EUROPEAN IDENTITY
LEARNING FROM THE PAST?

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1. EUROPEAN IDENTITY: A VIEW FROM THE FUTURE

I quote from an electronic newspaper of the year 4264 of the common era:[1]

Sensational Discovery!

Researchers succeed in deciphering an old script: has English always been spoken in our country?

As was reported by scientists during yesterday's session of the Academy of Objective Truth, a group of researchers succeeded in deciphering those famous documents that were unearthed during the construction of a wind power station 7,892,640 minutes ago. Their reading and interpretation has revolutionised our knowledge concerning ancient times in our country. The new insights relate to a variety of aspects of life in our region more than a billion minutes ago – such as nutrition, education, literature, religion, and fashion.

For the information of our readers, we recall the circumstances of this sensational discovery, which has radically changed our traditional perception of the culture of those times as an illiterate one, in which communication was entirely based on images. Millions of round discs have been hitherto discovered, bearing on them the still undeciphered symbols 'CD'. These symbols also appear on elaborate works of art generally interpreted as household altars (fig. 1).

Fig. 1. Cultic object of unknown significance (household altar?).

Many researchers regard them as magical signs. They explain them as linear representations of the crescent moon and the human head, reduced to their essential

elements (fig. 2). And then the great discovery came... Hundreds of lumps of an unknown substance, burned under unclear circumstances and later almost petrified and preserved, turned out to be written documents! Chemical analysis has shown that the substance in question was an organic material, which in those times was designated as 'paper' and – although this may seem absolutely incredible considering the primitive conditions of those times – was somehow harvested from trees. Some scientists have even formulated the hypothesis that in those times there existed larger groups of trees outside exhibition halls (!), which were called 'forests'. However, this is such a preposterous speculation that the government is considering the legal prohibition of similar unfounded theories.

Fig. 2. According to a theory, the symbols 'CD' are hieroglyphic signs representing the moon and a human head.

After numerous experiments and unsuccessful attempts, which unfortunately resulted in the complete destruction of many so-called 'books', our researchers finally succeeded in separating individual sheets (*folios*) from these lumps and to read on them many signs of writing – something that looks like a forerunner of our script. The key for the decipherment was given by the numerical signs, which are absolutely identical with ours. This observation encouraged our scientists to develop the working hypothesis that the signs that look like script may in fact be letters with a similar phonetic value as the letters of our alphabet.

Despite the very fragmentary preservation of most of the texts, thorough studies have come to the conclusion that the language spoken in our country in those ancient times was already a form of English. The finding place of these documents was identified, thanks to a signboard, as an establishment designated as 'International Press'. Presumably it served as a sort of archive of a settlement known under the name of He-i-del-berg – in the light of many parallels, probably to be pronounced as Hey del Berg (cf. Cerro de Pasco, Viña del Mar, Ojos del Salado). Unfortunately, not all documents could be deciphered. In particular a document with the heading *Die Zeit* seems to be entirely incomprehensible – perhaps it represents the attempts of a foreigner to learn the local script. According to the plausible and conclusive arguments of the research team, under the direction of Professor Nuntius Cydoniensis, all documents (so-called 'newspapers', 'journals', and 'books') originate in a very short period of time, perhaps a single year. It is still a matter of controversy whether the numeral 2002 refers to minutes, as in our system of time reckoning, or days – perhaps even years.

I skip now a larger part of the report and come to a section, which is quite significant for this article:

New insights concerning the legendary country 'Europe'

Without getting into the details of a very complex argument, we report here on the new insights concerning the legendary country *Europe*, which occupies such a prominent position in our mythology. It can now be regarded as certain that a country called 'Europe' existed and that it had an advanced and uniform political structure.

Following the most modern theoretical models, political scientists apply certain parameters in order to determine whether a community fulfils the necessary criteria to be characterised as a 'state' or a 'nation': citizenship, coinage, language, religion, culture, national identity. Now, this aforementioned 'Europe' seems to meet all these criteria. The population of the state called 'Europe' probably constituted a single nation with a single citizenship. The latter can be inferred from the designation of its population as 'the Europeans', a term that was certainly used in order to distinguish this citizen-body from other important citizen-bodies of those times, such as, for instance, 'the Americans', 'the Arabs', or 'the Muslims'. Europe had a single coinage, the so-called 'Euro', and this provides the researchers with a very reliable criterion which enables them to determine which regions were provinces of the state of 'Europe'.

It is of the greatest significance to observe that the 'Europeans' were a nation that shared the same culture. Expressions such as 'European music', 'European art', 'European cinema', 'European history', 'European studies', 'European fashion' and many others leave no doubt that this nation possessed the most important features of a single national identity, especially a homogeneous culture (music, art, garments), a common historical consciousness, and certainly also the same religion. Religious festivals such as New Year, Xmas – probably a pre-European ritual of obscure origins, the name of which is obviously connected with two other very important but puzzling cultural institutions called 'X-Files' and 'X-Factor' –, Easter, and 'Winter Sale' were celebrated at the same time all over Europe – but also in adjacent countries. On the coins of 'Europe' were represented the images of the common national heroes (or perhaps gods and goddesses?) of the 'Europeans' (fig. 3).

Fig. 3. European gods, heroes and a goddess on European coins.
European religion seems to have been primarily masculine.

The most significant expression of the national identity of the 'Europeans' was a great spring festival designated as 'Eurovision Song Contest'. Experts in hymnody, who represented the numerous 'European' provinces, competed in chanting, thus calling forth visions among the worshippers – a mystical experience, which remains very enigmatic. Combining various criteria (language, coinage, 'Eurovisionality', religious practices), our scientists have established that the following areas belonged to the state of 'Europe', at least in certain historical periods (we retain the spelling which is found in the sources): *Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Holland, Italy, Luxemburg, Montenegro, Netherlands, Österreich, Portugal, San Marino, Slovenia, Spain,* and *Turkey. Vatican*'s position remains enigmatic, because although it certainly used the 'European' coin, it is not known to have participated in the 'Eurovision Song Contest', possibly because its population adhered to a different (minority) religion.

The fact that 'Europe' was surrounded by many enemies certainly contributed to a strong national identity and a feeling of togetherness. The enemies of the 'Europeans' included various nations, such as the 'Arabs', the 'Muslims', and – certainly

Europe's greatest enemy – the 'United Kingdom'. The latter name was constructed in conscious opposition to the name 'European Union' in order to express, as clearly as possible, the different constitutional and political structures of these two countries. Two nations, which cannot easily be located in specific geographical areas, bear the puzzling names 'Refugees' and 'Asylum Seekers'. Armies of these two nations succeeded in invading Europe. The most vulnerable victims of this great invasion were four provinces called 'Deutschland', 'Germany', 'Italy', and 'Spain'.

The greatest allies of the 'Europeans' in those hard times were two nations in the west: a country called 'America' and another country called 'Usa'. Both states were somehow related to 'Europe' because their populations seem to have spoken similar dialects. We may assume that the English language – and, more generally, culture – were brought to Europe by colonists or immigrants from these states of America and Usa. This process of civilisation was designated as 'Americanisation' and was met by parts of the European indigenous population with suspicion. The first stop of these American and *Usean colonists must have been a province called 'Greece', which, unfortunately, cannot be located. Our sources occasionally refer to it as 'the cradle of European culture', probably precisely because the colonists and culture missionaries first became established in this province. There is, however, a problem. As our researchers inferred from the theories of the ancient archaeologist Manfred Korfmann, who studied an object called 'Troy', a region called 'Turkey' also claimed to be the cradle of European culture. This apparent contradiction can easily and plausibly be solved, if one accepts that 'Greece' and 'Turkey' were only two different names for the same country. The 'Turks', who were to be found in almost every European province, must have been the 'Ur-Europeans', the original Europeans, who laid the foundations of European culture. (...)

Of course, some puzzles still remain to be solved. For instance, it is still unclear whether there existed another country called 'Brussels' – another enemy of 'Europe'? Its existence is being inferred by some scientists from formulations such as 'the bureaucracy of Brussels' or 'the policy of Brussels', etc. References to a Brusselian nationality or citizenship are, however, still lacking. (...)

