a significant bloodline: a son Polydorus, from whom descended the Labdakides and Oidipus, and four daughters, Agave who begat Pentheus, Autonoe who married Aristeus and had Aktaion, Ino who had Learchos and Melikertes from Athamas, and Semele who begat Dionysos from Zeus⁶.

The audience who in 405 BC, in Athens, first saw the *Bacchae* of Euripides already knew a conclusion of this myth: where Kadmos was transformed into a snake and together with Harmonia left Thebes on a carriage pulled by oxen⁷.

In fact, the later tradition, well summarised in the Library of Pseudo-Apollodorus (*Bibliotheca*, generally dated to the 1st or 2nd century AD), narrated more adventures of this hero, who was either chased or went away voluntarily from Thebes and headed towards the western lands, more precisely to the region of the Encheleans⁸. As the Illyrians were attacking the Encheleans, the Delphic oracle declared that the latter would come out as winners, if they took as their leaders Kadmos and Harmonia. That in due course happened: Kadmos reigned over the

⁶ Ancient sources in ROSCHER 1894, 824-893; ROSSIGNOLI 2004, 103-106. Detailed analysis of Greek myths on the 'Phoenician' Kadmos in BONNET 2015, 332-349.

⁷ Eur. *Bacch.* 1330-1339: δράκων γενήση μεταβαλῶν, δάμαρ τε σὴ / ἐκθηριωθεῖσ' ὄφεος ἀλλάξει τύπον, / ἦν Ἄρεος ἔσχες Ἀρμονίαν θνητὸς γεγώς. / ὄχον δὲ μόσχων, χρησιμὸς ὡς λέγει Διὸς, / ἐλάῃ μετ' ἀλόχου, βαρβάρων ἡγούμενος. / πολλὰς δὲ πέρσεις ἀναρίθμω στρατεύματι / πόλεις· ὅταν δὲ Λοξίου χρηστήριον / διαρπάσωσι, νόστον ἄθλιον πάλιν / στήσουσι· σὲ δ' Ἄρης Ἀρμονίαν τε ῥύσεται / μακάρων τ' ἐξ αἴαν σὸν καθιδρύσει βίον. See also 1352-1362.

⁸ Cf. ps.-Apoll. *Bibl.* III 4: ὁ δὲ Κάδμος μετὰ Ἀρμονίας Θήβας ἐκλιπὼν πρὸς Ἐγγελέας παραγίνεται. τούτοις δὲ ὑπὸ Ἰλλυριῶν πολεμουμένοις ὁ θεὸς ἔχρησεν Ἰλλυριῶν κρατήσειν, ἐὰν ἡγεμόνας Κάδμον καὶ Ἀρμονίαν ἔχωσιν. οἱ δὲ πεισθέντες ποιοῦνται κατὰ Ἰλλυριῶν ἡγεμόνας τούτους καὶ κρατοῦσι. καὶ βασιλεύει Κάδμος Ἰλλυριῶν, καὶ παῖς Ἰλλυριῶν αὐτῶν γίνεται. αὐτὸς δὲ μετὰ Ἀρμονίας εἰς δράκοντα μεταβαλὼν εἰς Ἠλύσιον πεδῖον ὑπὸ Διὸς ἐξεπέμφθη.

Illyrians, and a son Illyrios was born to him⁹. But afterwards he was, along with Harmonia, turned into a serpent and sent away by Zeus to the Elysian Fields¹⁰.

Before all these events came to pass, as Hyginus records in his *Fabulae* (1st century AD), their daughter Agave had fled to Illyria, married king Lycothereses, and then killed him, in order to give his kingdom to her father¹¹. Parthenius of Nicaea (1st century BC–1st century AD) says that following Kadmos from Thebes into Illyria also came Epeiros, daughter of Echion, one of the Spartoi (the ‘Sown Men’, the ancestors of the Thebans who sprung up from the dragon’s teeth sown by Kadmos): Epeiros gave her name to the land in which she was buried¹². According to Herodotus, the Kadmeans (i.e. the descendants of the Phoenician hero who were expelled from Thebes by the Argives, during the rule of Laodamas son of Eteokles) eventually also ended up in the same region of the Encheleans¹³.

Thus, in the Illyrian epilogue of the Kadmos mythological cycle, the Phoenician hero appears in a renewed role as a parent and founder of peoples, cities and landscapes. If his son

⁹ See also Diod. Sic. XIX 53: Τὸς οὖν τότε κατοικήσαντας ὕστερον Ἑγγελεῖς καταπολεμήσαντες ἐξέβαλον, ὅτε δὴ συνέβη καὶ τοὺς περὶ Κάδμον εἰς Ἴλλυριοὺς ἐκπεσεῖν; Paus. IX 5: Κάδμου δὲ ἐς Ἴλλυριοὺς καὶ Ἴλλυριῶν ἐς τοὺς καλουμένους Ἑγγελέας μετοικήσαντος Πολύδωρος ὁ Κάδμου τὴν ἀρχὴν ἔσχε; Herodian. *De pros. cath.* III 1 and Steph. Byz. s.v. Ἴλλυρία: χώρα πλησίον τοῦ Παγγαίου, ἀπὸ Ἴλλυρίου τοῦ Κάδμου παιδός.

