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SERIES

DECODING THE MESSAGE
REVIEWING PROPAGANDA, COMMUNICATION AND LOCAL IDENTITIES ON THE COINAGES OF CLASSICAL AND HELLENISTIC CRETE

EDITED BY
MANOLIS I. STEFANAKIS

EULIMENE SERIES OF INDEPENDENT PUBLICATIONS 6
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SERIES OF INDEPENDENT PUBLICATIONS

6

STUDIES IN THE FIELDS OF CLASSICAL ARCHAEOLOGY, EPIGRAPHY, NUMISMATICS, AND PAPYROLOGY

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Mediterranean Archaeological Society

Rethymnon 2025

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EDITORIAL

Propaganda, as a means of communicating information, is primarily used to influence an audience and promote an agenda. It may not be objective and may be presenting facts selectively to encourage a particular synthesis or perception since the motives are usually political or religious. Although it has been a popular subject of research both in archaeology and history, its concept is barely researched for coinages of the autonomous Greek poleis and tends to focus rather on Roman (mainly Imperial) coinages. Whenever the subject is touched in Greek numismatics, scholars (archaeologists and historians) tend to downplay the role of coins as a means for "propaganda" or "message diffusion", let alone neglect to appropriately address and classify possible propaganda phenomena regarding the classifications established by social scientists.

The aim of this volume is to review the deliberate will of the issuing authorities to take advantage of coinage as a means for "propaganda" or "message diffusion", the models of communication and propaganda through coinage, as well as stages and components of the process of propaganda; to re-consider propaganda and communication on the Greek coins attempting to discern the main axes of the monetary propaganda of the classical and Hellenistic era. Consequently, research attempts to target propaganda messages encoded on coins struck by the various Cretan mints from the 5th to the 1st c. BC. The analysis of the imagery placed on Cretan coins, weight standards and common denomination issues may indicate that different types of propaganda were in the first instance intended for other cities and ethnicities. They commemorated important traditions –thus supported locality and ethnicity– denoted political or economic alliances, let alone implied supremacy over secondary cities or economic control of less powerful communities. In this context propaganda and communication on Cretan coins is explored in three distinct areas: cultic iconography, symbolisms of ethnicity and ways of economic control.

Early drafts of the papers included in this volume were originally presented at The International Numismatic Congress in Warsaw in 2021, in the session entitled: "Reviewing the topic of propaganda, communication, and local identities on the coinages of Classical and Hellenistic Crete".

Many thanks are owed to Dr Elpida Kosmidou and Dr Nick Salmon, for their useful remarks on earlier drafts of this volume, Ms Maria Achiola for her immense editorial assistance, Dr Asimina Vafiadou for the production of the introductory map of Crete and Ms Vicky Chatzipetrou for saving the manuscript from various language errors.

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Summaries / Περιλήψεις

Nikos Petropoulos, Propaganda and communication on ancient Greek coins: setting the principles, *EULIMENE SERIES OF INDEPENDENT PUBLICATIONS* 6 (2025), 1-19.

The importance of ancient Greek coins as a means of propaganda and communication is well known. Coinage, from its first occurrence in ancient Greece, is considered both an economic and political act. Ancient Greek coins provided an exceptional canvas on which political groups and communities presented their views on the world to themselves and others. Minting authorities, whether poleis, kings, or tyrants, utilized coins to convey various iconographical and ideological messages to their community members and beyond, thereby fostering a sense of civic or ethnic identity. When examined in the context of their particular historical circumstances, ancient Cretan coinages offer valuable insights into the intricate political and economic relationships among Cretan cities, shedding light on the processes that contributed to the formation or alteration of local identities on the island.