It is not difficult to pick up formulations that appear in newspapers, take them out of context, make a melange, and lead them *ad absurdum*. I am afraid that ancient historians unknowingly do this all the time, when they study their sources. For someone who is suddenly confronted with the present situation in Europe, without any knowledge of historical developments – for instance for an alien – to understand and define the term *Europe* is not easy, and even most European statesmen have some difficulties, especially when it comes to the enlargement of the European Union. And if our imaginary observer were to ask the question what European identity is, he might discover that he was chasing a ghost. The problems begin with the attribute 'European'. Despite the fact that Europe, as a region, can be somehow defined according to strict geographical criteria, the colloquial use of the word 'Europe' can vary from language to language. For the Greek, the Englishman, or the Irishman a 'journey to Europe' means leaving the native country, and this implies that subconsciously the average citizen of these countries does not regard Greece and Ireland as being part of Europe. Of course, this does not prevent either Greece or Ireland from using the Euro as their currency or from

dispatching their singers to the annual *Eurovision Song Contest* – together with Turkey and Israel. We occasionally use the term 'European culture', without giving any thought to the fact that – to the best of our knowledge – there has never been a moment in history that the entire population of Europe spoke the same language or shared the same religion. Not even in the period of the greatest expansion of the Imperium Romanum did the entire population of Europe live within the borders of the same state. A single legal system has never been applied to all European countries. And today, despite the vivid discussion concerning European identity and the future of Europe, we hardly address the question of what significance 'European identity' has for the third-generation Turk in Germany, for London's Indian inhabitant, or for the Muslim who was born in France. In order to realise the complexity of such problems of definition, we need some distance; we need a remote perspective, which can be provided by the historical sciences.

2. A PERSPECTIVE FROM THE PAST

Having played with a fictitious perspective from the future, I shall now present a perspective from the past. The question of what an identity is and how an identity is constructed has not been asked for the first time by privileged modern Europeans. Modern research in Ancient History and the Classics has recognised both the complexity and the significance of the subject of 'identity' in the political, social, and cultural thought of the Greeks and Romans.[2]

The first attempt to define the collective 'identity' of the Greeks was undertaken by Herodotus (9.144.2), who stressed a common origin (*homaimon*; 'sharing the same blood'), but did not neglect the importance of cultural features: language (*homoglosson*), religion, and customs. Herodotus' definition has created a school, since modern research on identity in the Greek world and in the Roman East still stresses the importance of factors such as memory, religion, and education. The study of construction and expression of identity in classical antiquity has a paradigmatic value: the sources allow us to identify this phenomenon in a primarily urban, very competitive multi-state context, comparable to that of the modern world, as well as in multicultural environments such as those of the Greek colonies, the Hellenistic world, and the Imperium Romanum.[3] Studies of identity

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[2]   It is not possible to present here more than a small selection of recent studies on aspects of identity: General approaches: Minamikawa (ed.) 2004; Duncan 2006. Hellenic Identity: Too 1995; Hall 1997 and 2002 (cf. the remarks of Mitchell 2005); Mitchell 2007. Elite identity: Stephan 2002. Athens: Boegehold and Scafaro (eds.) 1994. Other Greek cities and regions: Messene: Figueira 1999; Siapkas 2003; Luraghi 2006 and 2008; Phokis: McInerney 1999, 8-39; Achaeans: Greco (ed.) 2002; Greek cities in Roman Asia Minor: Rogers 1991; Scheer 1993; Lindner 1994; Klose 1996; Stephan 2002; Maupai 2003; Yildirim 2004. Republican Rome: Gruen 1992; Farney 2007. Jewish identity: Cohen 1999; Barclay 2002; Johnson 2004; Capponi 2007. Late Antiquity: Miles 1999; Machado 2006; Swift 2006; see also note 4.

[3]   Greek colonies: e.g. Greco (ed.) 2002; Lomas (ed.) 2004; Hodos 2006. Hellenistic period: e.g. Couvenhes and Legras (eds.) 2006. Roman Empire: e.g. Scheer 1993; Lindner 1994; Millar 1998; Laurence and Berry (eds.) 1998; Veyne 1999; Huskinson (ed.) 2000; Goldhill (ed.)

in ancient history have stressed the multiplicity of identities – ethnic, regional, civic, social, cultural, religious, gender – and noted the role played by a variety of factors, ranging from language, memory, and religion, to personal names, citizenship, athletics, office holding, coinage, dress, and food.[4]

In this article, I present two case studies that reveal the dynamic character of identity. An overview of identities in the island of Crete in the Classical and Hellenistic period exemplifies the existence of overlapping identities. In the case of Aphrodisias in Karia we may observe continual changes of identity as a response to changing political and cultural constellations.

3. OVERLAPPING IDENTITIES IN ANCIENT CRETE

A survey of the manner in which identities were constructed in Crete allows us to recognise an important aspect of this phenomenon: the parallel existence and overlapping of identities.[5]

The elementary and more clearly visible identity of a member of an ancient community was his civic identity, for instance the identity of a man as a citizen of Knossos. This identity could co-exist with other identities defined through a variety of criteria. It could co-exist, for example, with the regional identity of a 'Cretan' and with the social identity of an aristocrat, a participant in a 'men's house' (*andreion*), and a member of an age-class.[6] Which identity emerged and became visible, concealing other latent forms of self-definition, usually depended on specific conditions. Identities often emerged as a result of a more or less violent conflict with another group. Let us take the case of a man from the Cretan city of Lyttos. The 'Lyttian' was primarily a citizen of Lyttos; the citizenship distinguished him from those who lacked it: foreigners (*xenoi*), citizens of foreign *poleis* (*alliopolitai*), and the unfree. This particular identity was revealed whenever he came into contact with the 'others': with citizens of other Cretan *poleis*, with other Greeks, and with non-Greeks. He did not use the ethnic name *Lyttios* as part of his

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4   2001; Ostenfeld (ed.) 2002; Jones 2004; Yildirim 2004; Howgego, Heuchert, and Burnett (eds.) 2005; Bell and Hansen (eds.) 2008.

4   Multiple identities: e.g. Jones 2004; Williamson 2005; Mitchell 2007, 2. Language: Munson 2005; cf. (for modern Greece) Mackridge 2009. Memory: Rogers 1991; Scheer 1993; Lindner 1994; Barkan and Bush (eds.) 2002; Yildirim 2004; Price 2005; Machado 2006; Smith et al. 2006; Diefenbach 2007. Religion: Robertson 2002; Luraghi 2006. Religious identity in Late Antiquity: Piepenbrink 2005; Frakes (ed.) 2006; Diefenbach 2007; Sandwell 2007; Zacharia (ed.) 2008. Culture: Gruen 1992; Millar 1998; Goldhill (ed.) 2001. Citizenship: Sagan 1995. Athletics: van Nijf 1999; Newby 2005. Office holding: Sivonen 2006. Coinage: Howgego, Heuchert, and Burnett (eds.) 2005. Dress: Edmondson 2008; Koortbojian 2008.

5   For an earlier version of this section see Chaniotis 2006.

6   On Cretan *andreia* see Lavrencic 1988; Viviers 1994, 244-249; Chaniotis 2005a, 184 with note 40; Haggis et al. 2007. On the Cretan system of age-classes and transitory rituals see Leitao 1995; Gehrke 1997, 31-35; Vattuone 1998; Tzifopoulos 1998; Waldner 2000, 222-242; Chaniotis 2006b.

personal name in his city, as he did in his contacts with foreigners.[7] The basis of this civic, 'political' identity was a legal one: citizenship. A formulaic expression used in Cretan grants of citizenship explains an essential feature of citizenship: 'let him (them) participate in divine and human things.'[8] The new citizen was integrated into a community and not only with regard to 'secular' rights and duties; at the same time he became a member of a community of men sharing the same cults.