¹⁰ Cf. ps.-Apoll. *Bibl.* III 4, cit.; Apollon. Rhod. *Argon.* IV, 516 ss.: Οἱ (= some Argonauts) δ’ ἄρ’ ἐπ’ Ἴλλυρικοῖο μελαμβαθέος ποταμοῖο, τύμβος ἴν’ Ἀρμονίης Κάδμοιό τε, πύργον ἔδειμαν, ἀνδράσιν Ἑγγελέεσσιν ἐφέστιοι; Dion. Per. 390-397: Κεῖνον δ’ ἂν περὶ κόλπον ἴδοις ἐρικυδέα τύμβον, / τύμβον, ὃν Ἀρμονίης Κάδμοιό τε φημὶς ἐνίσπεικει· / κεῖθι γὰρ εἰς ὀφίων σκολιὸν δέμας ἠλλάξαντο, / ὀπτότ’ ἀπ’ Ἴσμηνοῦ λιπαρὸν μετὰ γῆρας ἴκοντο. / Ἔνθα σφιν τέρας ἄλλο θεοὶ θέσαν· ἀμφὶ γὰρ αἴαν / κείνην ἀμφοτέρωθεν ἐρηρέδαται δύο πέτραι, / αἴτ’ ἀμφω ξυνίασι δονεῦμεναι, εὐτέ τις ἀρχὴ / γίνεταί ἐνναέτησι κυλινδομένοιο κακοῖο; Hygin. *Fab.* 6: *Cadmus Agenoris et Argiopes filius, in Martis quod draconem fontis Castalii custodem occiderat suorum prole interempta, cum Harmonia Veneris et Martis filia uxore sua in Illyriae regionibus in dracones sunt conversi.* See VIAN 1963, 124; Sen. *Herc. fur.* 392-394: *Quin ipse torvuum subrigens crista caput / Illyrica Cadmus regna permensus fuga / longgas reliquit corporis tracti notas.*

¹¹ Hyg. *Fab.* 184: *Agave ... profugit ab Thebis; quae errabunda in Illyriae fines devenit ad Lycothersem regem, quam Lycothereses excepit, and 240: Agave (occisit) Lycothersem in Illyria, ut regnum Cadmo patri daret.*

¹² Parth. *Narr. amat.* 32 (Meineke, *Analecta Alexandrina*, 334): Φασὶ δὲ τινες τὸν δρυμὸν ἐκεῖνον εἶναι τῆς Ἐχίονος θυγατρὸς Ἠπειροῦ, ἣν μεταναστᾶσαν ἐκ Βοιωτίας βαδίζειν μεθ’ Ἀρμονίας καὶ Κάδμου, φερομένην τὰ Πενθέως λείψανα, ἀποθανοῦσαν δὲ περὶ τὸν δρυμὸν τόνδε ταφῆναι: διὸ καὶ τὴν γῆν Ἠπειρον ἀπὸ ταύτης ὀνομασθῆναι.

¹³ Hdt. V 61, 2: ἐπὶ τούτῳ δὴ τοῦ Λαοδάμαντος τοῦ Ἐτεοκλέος μουναρχέοντος ἐξανιστάται Καδμεῖοι ὑπ’ Ἀργείων καὶ τρέπονται ἐς τοὺς Ἑγγελέας. Cf. VANNICELLI 1995.

Illyrios took/gave the name from/to the Illyrians¹⁴, the myths yet assigned to Kadmos the foundation of some cities, such as Buthoe (already mentioned), Lychnidos¹⁵ (located in the modern Albanian or Macedonian region of Ohrid), and Rhizon¹⁶ (on the river of the same name in the Bay of Kotor). Lychnis and Rhizon¹⁷ were also the names of two eponymous heroes, similarly considered as Kadmos's sons. For the town of Lychnidos, in particular, an author of the Palatine Anthology attests to its foundation by the Phoenician Kadmos (Φοῖνιξ Κάδμος) around the lake of the same name¹⁸.

In this way, the Greek mythology depicts for the Illyrian region a vivid scenario that is of particular interest to us now

- in the *names* of the people associated with the figure of the Phoenician prince and his direct descendants;
- in the *cities* that accredited to Kadmos their ancient origins;
- in some specific *elements* of the landscape where, in historical times, were recognised some 'traces' of the ancient presence of this foreign hero, who came with his wife to 'humanise' the Illyrian territory.

I shall come back to that later. First it should be pointed out that Appian of Alexandria (2nd century AD) quotes a 'variant' story about Illyrios as the eponymous founder of the Illyrian race: one that differs significantly from that which recognised him as the offspring of Kadmos.

¹⁴ Illyrios is the eponymous hero of the Illyrians also according to Steph. Byz. s.v. Ἰλλυρία, cit., Eust. in Dion. Per. 389: Ἰλλυριοὺς δὲ φασὶ τὸ ἔθνος κληθῆναι ἀπὸ Ἰλλυριοῦ, παιδὸς Κάδμου καὶ Ἀρμονίας, and Schol. in Dion. Per. (*scholia vetera*) 388-391: Ἰλλυρικὴν περὶ χέρσον· Κάτω τῆς Ἰλλυρίας κεῖται ὁ τύμβος τῶν περὶ Ἀρμονίαν καὶ Κάδμον, οἵτινες εἰς ὄφεις μετεβλήθησαν. Ἡ δὲ ἱστορία παρὰ Ἀπολλωνίῳ ἐν τῷ δ'. Ἰστῆον δὲ ὅτι Ἰλλυριὸς υἱὸς Κάδμου καὶ Ἀρμονίας, ἀφ' οὗ Ἰλλυριοὶ ὀνομάζονται. Κεραυνία: δὲ ὄρη εἰρηνται διὰ τὸ πλῆθος τῶν ἐκεῖ πιπτόντων κεραυνῶν. Τύμβον δὲν Ἀρμονίης Κάδμοιο τε: Χαριέντως ἔφησε τὸ <φῆμις>.