Η σημασία των αρχαίων ελληνικών νομισμάτων ως μέσα προπαγάνδας και επικοινωνίας είναι γνωστή. Η παραγωγή νομίσματος, από την πρώτη εμφάνισή της στην αρχαία Ελλάδα, θεωρείται πράξη τόσο οικονομική όσο και πολιτική. Τα αρχαία ελληνικά νομίσματα παρείχαν έναν εξαιρετικό καμβά, στον οποίο οι πολιτικές ομάδες και κοινότητες παρουσίαζαν τις απόψεις τους για τον κόσμο στα μέλη τους και στους άλλους. Πόλεις, βασιλείς και δυνάστες, χρησιμοποιούσαν τα νομίσματα που έκοβαν για να στείλουν διάφορα εικονογραφικά και ιδεολογικά μηνύματα στην κοινότητά τους καθώς και πέρα από αυτήν και να δημιουργήσουν μία αίσθηση πολιτικής ή εθνικής ταυτότητας. Εξεταζόμενα υπό αυτό το πρίσμα και σε συνάρτηση με το ιδιαίτερο ιστορικό πλαίσιο στο οποίο ανήκουν, τα αρχαία κρητικά νομίσματα μπορούν να μας δώσουν μία καλή εικόνα των πολύπλοκων πολιτικών και οικονομικών σχέσεων μεταξύ των κρητικών πόλεων και των διαδικασιών που οδήγησαν στη διαμόρφωση ή στην αλλαγή των τοπικών ταυτοτήτων στο νησί.

Manolis I. Stefanakis, Cultic imagery as a means of communication and propaganda on the coinages of classical and Hellenistic Crete, *EULIMENE SERIES OF INDEPENDENT PUBLICATIONS* 6 (2025), 21-55.

Myth, religion and cult were widely exploited during the Hellenistic period by the Cretan mints, who used coinage as a very effective means to communicate the main cults of the city and to propagate their primacy and autochthony on the island. Patron deities and distinct, often unique, figures of local nymphs, heroes and mythical episodes were used to display the main cults of the city, almost always including direct or indirect references to the distant –Minoan– past, to show connections with the old Cretan tradition and cult within a new Dorian order. In a few cases, coin iconography was further used in a competitive manner between cities to proclaim rights upon extra-territorial sanctuaries of pan-Cretan or even panhellenic importance, thus exposing via the numismatic types the rivalry between neighbouring cities.

This paper aims to review the models of religious communication and propaganda messages encoded on coins struck by various Cretan mints from the 5th to the 1st c. BC. The analysis of the imagery placed on Cretan coins strongly indicates that coin types often commemorated important mythological and religious traditions in an attempt to support locality and ethnicity, let alone imply supremacy over neighbouring or rival cities.

Ο μύθος, η θρησκεία και η λατρεία αξιοποιήθηκαν ευρέως κατά την ελληνιστική περίοδο από τα νομισματοκοπεία των Κρητικών πόλεων, τα οποία χρησιμοποίησαν το νόμισμα ως ένα πολύ αποτελεσματικό μέσο για να επικοινωνήσουν τις κύριες λατρείες της πόλης και να προπαγανδίσουν την πρωτοκαθεδρία και την αυτοχθονία τους στο νησί. Προστάτιδες θεότητες και διακριτές, συχνά μοναδικές, μορφές τοπικών νυμφών και ηρώων, καθώς και μυθικά επεισόδια, χρησιμοποιήθηκαν για την προβολή των βασικών λατρειών της πόλης, σχεδόν πάντα με άμεσες ή έμμεσες αναφορές στο απώτερο, μινωικό παρελθόν, προκειμένου να καταδείξουν την άρρηκτη σχέση με την παλαιά κρητική παράδοση και λατρεία μέσα στη νέα δωρική τάξη. Σε κάποιες περιπτώσεις, η νομισματική εικονογραφία χρησιμοποιήθηκε περαιτέρω για να διακηρύξει δικαιώματα σε μεγάλα ιερά παγκρήτιας ή και πανελλήνιας εμβέλειας, καταδεικνύοντας μέσω της νομισματικής τέχνης τον ανταγωνισμό όμορων ή και αντίπαλων πόλεων.

Federico Carbone, Propaganda, communication, and ethnicity on the coinages of classical and Hellenistic Crete, *EULIMENE SERIES OF INDEPENDENT PUBLICATIONS* 6 (2025), 57-91.

The study of the Cretan monetary system illustrates how a comprehensive examination of various factors enables a detailed analysis of specific local characteristics. These dynamics are no longer perceived as mere remnants of the past, but rather as reflections of distinct features within a regional context, showcasing its unique identity. The organized study of ethnicity, propaganda and communication, in conjunction with the analysis of coins proves particularly insightful. This systematic approach allows for a nuanced understanding of the intricacies of the Cretan monetary policies. Moreover, it facilitates the interpretation of local policies and events, adding depth to our knowledge of phenomena that may only be partially documented elsewhere or obscured by patterns from more familiar historical and monetary contexts.