This 'civic' identity of a Lyttian was already being shaped during his childhood. As a child he attended the joint meals in the 'men's houses' and listened to narratives of the deeds of the ancestors and the older citizens.[9] In this way he was also introduced to the values (and gender roles) accepted by his community. During festivals he competed with his peers in dancing, running, and the use of weapons.[10] The songs of the local poets taught him heroic legends; the hymns, oaths, and prayers made him familiar with the local gods.[11] Local cultural memory was shaped and ritually transmitted during commemorative anniversaries.[12] We know of two such anniversaries celebrated in late Hellenistic Lyttos. They were the anniversary of the city's re-foundation in the late third century BCE, after its destruction in c. 221 BCE during a war, and the anniversary of the destruction of Dreros, Lyttos' neighbour and enemy. The identity of the Lyttian was thus defined both in a positive way, through the memory of a new beginning after a crisis, and in an aggressive way, through commemoration of victory and conquest. In both cases, identity meant belief in the superiority of one's community over others.

The identity of a Lyttian was, therefore, the result of the combination of civic rights and cultural memory. The significance of the latter becomes clear, when we consider individuals who were not born Lyttians, but became Lyttians later in life. Up to what extent did the award of citizenship assimilate the former foreigner to a natural Lyttian? For example, did a man who was born as a citizen of Olous, acquired citizenship in Lyttos on the basis of a treaty,[13] left his mother-town and settled in Lyttos have the same identity and the same collective consciousness as a Lyttian? Were a legal act (naturalisation) and a religious ceremony (civic oath) sufficient to have him give up his earlier civic identity? Was he accepted without reservation as a member of the same community? The new Lyttian 'participated in

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[7] The ethnic *Lyttios* is used e.g. in the grave inscriptions of Lyttians outside Crete, in Demetrias (*IG* IX.2.365) and in Eretria (*IG* XII.9.812).

[8] *Metechein thinon kai anthropinon*; Chaniotis 1996, 101f.

[9] Athenaios IV 22, 143 a-d.

[10] Chaniotis 1996, 127f.; Gehrke 1997, 37f.; Tzifopoulos 1998; Ferruti 2004.

[11] Hymns: Furley and Bremer 2001, I 65-76, II 1-20. Lists of gods in oaths: Chaniotis 1996, 68-76; Brulé 2005, 159-163.

[12] On commemorative anniversaries, in general, see Chaniotis 1991. On the difference between collective and cultural memory see Chaniotis 2005b, 214-216. The commemorative anniversaries of Lyttos are mentioned in a fragment of a treaty of Lyttos with Olous (c. 110 BCE), which will be published by Charalmbos Kritzas.

[13] For such a treaty of *isopoliteia* between Lyttos and Olous see Chaniotis 1996, 352-358.

divine and human things', but did he also share Lyttian cultural memory? Did he learn the local dialect? Did he give his children the names of his ancestors or typical names of his new home? When he prayed and when he cursed, did he invoke Athena Polias, the patron of Lyttos, or Zeus Tallaios, that of Olous?

Civic identity is occasionally overlaid by other forms of consciousness and solidarity, especially by a social identity. We may recognise this in documents, which reveal an endemic fear of civil war and treason.[14] In ancient Crete several such social identities were at play, such as membership in a 'men's house', an age-class, and a social class. We do not have information about the shaping of identity in the 'men's houses', but the social identity of the upper class, which consisted almost exclusively of landowners and warriors,[15] is clearly expressed in the self-confident, indeed arrogant, song of Hybrias:[16]

> My great wealth are my spear, sword, and the fine shield, which guards my skin. With this I plough, with this I reap, with this I tread the sweet wine from the vine, with this I am called master of the serfs.
> Those who do not have the courage to hold a spear, a sword, and the fine shield which guards the skin, all of them fall to their knees and do obeisance and call me lord and great king.

In this text we recognise again the connection between identity and a belief of the superiority of the group to which an individual belongs.

How social identities threatened to undermine civic identity, especially in critical situations, became clear during the greatest war of Hellenistic Crete. The alliances of Gortyn and Knossos joined forces to attack the third major city, Lyttos ('the War of Lyttos', c. 221-218 BCE). However, during this war deep divisions within communities became apparent. Polybios reports (4.53.5-6):

> At first all the Cretans took part in the war against Lyttos, but jealousy having sprung up from some trifling cause, as is common with the Cretans, some separated from the rest ... Gortyn was in a state of civil war, the elder citizens (*presbytatoi*) taking the part of Knossos and the younger (*neoteroi*) that of Lyttos.

Contemporary inscriptions allude to civil wars and desertion in many other cities.[17] The cause of the strife is only stated in the case of Gortyn. Here, civic unity was undermined by new partisan age-based forms of identity. A similar conflict occurred in 70 BCE, when the 'older' Cretans supported a peace treaty with Rome, while the younger Cretans supported war.[18] The front, which the young men built against the 'elder citizens' in these situations, was not simply a manifestation of the universal anthropological opposition between restless youth and ma-

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[14]   e.g. *Inscriptiones Creticae* I.ix.1; II.iv.8.
[15]   On Cretan social organisation see Link 1994; Chaniotis 2005a (with further bibliography).
[16]   Athenaios XV 695 f = *Poetae Melici Graeci* 909 ed. Page; Bowra 1961 (on the date); cf. Tedeschi 1986; Bile 2002, 123f., prefers a date in the fourth century BCE.
[17]   *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* XLIX 1217; *Inscriptiones Creticae* I.ix.1.
[18]   Diodoros 40.1.1.

ture old men; it originated in the military training of the young men and had a socio-economic background.[19]

In Crete, the question of identity does not concern only single communities in isolation, but also groups of communities which defined separate regional identities. In east Crete, such a regional identity has been observed among a group of cities that claimed origin from the pre-Hellenic population of Crete: the *Eteocretans* ('the genuine Cretans').[20] This population wrote (and spoke) a pre-Hellenic language until the third century BCE, which distinguished it from the rest of Crete. Its separate identity was based on linguistic and ethnic differences and was clearly expressed through the name 'the genuine Cretans' and through artistic, cultural, and to some extent religious peculiarities.

The competitive nature of this regional identity can be seen not only in the name *Eteocretans* but also in a religious text: a hymn for Zeus from Palaikastro in east Crete.[21] It consists of five stanzas and a refrain, sung at the beginning and between the stanzas. The hymn was performed on the first day of the year by young men dancing around an altar. The hymn recalls the birth of Zeus on Crete and the protection offered to him by the mythical Cretan demons, the Kouretes, requesting then the god's epiphany and protection.

> ... I salute you, son of Kronos,
> almighty splendour, who stand
> as leader of the company of gods!
> Come to Dikta at this New Year's day
> and take delight in the music,
> which we weave for you with harps,
> adding the sound of oboes,
> which we sing having taken our stand
> around your well-walled altar.
> ... For here it was that with their shields
> the Kouretes received you, immortal babe
> out of Rhea's hands, and hid you
> by dancing all around you.
> ... Come on Lord! leap up for our wine-jars,
> and leap up for our fleecy sheep;
> leap up also for the harvest of corn,
> and for our houses that there be offspring.
> ... Leap up also for our cities,
> leap up also for our seafaring ships;
> leap up also for the young citizens,
> leap up also for the famous *themis*...
> (translated by W.D. Furley and J.M. Bremer)

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[19]   Chaniotis 2005b, 44-46.
[20]   Eteocretan language and inscriptions: Duhoux 1982. Eteocretan identity: Whitley 2006; but see also Sjögren 2006/07.
[21]   *Inscriptiones Creticae* III.ii.2; Furley and Bremer 2001, I 68-75, II 1-20.