¹⁵ Cf. *Anth. Pal.* VII 697 (Christodorus Epicus): Οὗτος Ἰωάννην κρύπτει τάφος, ὅς ῥ' Ἐπιδάμου / ἄστρον ἔην, ἦν πρὶν παῖδες ἀριπρεπέες / ἔκτισαν Ἡρακλῆος· ὄθεν καὶ μέρμερος ἦρος / αἰεὶ τῶν ἀδίκων σκληρὸν ἔκοπτε μένος. / εἶχε δ' ἀπ' εὐσεβέων προγόνων ἐρικυδέα πάτρην / Λυχνιδόν, ἦν Φοῖνιξ Κάδμος ἔδειμε πόλιν· / ἔνθεν λύγχος ἔην Ἐλικώνιος, οὐνεκα Κάδμος / στοιχείων Δαναοῖς πρῶτος ἔδειξε τύπον. / εἰς ὑπάτους δ' ἀνέλαμψε καὶ Ἰλλυριοῖσι δικάζων / Μούσας καὶ καθαρὴν ἔστεφάνωσε Δίκην. See EDWARDS 1979, 33. For the identification of Ohrid with the ancient Lychnidos, at the lake of the same name, and for the etymology of this place name, see PROEVA 1999.

¹⁶ Cf. Herodian. *De pros. cath.* III 1 (Ῥίζων> ὁ τοῦ Κάδμου υἱὸς καὶ πόλις Ἰλλυρίας καὶ ποταμὸς ὁμώνυμος) and III 2 (Ῥίζων, Ῥίζωνος ὁ τοῦ Κάδμου υἱός). See EDWARDS 1979, 33, note 40.

¹⁷ Cf. Georgius Choeroboscus in Schol. in Theod. 76, 731 Lentz, see ANTONELLI 1994, 19 note 35.

¹⁸ *Anth. Pal.* VII 697, already mentioned.

According to Appian's *Civil Wars*¹⁹, the Greeks said that the country of Illyria received its name from Illyrios, who was the son of the Cyclops Polyphemos and his wife Galatea, along with his brothers Keltos and Galas. All the sons of this couple migrated from Sicily; and the Celts, Illyrians, and Galatians took their respective origins and names after them. This version had probably a Sicilian origin²⁰, and for Appian it seems to be 'more acceptable than others, although there are many variants of the myth, told by many writers'. The Alexandrian historian is also writing within the same ancient literary ethos that assigned 'ethnicity' to a genealogical source²¹, as I have already noted above, in reference to ps.-Apollodorus's text and to other ancient mythographers.

Appian also numbers the children of Illyrios, whose names were given to the Illyrian tribes. He speaks about the six sons (Encheleos, Autarideos, Dardanos, Mædos, Taulas, and Perrhæbos), three daughters (Partho, Daortho, and Dassaro), as well as others, from whom sprang the Enchelees, the Autarienses, the Dardani, the Taulantii, the Perrhæbi, the Partheni, the Dassaretii, and the Darsii. Autarideos had a son Pannonios, or Pæon, and the latter had sons Skordiskos and Triballos, from whom arose the tribes with similar names. 'But I shall leave these matters to the archaeologists', concludes the historian, referring to the specialists of the sciences of Antiquity, among which we all of us, gathered for this Round Table, are honourable members.

In the time of Appian, in any case, the story of Kadmos and Harmonia in Illyrian lands was well known, as was the story of the end of their earthly life through their metamor-

¹⁹ Cf. App. *Ill.* I 1-2: Ἰλλυριοὺς Ἕλληνας ἡγοῦνται τοὺς ὑπὲρ τε Μακεδονίαν καὶ Θράκην ἀπὸ Χαόνων καὶ Θεσπρωτῶν ἐπὶ ποταμῶν Ἰστρον. ... φασὶ δὲ τὴν μὲν χώραν ἐπώνυμον Ἰλλυριοῦ τοῦ Πολυφήμου γενέσθαι· Πολυφήμῳ γὰρ τῷ Κύκλωπι καὶ Γαλατείᾳ Κελτὸν καὶ Ἰλλυρίον καὶ Γάλαν παῖδας ὄντας ἐξορμήσαι Σικελίας, καὶ ἄρξει τῶν δι' αὐτοὺς Κελτῶν καὶ Ἰλλυριῶν καὶ Γαλατῶν λεγομένων. καὶ τότε μοι μάλιστα, πολλὰ μυθευόντων ἕτερα πολλῶν, ἀρέσκει. Ἰλλυριῶ δὲ παῖδας Ἐγγέλεα καὶ Αὐταριέα καὶ Δάρδανον καὶ Μαῖδον καὶ Ταύλαντα καὶ Περραιβὸν γενέσθαι, καὶ θυγατέρας Παρθῶ καὶ Δαορθῶ καὶ Δασσαρῶ καὶ ἐτέρας, ὅθεν εἰσὶ Ταυλάντιοί τε καὶ Περραιβοὶ καὶ Ἐγγέλεες καὶ Αὐταριεῖς καὶ Δάρδανοι <καὶ Μαῖδοι> καὶ Παρθηνοὶ καὶ Δασσαρήτιοι καὶ Δάρσοι. Αὐταριεῖ δὲ αὐτῷ Παννόνιον ἡγοῦνται παῖδα ἢ Παίονα γενέσθαι, καὶ Σκορδίσκον Παίονι καὶ Τριβαλλόν, ὧν ὁμοίως τὰ ἔθνη παρώνυμα εἶναι. καὶ τάδε μὲν τοῖς ἀρχαιολογοῦσι μεθεῖσθω.

²⁰ See ŠAŠEL Kos 2004, 503: 'The origins of this story most probably lead us to Sicily, where the love story between Polyphemus and Galatea may have been an old folk tale. However, its political implications, reflected in its subsequent genealogical development, point to the Syracuse of Dionysius the Elder'. About the love of Polyphemos and Galatea cf. Theocr. *Id.* 11.

²¹ Cf. ERCOLANI, LIVADIOTTI 2009, 14, 31, and 78-79. See also ANELLO 1984; ŠAŠEL Kos 2004, 501-504; CASTIGLIONI 2014.

phosis into snakes, according to the most common tradition²². In other different ‘versions’, they received a burial, were changed into stone effigies, or transferred to the land of the Blessed or the Elysian Fields.