This paper proposes a conceptual framework to explore definitions of ethnicity in the monetary economy of antiquity with a focus on the analysis of Cretan coins. It examines identity strategies in early Cretan coins, outlining dynamics in the selection of types among cities and communities. Subsequently, it explores into federal institutions and weight systems through the analysis of the Cretan staters. The study also investigates the presence of deity names on coins and the sharing of iconographies among different cities and communities. The revival of regional identity is explored through *cistophoroi* bearing the name Kydas, concluding the examination with some final reflections on the topic.

Η μελέτη της κρητικής νομισματοκοπίας δείχνει πώς μία ολοκληρωμένη εξέταση διαφόρων παραγόντων επιτρέπει μια λεπτομερή ανάλυση συγκεκριμένων τοπικών χαρακτηριστικών. Αυτές οι δυναμικές δεν γίνονται πλέον αντιληπτές ως απλά απομεινάρια του παρελθόντος, αλλά μάλλον ως αντανακλάσεις διακριτών χαρακτηριστικών σε ένα περιφερειακό πλαίσιο, που αναδεικνύουν τη μοναδική του ταυτότητα. Η οργανωμένη μελέτη της εθνότητας, της προπαγάνδας και της επικοινωνίας, σε συνδυασμό με την ανάλυση των νομισμάτων, αποδεικνύεται ιδιαίτερα οξυδερκής. Αυτή η συστηματική προσέγγιση επιτρέπει μια διαφοροποιημένη αντίληψη των περιπλοκών της κρητικής νομισματικής πολιτικής. Επιπλέον, διευκολύνει την ερμηνεία των ακολουθούμενων τοπικών πολιτικών και γεγονότων, επιτρέποντας να εμβαθύνουμε σε φαινόμενα που μπορεί να είναι μόνο εν μέρει τεκμηριωμένα αλλού ή να συγκαλύπτονται από μοτίβα που προέρχονται από πιο οικεία ιστορικά και νομισματικά πλαίσια.