By reminding the god of the protection Crete had offered him, the singers morally obliged the god to protect their cities. Although, at first sight, this request has the divinity as its addressee, in reality it presupposes the existence of competitors. The version of Zeus' birth referred to in this text stands in direct opposition to that of other contemporary texts. This hymn locates the nourishing of the divine child in east Crete: 'For *here* it was that with their shields the Kouretes received you.' The emphasis is placed on the word 'here', which means 'not in any other place'. In the same period in which young warriors of east Cretan cities were singing these verses, Callimachus, a poet in Alexandria, was contending that baby Zeus was not brought to the mountain of Dikta but to the mountain of Ida, not in east but in central Crete (*Hymn for Zeus*).[22] And in Asia Minor, in Halikarnassos, another poet was asking in the mid-second century BCE: 'What is so honourable about Halikarnassos? ... What is she proudly boasting of?'[23] And he gives the answer:

> She brought forth a grand crop of Earth-born men,
> assistants of mighty Zeus of the Height.
> It was they who first under a hollowed crest placed Zeus, newborn,
> the son of Rhea, so that he was hidden, and who fostered him
> in the innermost recesses of Earth, when Kronos crooked of counsel,
> was too late to place him far down in his throat.
> (translated by S. Isager)

The young dancers and singers of the hymn in eastern Crete stood in competition with those who asserted that Zeus' protectors were elsewhere: in central Crete or in Karia.

Another important form of regional identity – to a certain extent comparable with the process of European unification – was identity based on interstate agreements.[24] Two or more civic communities could construct a new identity on the basis of a treaty which resulted in their unification.[25] The cities in western Crete established such a federal state, to which they gave, quite programmatically, a name expressing a new identity: the *Oreioi*, 'those of the mountains', the 'Highlanders'.[26] This new identity was so strongly felt, at least by some citizens of this confederation, that the region covered by the cities of the Oreioi could be understood as a fatherland. 'My fatherland are the Oreioi' was written on the tombstone of a soldier from this area who was buried in Sparta in the early third century BCE.[27] This man (or those who set up the epitaph for him) stressed his new identity, which stood between the narrower identity of the citizen of a *polis* and the wider identities of the Cretan and the Greek. When will a Dutchman, a Finn, a

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22 Callimachus, *Hymn of Zeus* 42-54; on the geographical references in this passage see Chaniotis 1992, 75-79 and 88.

23 *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* XLVIII 1330. On this text see most recently Isager and Pedersen (eds.) 2004.

24 Cf. more generally (without reference to Crete), Buraselis and Zoumboulakis (eds.) 2003.

25 On this process in Crete, see Chaniotis 1996, 104-108, 421-432.

26 Chaniotis 1996, 421-422.

27 *Inscriptiones Graecae* V.1.723: [πα]τρὶς δέ μοί ἐστιν Ὄρειοι.

Greek, a Frenchman or a German, buried abroad, have on his tomb written 'here rests a European'?

Despite all political, regional, social, and other differences within Crete, when they came into contact with the other Greeks, the Cretans – all Cretans – stressed their shared Cretan identity, a largely artificial identity. Important components of this regional identity were myths, the 'Cretan' dialect, and shared institutions.[28] The epigrams, both those written by Cretans and those composed by foreign poets, presented a typical Cretan way of life consisting of the clichés of hunting, dancing, and making love.[29] Outside their island the Cretans were first Cretans and then citizens of their own *polis*.[30] A Cretan dream-interpreter in Hellenistic Egypt did not even write his name on the plaque which advertised his profession (fig. 4):[31]

> I interpret dreams, having received this command from the god. For good fortune. The interpreter of this is a Cretan.

Fig. 4. Memphis, sanctuary of Sarapis. A Cretan dream-interpreter advertises his profession (third century BCE).

4. THE CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITIES IN APHRODISIAS

My second example concerns a city in Asia Minor: Aphrodisias.[32] Sometime in the third century BCE a small settlement developed near a sanctuary of Aphrodite. Its original name must have been Nineuda, but probably when it acquired the status of a *polis* (after 188 BCE?) it was renamed Aphrodisias ('the city of Aph-

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[28] Myths (the birth of gods on Crete): Diodorus 5.64-77; *Inscriptiones Creticae* I.xxiv.1 lines 10-11. Dialect: Bile 1988. Institutions: Link 2002; Chaniotis 2005a.

[29] Vertoudakis 2000.

[30] See e.g. inscriptions mentioning 'Cretans' in Egypt: Baillet 1926, nos. 392, 610, 829, 858, 1016, 1577, 4414 bis. This may be the result of the fact that these Cretans were mercenaries recruited as 'Cretans' and not as citizens of Cretan *poleis*.

[31] Rubensohn 1900.

[32] For an earlier discussion of this subject, see Chaniotis 2003.

rodite').[33] Sometime in the second century, Aphrodisias joined the neighbouring community of Plarasa in a single community with a single citizenship: 'the people (*demos*) of the Plarasans and Aphrodisians.' Due to the prominence of the sanctuary of Aphrodite, but also thanks to its alliance with Rome, this community flourished. In the first century CE Aphrodisias seems to have entirely absorbed Plarasa, and from now onwards it is known only under the name of Aphrodisias. The abundant documentary sources allow us to observe the gradual construction of a communal identity as a dynamic process: a shift from an identity based on the collective memory of what had been jointly experienced in the Hellenistic and early Imperial period to the construction of an identity based on the cultural 'memory' of a remote, mythical past. The heterogeneous origins of the population makes this process even more interesting.

Although except for a few Latin inscriptions of public/legal character all the Hellenistic and Imperial inscriptions are in Greek, we can be sure that originally the population was of very diverse origins. Military settlers, both Greeks of various origins and Iranians, merged with Karian indigenous inhabitants. Only the personal names allow us to recognise this diversity.[34] For example, Epikrates, son of another Epikrates, who died still a young man around 100 BCE, had a name which is very common in Rhodes; his grave epigram was composed in the Dorian dialect, which was spoken in Rhodes; and it was inscribed on a round funerary altar of a type common in Rhodes and Kos (fig. 5); this family was certainly conscious of its Rhodian origins.[35]

Fig. 5. The grave monument of a young man, whose family was conscious of its Rhodian origins (name, dialect, form of the monument).

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[33]   On the early history of Aphrodisias see Chaniotis 2009a (with the sources). On the name see also Chaniotis 2003, 71.

[34]   Examples in Chaniotis 2009a. The Karian origin of the city is alluded to in an oracle allegedly given to Sulla in 88 BCE (Appianus, *Bella Civilia* 1.97).

[35]   Chaniotis 2009b.

Attalos, a man honoured for following his family traditions of public service (second century CE?), had a name of Macedonian origin and his father was called Makedon ('the Macedonian').[36] Adrastos, the name of some very prominent Aprodisians, was probably connected with local pre-Hellenic traditions.[37] Jews may also have lived in Aphrodisias from the Hellenistic period onwards, when king Antiochos III settled Jewish families in Asia Minor (c. 200 BCE).[38]

The first decades of the history of Aphrodisias were marked by wars, culminating in the wars of the first century BCE, when the city took the side of the Romans in the war against Mithridates (88 BCE) and later against the renegade general Labienus (c. 40 BCE); finally, it supported Octavian/Augustus. As we may infer from the city's public inscriptions in the first century BCE, the most important factor shaping Aphrodisian identity was this war experience. In 88 BCE, the envoys of Aphrodisias to the Roman proconsul Q. Oppius declared that[39]

> our entire people, together with the women and the children and the entire property, is willing to risk everything for Quintus and for the Roman interests, for we do not wish to live without the leadership of the Romans.
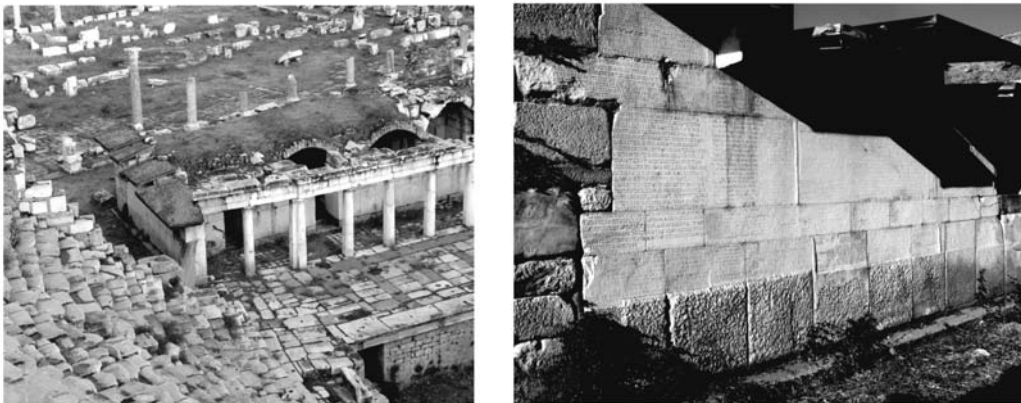

Fig. 6. Aphrodisias: the stage of the theatre and the north *parodos* [corridor] (left).
Fig. 7. Public documents were inscribed on the wall of the north *parodos* (right).