Until the 1980s, the main points of reference for these traditions, apart from the *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römische Mythologie* of Wilhelm Heinrich Roscher (1894) and the *Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* of Augustus Friedrich Pauly and Georg Wissowa (1893 s.), consisted of the study by Francis Vian on the Kadmean origins of Thebes (1963) and of the book of Ruth Edwards (1979), originating in a PhD dissertation on Greek ‘legends’ and Mycenaean times.

Over the past three decades, however, many essays have been devoted to the traditions of Kadmos in Illyria, matching the increased number of monographs devoted to the Graecity of the West²³, and also as a result of the series of six conferences in France and Albania. These congresses began in 1984 at the initiative of Pierre Cabanes, and were expressly dedicated to southern Illyria and Epirus, being held first in Clermont-Ferrand, then in Chantilly, Grenoble, and Tirana²⁴.

These and other studies conducted in eastern and western Europe²⁵ have further enriched the specialised bibliography, focusing on the various historical epochs, civil and religious institutions, and taking advantage of the most recent contributions from archaeology, epigraphy, philology, numismatics, and the social and economic history of the Balkan region. In this context, analysis of the myths was subject to various levels of interpretation.

Accordingly, some scholars have created a general framework for the mythical information referred to above, reviewing the relevant literary data; some have also composed a species of database for all available information. The reports range from more or less ran-

²² According to *Ov. Met.* IV 571-603, the Phoenician hero and his wife, weighed down by age and sadness, become serpents. In this version of the Kadmos saga, as well as in Euripides, the metamorphosis was not a punishment, a humiliation, but on the contrary an apotheosis, a glorification. See CASTIGLIONI 2010, *passim*; and also BONNET 2015, 338-339. Nonn. *Dion.* IV 418-420 (χωομένου δὲ Κάδμος ἀμειβομένων μελέων ἑλικώδει μορφῇ ἀλλοφυῆς ἡμελλε παρ’ Ἰλλυρίδος σφυρὰ γαίης ξεῖνον ἔχειν ἴνδαλμα δρακοντείοιο προσώπου), *Hyg. Fab.* 6 cit., and *Myth. Vat.* I 147 (p. 61 Kukcsár) presents the transformation into snakes in Illyria as an atonement of the killing of the dragon of Thebes (*Cadmus Agenoris filius postquam inspector suarum calamitatum fuerat in exitu nepotum, perosus Thebarum sedes cum Hermiona, Veneris et Martis filia coniuge sua in Illiricos sinus profugit. Ibi a diis petita uenia ut in draconis speciem conuerteretur, qui initio mali causa fuit, uota sunt impleta et in serpentes ambo uersi sunt*).

²³ See, in particular, in the Series *Hesperia* and elsewhere, ANTONELLI 1994; 2000; ROSSIGNOLI 2003 and 2004.

²⁴ See CABANES 1987; 1993; 1999; CABANES, LAMBOLEY 2004; LAMBOLEY, CASTIGLIONI 2011; LAMBOLEY, PÉRZHITA, SKĀNDERAJ 2018, as well as PROEVA 1999; ŠAŠEL KOS 2004; CABANES 2018.

²⁵ See for example CASTIGLIONI 2006; 2009; 2010, and 2014; ŠAŠEL KOS 1993 and 2004; DŽINO 2014; MATIJAŠIĆ 2015.

dom data to specific records, preserved by mythographers and most often by geographers interested in Illyria, or by Byzantine glossators able to gather up information derived from older authors, even if it is but small details, curiosities, and mythical variants otherwise completely unknown. I refer in particular to the essays of Benedetta Rossignoli, Marjeta Šašel Kos, and especially Maria Paola Castiglioni.

They and other researchers have also achieved a more accurate identification of the Illyrian landscape in question, notably where the ancient texts left room for a degree of uncertainty. Their discourse mainly concerns the localisation of certain elements within the mythical events, or an 'Illyrian appropriation' of the tales, varying according to the historical period. More specifically, this involves the cities that owe their foundation to Kadmos, the places where his transformation into a snake occurred and those where their tombs or other monuments are 'evident'.

To refer to Strabo, the modern discourse deals in particular with the traces left by the ancient heroes in the places that saw them as protagonists; 'and the scenes of the stories told about them are still pointed out there'²⁶.

Several authors, for example, specified the burial-places of Kadmos and Harmonia as graves or mounds; Apollonius²⁷, Stephanus²⁸ and Dionysius²⁹ use terms such as τάφοι and τύμβος. Nonnos³⁰ and Dionysius also speak about prodigious πέτραι, which might also correspond to two stone snakes into which Kadmos and Harmonia were transformed, according to many ancient writers. The *Periplus* of the ps.-Scylax testifies a ἱερόν and two λίθοι named after them, not far from the Rhizon river³¹. Nicander speaks about a σεμείλιον

²⁶ Cf. Strabo VII 7, 8: ταῦτα δὲ πρότερον μὲν κατεδυναστεύετο ἕκαστα, ὧν ἐν τοῖς Ἐγγελείοις οἱ Κάδμου καὶ Ἀρμονίας ἀπόγονοι ἦρχον, καὶ τὰ μυθεύόμενα περὶ αὐτῶν ἐκεῖ δείκνυται.

²⁷ Cf. Apollon. Rhod. *Argon.* IV 517 located their tombs 'near the dark deep Illyrian river ... among the Encheleans'. See also Lykophr. *Al.* 1021-1022 (Κράθις δὲ γείτορις ἠδὲ Μυλάκων ὄροις / χῶρος συνοίκους δέξεται Κόλχων Πόλαις).

²⁸ St. Byz. s.v. *Buthoe* and *Dyrrhachion*, already mentioned.

²⁹ Cf. Dion. Per. 390, cit.; Eust. in *Dion. Per.* 395: Ὅτι εἰσιόντι τὴν Ἰονίαν θάλασσαν κατὰ μὲν τὰ σκαιὰ ἢ τῶν Αὐσόνων κείται χώρα, δεξιτερὴν δὲ κατὰ χεῖρα ἢ Ἰλλυρίας ἐστὶ γῆ, οὕτω καλουμένη ἀπὸ Ἰλλυριοῦ υἱοῦ Κάδμου, and Schol. in D.P. (*scholia vetera*) 388 cit.