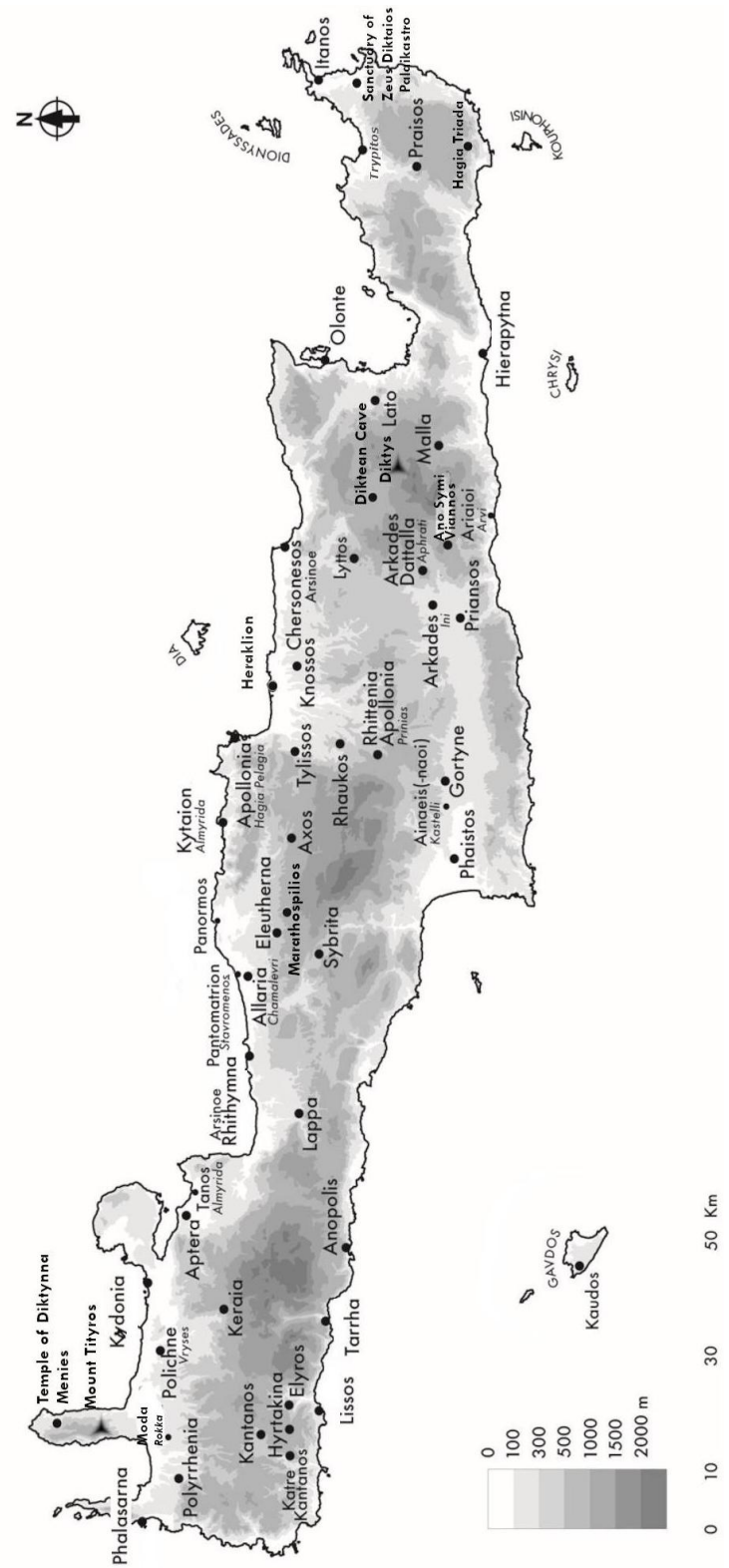
Η παρούσα εργασία προτείνει ένα εννοιολογικό πλαίσιο για τη διερεύνηση των ορισμών της εθνότητας στη νομισματική οικονομία της αρχαιότητας, με έμφαση στην ανάλυση των κρητικών νομισμάτων. Εξετάζει στρατηγικές ταυτότητας στα πρώιμα κρητικά νομίσματα, σκιαγραφώντας τη δυναμική στην επιλογή τύπων μεταξύ πόλεων και κοινοτήτων. Στη συνέχεια, εξετάζει ομοσπονδιακούς θεσμούς και σταθμητικούς κανόνες μέσα από την ανάλυση των κρητικών στατήρων. Η μελέτη διερευνά επίσης την παρουσία ονομάτων θεοτήτων σε νομίσματα και την κοινή χρήση εικονογραφικών θεμάτων μεταξύ διαφορετικών πόλεων και κοινοτήτων. Η αναβίωση της τοπικής ταυτότητας διερευνάται μέσω των κιστοφόρων που φέρουν το όνομα Κύδας, ενώ η έρευνα ολοκληρώνεται με ορισμένους τελικούς προβληματισμούς για το θέμα.

Dr. Vassiliki E. Stefanaki, Economic control as a form of propaganda among Cretan mints: the so-called “monetary alliances” between Cretan city-states, *EULIMENE SERIES OF INDEPENDENT PUBLICATIONS* 6 (2025), 93-110.

It is generally accepted that coinage functions as a transmission vehicle of political, economic, social and religious messages. The approximately 43 Cretan cities that issue coins with a rich iconographic repertoire in Classical and Hellenistic times and which are in constant conflict with each other, affirm their origin, ethnicity and religion, as well as their political identity and pride through their coins. Nevertheless, the Cretan coinage could also testify in some cases to the economic control of an authority in a particular area, using common types, weight standards and denominations. The purpose of this paper is to study, with the contribution of written sources, this frequent phenomenon of the so-called “monetary alliances” between Cretan city-states.