This text could be read by later generations. The dramatic situations, which the Aphrodisians had faced, were recorded in other documents as well, which were inscribed on a wall of the city's theatre in the early third century CE for citizens and foreigners to see (figs. 6 and 7). One of them is a letter of Octavian, the later Augustus, to the city of Samos, in which he explained why Aphrodisias had a privileged position as a free city:[40]

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[36]   *Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua* VIII 479.
[37]   This has been pointed out to me by Riet van Bremen (University College, London), who is preparing a study on this name.
[38]   Trebilco 1991, 5-7.
[39]   Reynolds 1982, 11-16 no. 2 lines 7f.
[40]   Reynolds 1982, 104-106 no. 13 lines 2-4; *Inscriptiones Graecae* XII.6.160.

> You yourselves can see that I have given the privilege of freedom to no people except the Aphrodisians, who took my side in the war and were captured by storm because of their devotion to us. For it is not right to give the favour of the greatest privilege of all at random and without cause.

In another document, this time addressed to Ephesos (39 or 38 BCE), Octavian demanded the return to Aphrodisias of a golden statuette of Eros, which his adopted father Caesar had dedicated to Aphrodite and had been taken by Labienus to Ephesos as war booty. This document was selected to be publicly displayed in Aphrodisias exactly because it manifested the sufferings of the Aphrodisians in the service of Rome:[41]

> Solon, son of Demetrios, envoy of the Plarasans and Aphrodisians, has reported to me how much their city suffered in the war against Labienus and how much property, both public and private, was looted. With regard to all these matters I have given a commission to my colleague Antonius, that he should restore to them as much as he can find, and I decided to write to you, since you have a city well-placed to assist them if they lay claim to any slave or other piece of private property. I was also informed that out of the loot a golden Eros, which had been dedicated by my father to Aphrodite, has been brought to you and set up as an offering to Artemis. You will do well and worthily of yourselves if you restore the offering which my father gave to Aphrodite. In any case Eros is not a suitable offering when given to Artemis. For concerning the Aphrodisians, upon whom I have conferred such great benefits, it is necessary that I should take the care about which I think you too have heard.

Finally, a decision of the senate concerning the privileges of the city and the sanctuary of Aphrodite in 39 BCE refers to the loyalty of the Plarasans and Aphrodisians in the wars and to the destruction of their city.[42] Martial themes can also be observed in the honorary decree for a certain Kallikrates, who was granted the extraordinary honour of burial in the gymnasium (late first century BCE) because of his services during the wars of the Late Republic:[43]

> [--- since he] has preserved the public affairs in the most critical situations and crises and [---] has served as stephanephoros and gymnasiarchos [--- and] agoranomos in a most severe [famine --- and has held] offices not subject to account during the wars [--- and has served] as envoy to the magistrates/generals in Rome [---] and in all kinds of dangers and affairs [--- and] has fought against the enemy [killing?] sixty [of them] ... let it be allowed to him to be buried [in the gymnasium] ...

All these documents date to the first century BCE; some of them were selected to be inscribed on the wall of the theatre in the early third century CE because the inhabitants of Aphrodisias could be as proud of their content as they had been three centuries earlier. They are striking not only because of the dominant themes (loyalty, military exploits, sufferings) but also because a theme that we

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[41] Reynolds 1982, 101-103 no. 12 lines 4-18.
[42] Reynolds 1982, 54-91 no. 8 lines 18-29.
[43] Reynolds 1982, 150f. no. 28; cf. ibid. 151-153 no. 29. Cf. Schörner 2007, 54-56 and 243f. Kallikrates' grave may be the one which is still visible next to the bouleuterion of Aphrodisias: Chaniotis 2008b, 70f.

would expect – the kinship of Romans and Aphrodisians because of the kinship of Aphrodite and Aeneas, Rome's founder – is entirely absent. In a period in which many communities placed in the foreground of their self-representation the miracles performed by their deities and kinship based on myths,[44] the elite of Aphrodisias (the authorities and the envoys) chose a different strategy: they recalled recent achievements. The significance of military exploits in this period is also reflected by the statue of a military commander (early first century CE).[45]

The same attitude can be observed in the commemoration of the foundation of the city. A large number of honorary inscriptions and epitaphs for members of the elite (c. 50 BCE - c. 230 CE) use the same theme: these elite members were descendants of the men who had jointly built (*synktizein*) the community, the city, the fatherland (*demos, polis, patris*).[46]

Three factors are responsible for this interest in recent visible attainments rather than in distant myths. First, the fact that the community which produced these documents was not that of the Aphrodisians *alone*, but the 'people of Plarasa and Aphrodisias'. This community was not yet exclusively the 'city of Aphrodite'. The community of 'Plarasans and Aphrodisians' had a different identity and, consequently, a different self-representation from the community of the Aphrodisians. Secondly, Aphrodisias was not the only city of Karia (or Asia Minor) with an important sanctuary of Aphrodite. The goddess was also worshiped in many other places,[47] which could have claimed kinship with the Romans. If the Plarasans/Aphrodisians had exploited the theme of mythological kinship in order to strengthen their relations to Rome, they would have placed themselves on the same level as many other Greek communities. In this competitive environment, they had to exploit a specific achievement that differentiated them from the others. Thirdly, the addressee of their diplomacy was not another Greek community accustomed to almost ritualised 'kinship diplomacy' but the Roman authorities, more interested in pragmatic arguments. The Athenians had allegedly learned this lesson in 87 BCE, when Sulla was besieging their city and their envoys confronted him with stories of their past military glory:[48]

> When they made no proposals which could save the city, but proudly talked about Theseus and Eumolpos and the Persian Wars, Sulla said to them: 'Go away, blessed men, and take these speeches with you; for I was not sent to Athens by the Romans to fulfil love of knowledge, but to subdue rebels.'

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[44] Miracles: e.g. Chaniotis 2005b, 157-160. 'Kinship diplomacy': Curty 1995 and 2005; Jones 1999; Battistoni 2009.

[45] Smith et al. 2006, 122-124.

[46] Reynolds 1982, 1 and 164f.; Chaniotis 2004, 382. It is not clear whether this is a reference to the original foundation of Aphrodisias in the early second century BCE, to the creation of a joint community with Plarasa in the second century BCE, or to the rebuilding of Aphrodisias in the first century BCE.

[47] e.g. Halikarnassos, Knidos, and Theangela, probably also Hydisos, Idyma, Keramos, Lagina, Mylasa, and Tabai. See Laumonier 1958, 186, 188, 351f., 512f., 622, 643, 653f., 657f., 672f.

[48] Plutarch, *Sulla* 13. Discussed by Chaniotis 2005b, 215f.

The Samians learned the same lesson fifty years later, when they took advantage of friendly relations with Octavian's wife in order to appeal to be granted freedom. Octavian's response is preserved in an inscription in Aphrodisias:[49]

> I am well-disposed to you and should like to do a favour to my wife who is active on your behalf, but not to the point of breaking my custom. For I am not concerned for the money which you pay towards the tribute, but I am not willing to give the most highly prized privileges to anyone without good cause.

A good reason is given at the beginning of his letter: 'I have given the privilege of freedom to no people except the Aphrodisians, who took my side in the war and were captured by storm because of their devotion to us.'

In this competition among the Greek cities for privileges, the Romans had their own priorities. When the Greek communities recognised them, they adapted their diplomacy and its self-representation to these priorities. Plarasa/Aphrodisias was not alone in the commemoration of recent military achievements in this period.[50] The consideration of Roman attitudes also affected the identity which was promoted by the elite – identity based on the memory of recent wars and the foundation of the city.