³⁰ Nonn. *Dion.* XLVI 364-367: Ἰλλυρίην δ' ἐπὶ γαῖαν ἐς Ἑσπερίου στόμα πόντου Ἀρμονίην λιπόπατριν ὁμόστολον ἤλικι Κάδμῳ ἀμφοτέρους πόμπευεν ἀλήμονας, οἷς χρόνος ἔρπων ὤπασε πετρήεσαν ἔχειν ὀφιώδεα μορφήν; Ροσσι 1989, 118.

³¹ Ps.-Scyl. 25-26: Ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ Ἀρίωνος ποταμοῦ εἰς Βουθόην καὶ τὸ ἐμπόριον ὁ πλοῦς ἡμέρας ἡμισυ. Καὶ Κάδμου καὶ Ἀρμονίας οἱ λίθοι εἰσὶν ἐνταῦθα καὶ ἱερόν, ἄπωθεν τοῦ Ἀρίωνος ποταμοῦ. Ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ Ἀρίωνος ποταμοῦ Ἰλλυριῶν ἔθνος εἰσὶν οἱ Ἐγγελεῖς, ἐχόμενοι τοῦ Ῥιζοῦντος. Ἐκ Βουθόης δὲ εἰς Ἐπίδαμνον, πόλιν Ἑλληνίδα, πλοῦς ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς, ὁδὸς δὲ τριῶν ἡμερῶν.

of the Sidonian Kadmos in the area of the rivers Drilon and Naron³². Finally, the Hellenistic historian Philarchus, preserved in Athenaeus, locates a μνημεῖον of Kadmos and Harmonia near a place named Κύλικες that was once famous³³, but was no longer recognizable. These all would be indications of an ‘indigenisation’ of the myth, which would have become true local cult, according to Benedetta Rossignoli³⁴.

In this way, we can identify three different geographical areas that involve the mythical stories.

The first one is on the Adriatic coast and concerns Buthoe³⁵, founded by Kadmos, and Rhizon, which is at the same time the name of his son, of the city and of the river. It is here that the ps.-Scylax places the ‘stones’ of Kadmos and Harmonia, as well as their sanctuary; here too it seems possible to place the stone snakes reported by Nonnos. Here Apollonius of Rhodes and Dionysius Periegetes place the tombs of the heroic couple. Thus, the ‘deep and dense river of Illyria’ of Apollonius must be the Rhizon gulf, rather than the Drilon River, as has also been proposed.

A second field of action is inland, in the region of the Lychnidos Lake, today at the border between Albania and Macedonia: the Drilon rises here and it was in this place that Kadmos became the military and political guide of the Encheleans, an indigenous people. According to Strabo, this was also the territory ruled by the descendants of Kadmos³⁶.

Callimachus of Cyrene (4th-3rd centuries BC), as quoted by Strabo, represents a discordant voice: he places the tomb-stone of blonde Harmonia not far from the colony called

³² Nic. *Ther.* 607-609: ἶρῖν θ', ἦν ἔθρεψε Δρίλων καὶ Νάρονος ὄχθαι, / Σιδονίου Κάδμοιο θεμεῖλιον Ἀρμονίης τε / ἐνθα δὺν δασπλήτε νομὸν στειβουσι δράκοντε. Cf. Schol. in Nic. *Ther.* 607 and 611: Ἰλλυρικὴν ἶρῖν. Δρίλων γὰρ ποταμὸς Ἰλλυρίδος καὶ Νάρων, ὃς διαχωρίζει Ἰλλυριοὺς καὶ Λιβύρνους. ἐνταῦθα καὶ ὁ Κάδμος καὶ ἡ Ἀρμονία ἔκησαν, οἱ καὶ εἰς ὄφεις μετεβλήθησαν, ὡς φησι καὶ Διονύσιος: “κεῖθι γὰρ εἰς ὀφίων σκολιὸν γένος ἠλλάξαντο”. ... οἱ δύο, ὁ Κάδμος καὶ ἡ Ἀρμονία, δράκοντες δασπλήτες γενόμενοι τὸν νομὸν στειβουσι, τουτέστι τὸν πρὸς νομὴν ἐπιτήδειον τόπον πατοῦσιν.

³³ Phyl. fr. 39 Jacoby, ap. Ath. *Deipn.* XI 6: πολλοῖς δὲ καὶ ὁ ἐν Ἰλλυριοῖς τόπος διαβόητός ἐστιν ὁ καλούμενος Κύλικες, παρ' ᾧ ἐστὶ τὸ Κάδμου καὶ Ἀρμονίας μνημεῖον, ὡς ἰστορεῖ Φύλαρχος ἐν τῇ δευτέρᾳ καὶ εἰκοστῇ τῶν Ἱστοριῶν.

³⁴ ROSSIGNOLI 2004, 116. I will skip here other hypotheses. For example, the suggestion that the location of the mythical events was employed in military and diplomatic issues in the interests of Syracusan propaganda, which exploited the tradition of Kadmos's Illyrian progeny to justify an aggressive policy of conquest by Dionysius the Great (ROSSIGNOLI 2004, 118); or the ‘paideia’ of the snake raising the son of the heroic couple among his coils (see below) as a reflection of the historical image of Philip II of Macedonia (ROSSIGNOLI 2004, 121). On the controversial identification of Kadmos on belt (military?) plaques found in various archaeological contexts in ancient Illyria, see PROEVA 2011. Discussion on the ophidian figures in Illyrian contexts may be seen in CASTIGLIONI 2006.

³⁵ See VIAN 1963, 126. But Buthoe (Budva) is actually outside the Bay of Kotor.