Είναι γενικά αποδεκτό ότι η κοπή νομισμάτων λειτουργεί ως μέσο μετάδοσης πολιτικών, οικονομικών, κοινωνικών και θρησκευτικών μηνυμάτων. Οι περίπου 43 κρητικές πόλεις που εκδίδουν νόμισμα με πλούσιο εικονογραφικό ρεπερτόριο στους κλασικούς και ελληνιστικούς χρόνους και που βρίσκονται σε διαρκή σύγκρουση μεταξύ τους, δηλώνουν την καταγωγή, την εθνότητα και τη θρησκεία τους, καθώς και την πολιτική τους ταυτότητα και υπεροχή μέσω των νομισμάτων τους. Ωστόσο, η κρητική νομισματοκοπία μαρτυρά επίσης σε ορισμένες περιπτώσεις τον οικονομικό έλεγχο μιας αρχής σε μια συγκεκριμένη περιοχή, μέσω της χρήσης

κοινών τύπων, σταθμητικών κανόνων και υποδιαιρέσεων. Σκοπός της παρούσας μελέτης είναι να ερευνήσει, με τη συμβολή των γραπτών πηγών, αυτό το συχνό φαινόμενο των λεγόμενων «νομισματικών συμμαχιών» μεταξύ των κρητικών πόλεων-κρατών.



Map of Cretan mints from the 5th to the 1st c. BC

PROPAGANDA AND COMMUNICATION ON ANCIENT GREEK COINS: SETTING THE PRINCIPLES*

The background of the study on propaganda in ancient coinage

The use of Roman coins as a means of political propaganda is an aspect of ancient history that garnered the early attention of researchers and historians. T. Mommsen[1] laid the foundations for the analytical study of Roman coinage within its historical context, while H. Cohen[2] made significant contributions by categorizing and describing Roman coin types and their associated propaganda. The 20th century witnessed a significant surge in the study of Roman coin propaganda. The publication of reference works, such as *The Roman Imperial Coinage* series (*RIC*)[3], established a framework for studying Roman coin propaganda. The types chosen for the Roman imperial coinage were interpreted as a means of influencing public opinion, reconciling the subjects to the rule of the Emperor and explaining imperial policy to them. H. Mattingly interpreted the regular display of current events on Roman coins as evidence that coins served as the newspapers of the day. Researchers such as M. Grant[4], A. Alföldi[5], and C.H.V. Sutherland[6] recognized the evolving nature of political messages on Roman coins over time, spanning from the Republican to the Imperial periods. They explored various aspects of propaganda and its utilization on Roman coins, shedding light on the political, social, and cultural dimensions of the Roman Empire. Contemporary research on Roman coin propaganda encompasses a wide range of topics, including the use of coinage to express identity in Roman provinces and the ways local communities employed coins to communicate political and cultural messages[7].

On the contrary, the study of propaganda on Greek coinage has been a less examined field in numismatics and ancient history. In the second half of the 19th century, with the development of the discipline of archaeology, scholars like E. Curtius[8] and F. Imhoof-Blumer[9] began analysing Greek coins in their historical and artistic contexts, establishing a new ground for study. In the 20th century, researchers gradually

* I would like to express my gratitude to Professor Manolis I. Stefanakis, for inviting me to contribute to the volume and for providing constructive criticism on previous drafts of this paper.

[1] Mommsen 1860.

[2] Cohen 1892.

[3] Mattingly and Sutherland (eds) 1923.

[4] Grant 1946; 1958.

[5] Alföldi 1956.

[6] Sutherland 1951.

[7] Howgego *et al.* 2005.

[8] Curtius 1870.

[9] Imhoof-Blumer and Gardner 1885.

began paying close attention to the iconography and symbolism used on Greek coins. They analysed the choice of images and inscriptions as well as the placement of elements in the coin's design to uncover the intended messages. E. Newell was among the first scholars to systematically study the portraits of the rulers of various Hellenistic kingdoms and the historical references on their coinages[10]. C.M. Kraay[11] provided an in-depth analysis of the relationship between Greek coins and the cities that issued them. While not exclusively focused on propaganda, his study laid the groundwork for understanding the broader socio-political context in which coins were minted. Other scholars, through their studies on prominent ancient Greek coinages, have further contributed to our understanding of the political and ideological messages conveyed through Greek coins. M. Thompson, for instance, enhanced our insight into the role of coins in socio-political dynamics through her study of the coins minted in Athens during a critical period, considering their designs, inscriptions, and historical context[12]. T. Figueira shed light on the multifaceted relationship between coinage and politics in Athens by exploring the political, economic, and social implications of Athenian coinage during the Classical period[13]. Similarly, T.R. Martin delved into coinage as a reflection of political structures by discussing how the designs, production, and circulation of coins were indicative of the political structures and systems of governance in Classical Greek city-states[14].