After the establishment of Augustus' monarchical rule, Aphrodite, Aeneas' mother, was the ancestor of the imperial house. This kinship between the founder of Rome and the patron of Aphrodisias was naturally exploited by the Aphrodisians. This may be observed in the sculptures which decorated a building complex dedicated to the cult of the emperor (*Sebasteion*, fig. 8),[51] in the use of the personal names Aineas (Aeneas) by Aphrodisians (fig. 9),[52] and in inscriptions.[53] The documents, which were selected to be inscribed on the theatre wall continually reflect this element of self-representation. The letters of Roman emperors adopt formulations originally contained in the letters of Aphrodisias to which they respond. Consequently, they reveal how the Aphrodisians wanted to represent their city to the emperors. A letter of the emperors Traianus Decius and Herennius Etruscus is a good example (250 CE):[54]

> It was to be expected, both because of the goddess for whom your city is named and because of your relationship with the Romans and loyalty to them, that you rejoiced at the establishment of our kingship and made the proper sacrifice and prayers. We preserve your existing freedom and all the other rights which you have received from the emperors who preceded us, being willing also to give fulfilment to your hopes for the future.

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[49] Reynolds 1982, 104-106 no. 13 lines 4-7; *Inscriptiones Graecae* XII.6.160.
[50] Examples in Chaniotis 2003, 76f.
[51] Smith 1987, 89-100 and 1990, 95-100; Jones 1999, 101f.
[52] Reynolds 1982, 4; the name is also attested in an unpublished inscription (fig. 9).
[53] Chaniotis 2003, 77-79.
[54] Reynolds 1982, 140-143 no. 25 lines 8-10. Cf. Reynolds 1982, 127-129 no. 18 line 4.

In the same period several other cities of Asia Minor exploited prominent local cults of Aphrodite in their diplomatic contacts with Rome,[55] but a city which was named after Aphrodite, 'the ancestor of the divine emperors' (*prometor theon Sebaston*),[56] clearly had an advantage over other competitors. It should be also noted that the distinctive image of Aphrodite of Aphrodisias, known from a series of copies and very different from the iconography of Aphrodite/Venus, made clear that not only the city, but also its goddess had a distinct identity.[57]
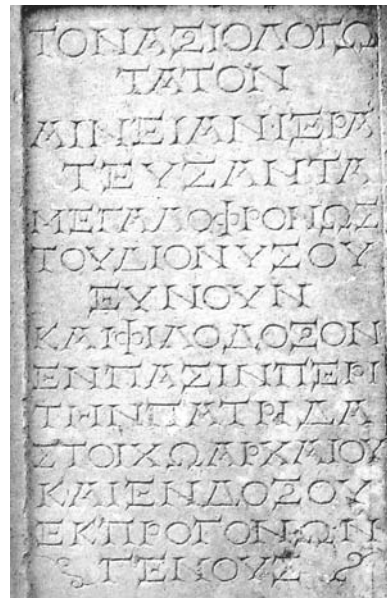

Fig. 8. Aphrodisias, relief in the Sebasteion: Aeneas escapes from Troy (left.).
Fig. 9. Honorary inscription for Aineas (line 3), member of an ancient and prominent family and priest of Dionysos (unpublished).

Things changed in the next generations, when the memory of the military achievements started to blur and new challenges occurred. Because of the homogenisation of political, social, and cultural structures in the Roman East, many communities tried to rediscover, redefine, and express their individuality primarily through an emphasis on local mythical and historical traditions and on local cultic practices. Expressions of this development are commemorative anniversaries, the advance of local historiography, the renewal of old festivals and rituals, the representation of local myths in monumental art and on coins, the restoration of old monuments, and the patriotic education of young men.[58]

Under Roman rule many cities in the Greek East claimed for themselves mythical origins, and competed on the basis of such claims for privileges and

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[55]   See the examples in Chaniotis 2003, 78f., with references to inscriptions of Knidos, Assos, Ilion, Plakados, and Kyzikos.
[56]   Reynolds 1986, 111f.
[57]   On the image of Aphrodite of Aphrodisias see Brody 2007.
[58]   For these phenomena see Bowie 1974; Chaniotis 1988, 177-182, 234-277, 362-389; Rogers 1991; Scheer 1993; Lindner 1994; Laurence and Berry (eds.) 1998; Huskinson (ed.) 2000; Goldhill (ed.) 2001; Ostenfeld (ed.) 2002; Howgego, Heuchert, and Burnett (eds.) 2005.

honorary titles (for instance *metropolis*).[59] If the Aphrodisians had continued to commemorate the foundation of their city in the second or first century BCE, they would have given up any claim on priority. From the late first century CE onwards the evidence for mythical founders of Aphrodisias abounds. A civil basilica which was built under Domitian was decorated with reliefs which depicted the founding hero of the city, Ninos (fig. 10). Presumably, the similarity of Aphrodisias' early name (*Nineuda* or *Nineudon*) with the name of Ninos, the legendary consort of the Assyrian queen Semiramis (c. eighth century BCE), was responsible for the creation of this foundation legend.[60] Its details are unknown and cannot be reconstructed from the images. But as we may infer from a fragment of the local historian Apollonios, it was believed that Ninos founded a city which he named *Ninoe*; the same author also gave other early names: 'the city of the Leleges' and 'Great City' (*Lelegon polis*, *Megale polis*).[61]

Fig. 10. Aphrodisias, relief panel in the civil basilica: Ninos, one of the mythological founders of the city.

But a foundation after the Trojan War was not early enough. Another mythological figure that appears in the reliefs of this basilica is Bellerophon (fig. 11). An inscription on the base of his statue (c. second century CE), discovered a few years ago, explains his role: he was also regarded as the founder (*ktistes*) of Aphrodisias.[62] With him, the foundation of Aphrodisias was placed as early in time as one could possibly go; Halikarnassos, another Karian city, which claimed Bellerophon as her founder, could not claim any priority.[63] Thus, Aphrodisias could be counted among the earliest cities of Asia Minor – a true *metropolis*. Of course,

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[59] On the competition among the cities of Asia Minor see Heller 2006. On the importance of mythical founders see Weiss 1984, 179-208; Scheer 1993; Lindner 1994; Di Segni 1997.

[60] Discussion of the reliefs: Yildirim 2004.

[61] Stephanos of Byzantion, s.v. Aphrodisias; Chaniotis 2003, 71.

[62] Smith 1996, 56.

[63] *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* XLVIII 1330. On the significance of Bellerophon in Lykian and Karian foundation legends see Jones 1999, 128 and 139-143.

these traditions originate in the circle of the elite. They reflect the constructed identity they wanted to present to Rome and to their neighbours in the 'globalised' world of the Roman Empire, in which local identities could primarily be promoted through constructed cultural memories.

Fig. 11. Aphrodisias, relief panel in the civil basilica: Bellerophon, mythological founder of the city, together with his horse Pegasus and Apollo.

With these media of self-representation (memory of military achievements in critical situations, foundation legends, mythical kinship), the elite of Aphrodisias constructed a collective identity for a community with very heterogeneous origins. Aphrodisias presented itself as a Hellenic city, free and autonomous, conscious of its ancient origins and its military exploits. But even though the Aphrodisians presented themselves as such to Rome, their ally, and to their neighbours and competitors, we may be certain that there were conflicting identities within the city and even within the elite. The civic identity of the 'Aphrodisian' co-existed with the family identity of the members of the prominent clans, who proudly referred to their forefathers and often listed six, seven or more generations of ancestors, keeping family memories of more than two centuries.[64] It also co-existed with the 'Roman' identity of those Aphrodisians, who had received Roman citizenship or were members of, or related to, Roman senatorial families.[65]

We do not know how this identity was perceived by other social strata. We may assume that for some time the community of the Plarasans, originally the 'senior partner' in the federation with Aphrodisias but later absorbed by Aphro-

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[64]   e.g. Chaniotis 2004, 378-386 no. 1: 'Hermogenes Theodotos, son of Hephaistion, one of the first and most illustrious citizens, a man who has as his ancestors men among the greatest and among those who built together the community and have lived in virtue, love of glory, many promises (of benefactions), and the fairest deeds for the fatherland; a man who has been himself good and virtuous, a lover of the fatherland, a constructor, a benefactor of the city, and a saviour, etc.' *Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua* VIII 449: Adrastos, son of Apollonios, son of Hypsikles, son of Menandros, son of Zenon; 500: Zenon Hypsikles, son of Zenon, son of Zenon, son of Zenon, son of Hypsikles, son of Hypsikles, son of Menandros, son of Zenon.