³⁶ Cf. Strabo, VII 7, 8, cit. See VIAN 1963, 127; ANTONELLI 1994 and 2000, 74; CABANES 2018.

Πόλαι, and thus provides a third zone of involvement, apparently in the Istrian peninsula³⁷. A recent suggestion equates this colony with modern Pola or Pula, situated at the southern tip of the Istrian peninsula³⁸. However, one can also suspect that Callimachus sacrificed geographical accuracy to his taste for erudite details. In fact, another proposal identifies the ancient settlement with the modern Pulaj, in Albania, near the river Buen/Bojana, at the border with Montenegro. That fits better with the testimonies of Philarchus and other writers, who place the site of the heroic graves in the area between Rhizon and Drilon³⁹.

The studies to which I am referring allow us to reconstitute the genesis of the Illyrian epilogue of Kadmos's myth during the 5th century BC, and to connect its localisation in the Illyrian-Epirotic area with the Corinthian presence in the region⁴⁰.

The oldest mention of Kadmos's exile from Thebes and his snake metamorphosis is in Euripides' *Bacchae*, as mentioned before, but without any allusion to the Illyrian region. What we have in this tragedy, however, corresponds to what Herodotus writes⁴¹, announcing the defeat of the people who dared to attack the Delphic sanctuary, with explicit reference to the Illyrians and Encheleans. In the 6th century BC, Hecataeus already knew of this people⁴², and the ps.-Scylax (probably 4th century BC) mentioned a tomb of the heroic couple as in the territory of the Encheleans. The version introduced or tapped into by Euripides was the basis of a further enrichment of the tradition that made Kadmos an exiled hero⁴³. In the 3rd century BC the metamorphosis of the couple into the *Dracones Illyriae*⁴⁴ became well known.

Whilst it is true that a large part of the ancient reports is later rather than earlier in date, yet this does not necessarily mean that the stories themselves are recent developments. Glossaries of Late Antiquity and of Byzantine times may indeed give evidence for the growth of a tradition, written as they often were from a particular ethnographic angle

³⁷ Callim. *Aet. fr.* 11 Pfeiffer, *apud* Strabo I 2, 39: ... και ὁ Καλλιμάχος ἐπισημαίνεται, τότε μὲν “Αἰγλήτην Ἀνάφην τε Λακωνίδι γείτονα Θήρην” λέγων “ἄρχμενος, ὡς ἦρωες ἀπ’ Αἰήταο Κυτταίου αὐτὶς “ἐς ἀρχαίην ἐπλεον Αἰμονίην,” τότε δὲ περὶ τῶν Κόλχων “οἱ μὲν ἐπ’ Ἰλλυριοῖο πόρου σχάσαντες ἐρετμὰ “λᾶα πάρα ξανθῆς Ἀρμονίης τάφιον ἄστυρον ἐκτίσσαν “το, τό κεν φυγάδων τις ἐνίσποι Γραικός, ἀτὰρ κείνων “γλῶσσ’ ὀνόμηνε Πόλας”.

³⁸ See ROSSIGNOLI 2004, 110-111.

³⁹ See CASTIGLIONI 2011, 727-728, and 2012, 208.

⁴⁰ See VIAN 1963, 132 s.

⁴¹ On the mentions of Illyrians in Herodotus (cf. Hdt. IV 49, VIII 137, and IX 43.) and others classical authors, see DŽINO 2014.

⁴² Although the sources date back to a century later, see DŽINO 2014.

⁴³ See CASTIGLIONI 2009, 103.

⁴⁴ For a possible connection with the hats and belts of Celtic warriors in the shape of a dragon rampant in the Balkans, see ROSSIGNOLI 2004, note 2.

or with an encyclopaedic objective in mind, which prejudice may involve the elaboration of original etymologies from existing place names. However, they also drew a lot of information from previous and earlier Classical authors, which would otherwise have been lost⁴⁵. Therefore, the contribution of mythical data in the Greek perception of the Balkan region may be placed in a historical perspective, or a series of the same⁴⁶. We can also recognise their input in the construction of the 'Illyrian brand' in the Greek ethnographic discourse: on one side, as a kind of *finis terrae*, where the shores of the Afterworld began, and, on the other, as a wild territory made viable and liveable in, 'thanks' to those Greek heroes who, in the distant past, had visited and primed it⁴⁷.

Maria Paola Castiglioni has well summed up the outcomes of her historical investigation and of the most recent studies: 'After a careful textual analysis supported by the available archaeological material, we can conclude that the complexity of this myth is, in short, the result of disparate development and the overlapping of unrelated themes. Each stage of the process springs from a specific historical context where the myth serves different purposes. At the end of this longue course, Kadmos appears as the trans-Balkan hero par excellence, the pioneer of the Greek presence in Illyria. Besides, he was so successful that he was even adopted as heroic ancestor by the Illyrian elite. In this sense, the Kadmos myth is an excellent example of the acculturative alchemy that arose from the contact between Greeks and Barbarians'⁴⁸.

Thus were confirmed the criticisms that Ruth Edwards directed at interpretative theories that did good service in Pausanias's time⁴⁹, when Kadmos' Egyptian origins, rather than Phoenician, were being debated⁵⁰; or in the times of Philo of Byblos, who stated that divine and heroic events represented an echo, albeit distorted, of ancient and real facts⁵¹.

⁴⁵ See BRELICH 1977.

⁴⁶ The study of the Greek myths set in southern Illyria, in particular by Maria Paola Castiglioni (CASTIGLIONI 2006; 2009; 2011; 2012; 2014), through repeated analyses of the various episodes here localised, has allowed the evaluation of the contribution of such stories in the perception that the Greeks had of the region of Epirus, a very pivotal area, as well as of the phenomenon of indigenous acculturation. On these questions, VIAN 1963, 128 ff. has extensively written, although he tried to show (p. 132) that the Illyrian end-game of the Kadmos story was not a work of the imagination of the mythographers, but based on a historical substratum.