[65]   For the representation of such social identities in the portrait statues see Smith et al. 2006, esp. 150-157 and 194-196.

disias, had a separate local identity. The presence of the mythical hero Gordios, the son of Midas, in the representation of the foundation legends of Aphrodisias in the civic basilica (see note 60) supports this assumption. Apparently, he was perceived as the founding hero of Gordiou Teichos ('the wall of Gordios'), an independent city in the vicinity of Aphrodisias, which must have been incorporated in its territory.[66] The use of a few Karian names until the second or third century CE and the continuation of some cults that seem to have their roots in the indigenous Karian population (for instance Zeus Nineudios, Pluton, and Kore Plyaris) suggest that some consciousness of a pre-Hellenic past may have existed – and this may have been stronger in the countryside, where hardly any inscriptions survive, than in the city.[67] A separate identity was certainly maintained by the Jews of Aphrodisias, but it became visible only in the fourth century CE, in competition with Christianity. But Jews certainly lived at Aphrodisias and in its countryside earlier, and a Jewish funerary monument decorated with a menorah was found at Gök Tepesi northwest of Aphrodisias.[68] If for a period of 500 years (c. 200 BCE - c. 350 CE) we do not know any single Jew in Aphrodisias by name, this must be due to the fact that the inscriptions of Aphrodisias usually concern the elite families. It is also quite probable that the Jews of Aphrodisias, exactly like the Jews in the neighbouring city of Hierapolis, adopted Greek names, using the Hebrew one only as a second name.[69]

This more or less harmonious image of 'the most illustrious people of the glorious city of the Aphrodisians, ally of the Romans, devoted to the emperor, free and autonomous according to the decrees of the most holy senate and the treaty and the imperial responses, inviolable'[70] was shattered when the rise of Christianity to state religion brought the conflict of religious identities to the foreground. From the mid-fourth century onwards religious symbols (cross, menorah, double axe, the symbol of Karian Zeus) were inscribed on the walls of public buildings (figs. 11 and 12);[71] Jews and Christians chose their personal names as a public display of their faith;[72] and the late pagans, often individuals with a philosophical education, gave public manifestations of their belief in the traditional gods but

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[66] On Gordiou Teichos see Drew-Bear 1972, 439-443; Chaniotis 2009b.

[67] Karian names: Blümel 1992. The epithet of Zeus Nineudios derives from the pre-Hellenic name of Aphrodisias, Nineudon or Nineuda: Chaniotis 2004, 392f. no. 11 (the dedication of a bronze-smith). The epithet of Kore Plyaris ('the Virgin of Plyara', mentioned in an unpublished inscription) derives from the pre-Hellenic place name Plyara (Drew-Bear 1972, 435). The cult of Pluton was very popular in Karia: Laumonier 1958, 507f.; Robert 1987, 22-35.

[68] Smith and Ratté 1995, 38f.

[69] Chaniotis 2002a, 226f. For the preference of Greek and Latin names by the Jews until the fourth century CE see Williams 2000, 317f.

[70] Reynolds 1982, 168-170 no. 43.

[71] On the Jewish community in Aphrodisias see Chaniotis 2002a and Ameling 2004, 71-112. On the use of religious symbols see Chaniotis 2002b, 103-105 and 2008c, 247f. and 259.

[72] Jews: e.g. Beniamin, Eusabbathios, Heortasios, Ioudas, Samouel. Christians: e.g. Athanasios, Anastasios, Iordanes, Kyriakos, Theophylaktos. For examples see Chaniotis 2002a, 229-231, 2002b, 105-109, and 2008c, 256f.

also of their expectation of life after death.[73] As late as c. 480 CE, an honorary epigram for a prominent political figure begins with the words 'city of the Paphian goddess and of Pytheas', provocatively reminding its readers that Pytheas' fatherland was still the city of Aphrodite; contemporary acclamations inscribed on one of the markets reveal what the assembled crowd was shouting during the inauguration of a hall: 'there is only one god in the whole world. ... The whole city says this: Your enemies to the river! May the great God provide this!' And a fragmentary text, approximately dated to the same years, praises someone who drove away the civil strife, which was destroying the city.[74]
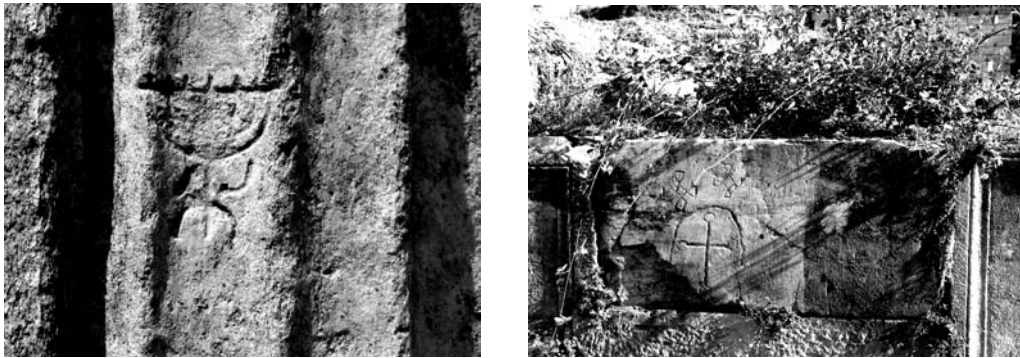

Fig. 11. Aphrodisias. Drawing of a menorah on a column of the Sebasteion (left).
Fig. 12. Drawings of crosses on a plaque in the South Agora (right).

This conflict ended with the victory of Christianity in the early sixth century. The temple of Aphrodite was converted into a Christian church (late fifth century) and the embarrassing name Aphrodisias could no longer be tolerated. By the mid-seventh century CE Aphrodisias had been renamed Stauropolis ('the city of the Cross') and liberated from its polytheistic past.[75] The Stauropolitans even removed the old name of the city from inscriptions – an interesting (not unparalleled) case of collective amnesia (fig. 13).[76]

Fig. 13. The pagan name Aphrodisias (line 4) erased by the Christians.

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[73]   For this evidence see Chaniotis 2008c.
[74]   Pytheas: Rouché 1989, 93 no. 56; Albinus: ibid., 126-136 no. 83; reference to civil war: ibid., 104f. no. 64. Discussion of these texts in Chaniotis 2008c, 244f. and 254f.
[75]   Rouché 2007, 186f.
[76]   e.g. Reynolds 1982, 54-91 no. 8 lines 51, 58, 66, 84, 87, 93; 92-96 no. 9 lines 6, 8, 11f.; Rouché 2007, 187-189.

The renaming of cities for political or religious reasons is not at all uncommon in Greek history.[77] Within a millennium, Aphrodisias changed its name at least twice (Nineuda-Aphrodisias, Aphrodisias-Stauropolis). These name changes were connected with decisive political and religious changes and, consequently, with changes in the collective identity of its inhabitants. The case of Aphrodisias is a nice example of the construction and evolution of an identity as a dynamic process. The collective identity, which was promoted by the elite, consisted of four components: a political element (loyalty and alliance with Rome), a historical element (experience of war, foundation of the city), a religious element (Aphrodite as patron goddess and mother of the founder of Rome), and a mythical element (foundation legends). Each component was a reaction to specific historical situations: the award of privileges by Rome on the basis of services and loyalty; competition among cities for privileges and rank; competition among elite families for influence and authority. In the formative period of the community, an important component of identity was the experience of war, military achievements, and a successful response to challenges. After this crisis had been overcome, the foundation legends, which placed the city's origins in a remote past, overlaid the memory of the city's historical origins. Both the historical and the fictitious past have something in common: they concern the origins of Aphrodisias. The memory of success but also competition with neighbours and a feeling of superiority and priority were decisive for the formation of an identity.

5. IS THERE ANYTHING TO LEARN FROM ALL THIS? RE-INVENTING EUROPEAN IDENTITY

After these excursions in the future and the past, it is time to think about the relevance of these paradigms for questions concerning European identity. The Cretan paradigm makes clear that different forms of identity can coexist: the legally defined identity of a citizen of a *polis* or a federal state; the identity of a member of a civic subdivision; regional identities within Crete; the identity of a Cretan; the cultural identity of a group which shares the same cultural memory; the social identity of the members of the elite and other social groups; the identity of members of an age class and a 'men's house'; the identity of members of political groups. Which criterion prevailed – citizenship, economic or social interests, social or cultural memory, etc. – depended on the response of a group to a variety of factors that ranged from reactions to external threats and internal divisions to competition and conflict.

The paradigm of Aphrodisias confirms and supplements this picture, showing the dynamic character of collective identity, its evolution as a socio-cultural construct, and the close interdependence between historical contexts and the construction and manifestation of identity. The Aphrodisian changes of identity show both

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[77]   Freitag 2008.

the importance of names for the construction and expression of identity and the dynamic character of collective identity.

As a social, historical construct, identity is subject to continual changes. It can be deleted and constructed anew. In this process, the components of collective identity are various and variable. They range from a specific dialect, peculiar institutions and local customs to characteristic economic activities, a specific way of life, memory, and local rituals.[78] Which component of identity will emerge more strongly depends on the relations, the competition, or the conflict of a community with other communities. It is in the context of changing environments that one feature of distinctiveness may lose its efficacy as an expression of self-representation and another may take its place. When language, dialect, art or institutions no longer distinguish one community from another, then another element may be pushed into the foreground to express individuality: a local cult, a myth, a local historical tradition. Such developments, which can be observed now in the process of European unification, are particularly clear in the two most cosmopolitan periods of classical antiquity: in the Hellenistic world and in the Roman Empire (see note 3).

Both case studies also show the significance of cultural memory which is no less constructed than an identity. This 'memory' can be based on narratives of victory, success, and superiority. The identity which the Aphrodisians displayed seems to have aimed at showing the superiority or priority of this community over other (often neighbouring) communities. The two case studies give us an impression of media which may be used to forge a collective identity: citizenship, rituals, commemorative anniversaries, mythological narratives, narratives of joint experiences.

Turning now from Crete and Aphrodisias to European identity, this identity too is a construct, hard to grasp exactly because it is subject to continual transformations and adaptations to changing environments. Europe itself is a changing political, geographical, and cultural construct, and the identity displayed by the European Union depends on its responses to 'others'. When we compare constructions of European identity with the two aforementioned examples, we observe that several typical features of a collective identity are absent. The lack of a joint European citizenship (not to mention the absence of a joint foreign policy) is an obstacle to the development of a political identity. Significant requirements for a cultural identity, such as a common language, a common religion, joint historical experiences, a common mythology, and a common system of social values, are also lacking. *Leventiá*, a Greek word with a great significance for the modern Greek system of values, which corresponds to a mixture of pride, bravery, and manliness, cannot be translated in any other European language. Christendom, which is often mentioned together with Graeco-Roman culture as one of the pillars of a European cultural *koine*, was never the only religion of the European populations. The Europeans have never experienced history together; they have

[78] See note 4. For the importance of specific rituals as an expression of local identity, in particular in the context of competition among communities, see Chaniotis 2008a, 76-80.

never won (or lost) a war, which they have fought together; instead, they have fought many wars against each another. Their joint currency – or rather, the currency of those who were admitted to the stability pact – has only on one of the two sides the same image; the other side of the 'Euro' undermines the image of homogeneity and unity, highlighting particularities, diversities, and local patriotisms. The Greeks selected images which no other Europeans would be able to recognise (fig. 3); to the Greeks, they recall the myth of the abduction of Europe by the Olympian god Zeus, the Athenian Empire (the owl of the Athenian coins), the war of independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1821-1828 (Rigas Feraios, warships of the war of independence), and the formation of the modern Greek state (Ioannis Capodistria, Eleftherios Venizelos). They do not recall classical art and literature, one of the many roots of European culture. Also absent from Europe are the symbolic acts and rituals which could forge a European identity – such as for instance the celebration of the birthday of 'Saint Schuman' (now only celebrated by the employees of the European Union on 9 May), the 'commemorative anniversary of the treaties of Maastricht', the 'day of European unity', etc. Only the 'International Charlemagne Award' of Aachen tries to remind the Europeans that Charlemagne was regarded in his own times as *Europae pater* – a Europe that lacked a unity in his times as it lacks it today.

Finally, a feature which can often be observed in collective identities, a belief in the superiority and predominance of a community and its culture over others, has been sometimes stressed by (conservative) European politicians (for instance Berlusconi), but has generally been criticised and rejected, rightly so. There is no such thing as a homogeneous European culture, with which the Greeks, the Bosnian Muslims, the third-generation Turks in Germany, the French Jews, the Basks, and the Laps – not to mention the Indians and Pakistanis living in London – can identify themselves.

But do we really need all that in order to have a European identity? What the ancient paradigms have shown is that identities can be defined according to a variety of criteria and that they are continually adapted to changing historical contexts. Identities are responses to 'otherness' and to challenges. Classical paradigms should not offer models to be copied, but stimuli for reflections. The ancient paradigms do not invite us to adopt criteria, which had served the construction of identities in classical antiquity, but to consider how modern Europe can respond to new challenges and contribute its own specific ways of defining identity, beyond a common language, a common religion, a common culture, or even a common citizenship.

What has always defined Europe was cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity. In order to construct a European identity, some authoritative Europeans, especially statesmen, attempt to promote the idea of a joint cultural memory based on Christian traditions and the cultural roots of Graeco-Roman antiquity. Such a cultural memory is in fact cultural amnesia, the elimination of the memory of the cultural diversity which existed and still exists in Europe – the glamour of Arabic culture in mediaeval Spain, the power of the Ottoman Empire, European Jewry –

and of the countless old and new minorities. Should European identity be constructed on myths and selective memory?

If not in a common culture, then where shall the belief in superiority be founded, which can effectively support a European identity in the twentyfirst century? Until the financial crisis of September 2008 there had been a belief in supremacy, which was based on the prosperity of the members of the European Union (or at least most of them). Economic growth – and not cultural traditions, religion or specific values – have brought the Finns or the Hungarians into the European Union; the Greek wants to be 'European' for economic considerations; reservations about economic perspectives have made the majority of the Swiss prefer a looser association with the EU. This one-sided focus on the belief in European economic supremacy distinguishes the limping European 'identity' from the identity of the Arabs or the Americans. But an identity based on such a foundation is weak and ephemeral. Every new economic crisis is bound to undermine European political cohesion.

If economic identity cannot compensate the absence of cultural identity, political identity may achieve this. By this I do not necessarily mean a joint European citizenship, but rather a joint foreign, defence, social, environmental, and research policy, and above all the commitment to joint values: democracy, sensitivity towards human rights and civil liberties, tolerance of diversity, commitment to unprejudiced advance in knowledge, and protection of the environment.[79] Not the belief in the superiority of a 'European culture' will allow the Europeans, both in the continent and in the diaspora, to develop a distinct identity, but the belief in the superiority of these joint values, which have not been created by bureaucrats in Brussels or statesmen, but have developed with the active participation of European citizens. The integration of immigrants to Europe cannot be successful if it is only based on economic considerations or on the fraudulent idea of a joint European culture, neglecting values which truly distinguish Europe from other regions of our world.

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[79]   Cf. the views repeatedly expressed by Jürgen Habermas (e.g. 'Opening Up Fortress Europe'; http://www.signandsight.com/features/1048.html).

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