⁴⁷ On the definition of Illyrians and on the perception of indigenous population of the Illyrian land, see DŽINO 2014.

⁴⁸ CASTIGLIONI 2010, 197-198. Translation of the author.

⁴⁹ Paus. IX 12, 2: τοῖς οὖν νομίζουσιν ἐς γῆν ἀφικέσθαι Κάδμον τὴν Θηβαΐδα Αἰγύπτιον καὶ οὐ Φοίνικα ὄντα, ἔστιν ἐναντίον τῷ λόγῳ τῆς Αἰθηνᾶς ταύτης τὸ ὄνομα, ὅτι Ὅγγα κατὰ γλῶσσαν τὴν Φοινίκων καλεῖται καὶ οὐ Σάις κατὰ τὴν Αἰγυπτίων φωνήν.

⁵⁰ See EDWARDS 1979, 57, 113.

⁵¹ On Philo's Euhemerism, see TROIANI 1974. On Euhemerism in Antiquity, see now ROUBEKAS 2017.

These though are now obsolete scenarios, although they still gave rise to some debate in the first half of the last century, when an identification of the Illyrian territory with the mythic 'Phoenicia' was being claimed. An ancient Illyrian migration into Boeotia or a movement of Pelasgian tribes from the Adriatic Sea to Thebes were both also being proposed, as if Φοίνικες originally was equivalent to Πελασγοί⁵².

The modern study of myths has likewise demonstrated that searching for the archaeological traces of those heroic events, using the stories as a literal guide for the reconstruction of historical facts, is an invalid method of approaching the tales. The mythical dimension, if in itself perceived once as a foundation in the time-stream of reality, yet simultaneously belongs to an outdated, sacred, and imaginary 'past' – one accepted as not comparable and equivalent to the contemporary chronological sequence of human events.

The function of all myths, in general, is rather to establish and put on a firm footing the 'present', reconstructing how, in a primordial and different time, unique events occurred that established the present order of things. The historical background, on which the myths are based, therefore, is that of the time when they were fashioned and told, not the one in which the events would 'actually' have taken place⁵³.

This 'diverse', mythical world, was still visible and tangible for instance in the ruins of the earlier Mycenaean civilisation (which the Greeks identified as 'tombs' or 'relics of the ancient heroes')⁵⁴. Its role now was to epitomise a whole human society, one which exploits and adapts the Kadmos saga, using this hero from Phoenicia to legitimise itself as the sacred couple's heirs in Boeotia and Illyria.

This admixture of different strata of interpretations is in keeping with some aspects explained by the most recent thinking on comparative mythology.

Kadmos, undoubtedly, belongs to the category of those heroic travellers who discover an 'unknown territory', and go on to colonise regions, establish communication routes, and so acquire the opportunity (or the right in some eyes) to breach those same alien universes, introducing and hybridising customs and traditions. Kadmos, in fact, is a 'civilising' hero who introduced original and diverse elements of culture into Greece. At the same time, he is a hero of foreign origin⁵⁵, such as Danaos and Pelops, who was actively involved in the

⁵² See VIAN 1963, 132; EDWARDS 1979, 87-113, and CASTIGLIONI 2010.

⁵³ See BRELICH 1970. In my opinion, it seems pointless to look in these tales for traces of historical movements of peoples from east to west, while it is much more productive to investigate the ideological motivations that drove people to narrate certain events, supposing them as having occurred in a time before the present.

⁵⁴ See MALKIN 1987.

⁵⁵ See MILLER 2005. Cf. Schol. in Isocr. *Vita-Hypoth.* I 141: ὁ Σιδώνιος Κάδμος βάρβαρος ὢν (ἢ γὰρ Σιδῶν καὶ αὐτὴ ὑπὸ τοῦς Πέρσας ἦν).

elaborate process of Hellenisation of the regions he visited. Kadmos is also a founding hero who, starting from the fantastic Phoenician East, ended his days in the equally fantastic Illyrian West.

In his homeland, in Phoenicia, he does nothing. But, both in Greece and in Illyria he operates as a founder and cultural hero. Starting from Tyre, with his brothers Kylix and Phoenix, looking for their sister Europe kidnapped by Zeus, the Phoenician prince explores new routes and introduces writing into Greece. In a strange land, Kadmos establishes new cults (Demeter Thesmophoros, Athena Onka, Aphrodite), erects altars, opens stone quarries, discovers mines of gold and copper, and comprehends the processes of metallurgy⁵⁶. He makes the land 'cultivable' (from Demeter, Kadmos received an ear of wheat, as a wedding gift) and habitable (by killing the primordial dragon). The establishment of many new settlements was attributed to him on Rhodes, Thera, Samothrace, and Thrace⁵⁷. In Greece, he founded Thebes, the 'Kadmean citadel', and married Harmonia, the personification of Order⁵⁸. Finally, he manages to pacify the territory of the Encheleans, and, with his children, 'creates' the Illyrian historical landscape⁵⁹.

The contrast with the origin of Kadmos in Phoenicia, his time in Greece and finally in Illyria, is particularly striking. Kadmos does not have a place in any local tradition in Tyre or Sidon; his presence on the imperial coins only testifies to the efforts of a Hellenised administration to exploit the resources of the traditional mythology⁶⁰. In Thebes, he is bearer of cultural achievements that changed the physiognomy of the region and the customs of the inhabitants, the natural sphere, the fertility and prosperity of the soil, as well as instituting the right practice of marriage.

In Illyria, he shapes and 'humanises'⁶¹ the territory, with the introduction of the City and the attribution of the names of his children to the natural elements, to the cities of the urbanised landscape, and to the people who descend from him through his successors.

His cultural role in Illyria, at the same time, is another example of the Greek model of the mythical appropriation of the increasingly known and frequented Adriatic coast, through journeys made by heroes, such as Diomedes in Apulia/Daunia and Antenor in Venetia and Patavium⁶²: territories where the ancient and mythical traces (objects and monuments) of their passage remained for a long time visible.

⁵⁶ Quarries: Plin. *N.H.* VII 195; gold mines: Plin. *N.H.* VII 197; copper mines: Hyg. *Fab.* 274. For the mines in Thracia, see EDWARDS 1979, 32, and CASTIGLIONI 2012.

⁵⁷ See EDWARDS 1979, 29 ss.

⁵⁸ See ROCCHI 1989.

⁵⁹ Also Eust. *in Dion. Per.* 389 cit. claims that Illyrians are descendants of Illyrios.

⁶⁰ See VIAN 1963, 133; BONNET 2015 *passim*.

⁶¹ See CASTIGLIONI 2009, 99.

⁶² See BRILLANTE 2001, 278-279, and ŠAŠEL KOS 2004, 496-497.

If the Greeks could use the Kadmean saga in the West to identify the passage of remote heroic wanderings, in order to justify their colonising movements, the indigenous peoples, on the other hand, after gaining the knowledge and conscience of those same myths, could glorify their origins by referencing that illustrious and civilising ancestor.

Together with many other 'borderline' heroes, however, Kadmos remains on an intermediate plane, marked by belonging to an archaic era, maybe even the more so with the appearance on the scene of Dionysos, son of Kadmos's daughter, Semele, and Zeus. In my opinion, his 'exile' among the Barbarians of Illyria should be so viewed, as also for his descendants the Kadmeans driven out of Thebes in their time⁶³, and where then reigned Illyrios and his descendants. This cultural hero and his Theban descendants belong to a heroic season that is over: their exile marks their passing from the flow of 'current time' and their metamorphosis into snakes contributes to the 'founding' role of Kadmos, giving him even an apotropaic function⁶⁴. For Kadmos, the Adriatic region appears as a liminal space, one step from the Afterworld: here the Phoenician hero can (and has to) leave his human condition behind and / or progress to the non-human or superhuman world.

In a land organised and urbanised under the name and power of their descendants, in an Illyrian country structured by his son Illyrios (to whom other myths gave the paternity of various tribes), there is no place left for Kadmos and Harmonia, despite their special relationship with the gods and their superior civilising roles among the rural inhabitants. The snake metamorphosis⁶⁵, already announced by Euripides⁶⁶, has come to represent in Ovid's 'Metamorphoses' (1st century BC-1st century AD) the last act, the loss of the human/heroic condition. 'Oppressed by misfortunes and years'⁶⁷, Kadmos and Harmonia just have to accept the change, holding each other, while the tongue's skill is stilled, language falters and words vanish: 'Suddenly they were two snakes there, with intertwining coils, until they sought the shelter of the neighbouring woods'.

⁶³ Cf. Hdt. V 61, cit.

⁶⁴ The dragon killer (in Thebes) turns into a dragon (in Illyria). See CASTIGLIONI 2009, 103, and 2010.

⁶⁵ For the translation in the Elysian Fields, see ROCCHI 1989, 118, 134; CASTIGLIONI 2006. On this metamorphosis cf. also Luc. *Phars*, III 189-190: *Encheliae versi testantes funera Cadmi, / Colchis et Adriacas spumans Absyrtos in undas* (see VENINI 1967), and Lact. *Plac. in Stat. Theb.* III 290: *Illyricas ubi Cadmus fugiens infortunia Thebarum, existimans se loco etiam mutare fortunam, cum Harmonia coniuge versi sunt in dracones in Illyrico. Ut Lucanus 'Encheliae versi testantes funera Cadmi'.*

⁶⁶ Eur. *Ba.* 1330-1339, cit. On this metamorphosis cf. also the 'explanations' provided by Eust. in *Dion. Per.* 391.

⁶⁷ Ov. *Met.* IV 569: *malis annisque graves*; 600-601: *et subito duo sunt iunctoque volumine serpunt / donec in adpositi nemonis subiere latebras*. See VIDEAU 1998.

Since then, says Ovid, snakes in Illyria are harmless⁶⁸: ‘they do not avoid human beings or wound them; quiet serpents, remembering what they once were’⁶⁹.

The hero who killed the dragon in the primeval Boeotian territory finally took the form of a snake, as did his wife, in a fabulous Balkan region. According to a Commentary on Vergil’s *Aeneid*, when Kadmos left Thebes and passed through the territory of Macedonia, he left a young son, born to him by his wife Harmonia by the Illyrian River. ‘A serpent twined around this son and, until he had grown up, nursed him in the embrace of its body and filled him with the power to subdue this entire country. It named him Illyrius, after itself’⁷⁰.



Fig. 1 Map of Illyria (after ŠAŠEL KOS 2004, 495).

⁶⁸ On the docility of the Epirotic serpents in the Apollonian divinatory context, see DUMONT 1987.

⁶⁹ *Ov. Met.* IV 602-603: *Nunc quoque nec fugiunt hominem nec vulnere laedunt, quidque prius fuerint, placidi meminere dracones.* But cf. *Stat. Theb.* III 290, where Harmonia strips and spits poison on the Illyrian grass.

⁷⁰ Cf. *Interpr. Vat. Verg. Aen.* I 243: *Cadmus, Agenoris filius, relictis Thebis comite Harmonia coniuge fortunae iniurias sustinens fines Macedoniae supergressus parvulum filium, qui iuxta Illyricum fluvium ab Harmonia editus fuerat, dereliquit. Hunc serpens spiris suis innexuit et, donec ad adultos veniret annos, amplexu corporis fovit imbutque viribus, quibus omnem illam regionem sibi subdidit. Hic ex vocabulo (suo) Illyrium denominavit.* See ROSSIGNOLI 2004, 106 ss.; ANTONELLI 1994, 19; ŠAŠEL KOS 2004, 501.

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