C. Howgego also made significant contributions to our understanding of the political aspects of coins in ancient Greece. In his comprehensive work *Ancient History from Coins*[15], he made crucial remarks on how politics influenced the selection and iconography of ancient Greek coin types. He emphasized how rulers used coinage as a means of propaganda by conveying messages about power, authority, and political ideology. Worth mentioning is also the interdisciplinary study by L. Kurke, a classicist and scholar of ancient Greek literature, who draws on numismatics and material evidence to explore the symbolic and political dimensions of coins as cultural elements in Archaic Greece[16]. More recently, researchers, such as H.A. Troxell[17], F. de Gallataÿ[18], C. Lorber[19] and A. Liampi[20], have conducted extensive studies on Greek coinage and its political significance and propaganda. They delved into themes such as the portrayal of rulers, gods, and allegorical figures on coins, considering the political circumstances, military campaigns, and cultural values of the time when coins were issued. However, the study of Greek coins as a means of propaganda remains a wide-open area of research. Given the multiplicity and diversity of coinage across different Greek city-states and regions throughout the centuries, there are still numerous cases of propaganda on

[10] Newell 1927; 1937.
[11] Kraay 1976.
[12] Thompson 1961.
[13] Figueira 1988.
[14] Martin 1985.
[15] Howgego 1995, 62-88.
[16] Kurke 1999.
[17] Troxell 1997.
[18] de Callataÿ 2012.
[19] Lorber 2012; Iossif and Lorber 2012.
[20] Λιάμπη 2017.

coins that could be extensively studied to provide new insights into the complex ancient Greek political landscape. In this context, the studies presented in the current volume aim to focus on the applications of propaganda on the coinages of Classical and Hellenistic Crete, exploring their role in the formation of local identities on the island during those periods.

Selected cases of propaganda on ancient Greek coins

The use of propaganda[21] as a means of controlling information flow, managing public opinion or manipulating behaviour is as old as recorded history. Although ancient kingdoms such as Mesopotamia and Egypt employed techniques of propaganda, these applications were sporadic and lacked a sophisticated or psychological base. It is not until the emergence of Greek civilization in the 8th c. BC that we observe the first systematic application of propaganda, evident in both warfare and civil life. During this time, the Greek city-states formed the basis of an increasingly structured society, where each state had its gods, culture, and social hierarchy. Given these differences, rivalry between the city-states for cultural domination as much as for trade, was inevitable. In these conditions, the "iconography" of propaganda flourished; great temples, monumental sculptures and images depicted on every kind of artifact started to be used as symbols of the state's power[22]. Within this context and by the early 6th c. BC, Greek coins and the images they carried were utilized by minting authorities to emphasize and convey various iconographic and ideological messages applied in the field of religion, politics and ethnic identity.

In a time when conveying official messages and information over a wide area posed challenges for a state, coins emerged as the perfect medium for visual propaganda, offering significant advantages over other official means. One crucial advantage was their multiplicity, given that the purpose of coinage is to produce thousands of identical objects. Additionally, their rapid hand-to-hand circulation, spanning all levels of society from the highest to the lowest, and their involvement in various manifestations of social activity were key benefits. Coins circulated across a broad geographical range and, in the case of popular Greek coins, they reached distant foreign markets resulting in the internationalization of the conveyed information. Therefore, the small surface of this everyday object served issuing authorities as a highly effective propaganda tool.

Although the images on the early coinages were initially intended simply to inform about the identity of the issuer –essentially, the guarantor of money and enforcer of its acceptability– city-states perceived coinage from the start as an opportunity of self-promotion. Greek mints quickly abandoned the "heraldic" imagery of unclear reference and began using unique symbols or features that intelligibly represented their cities, promoting the prestige of their states. These symbols were often inspired by nature, religion, cult or local tradition, sending various messages to the members of the issuing community and those outside it, thereby generating a sense of civic or ethnic identity[23]. Every symbol on ancient Greek coins was a reference to the social identity and cultural

[21] For a propaganda definition, see Jowett and O'Donnell 2012, 2-17.

[22] An overview of the historical development of propaganda and the developing media and audiences in the ancient Greek world can be seen in Jowett and O'Donnell 2012, 51-53.

[23] For numismatic types as symbols of public communal identities, see Howgego 2005.

traditions of the community. In many ways, ancient coins served as nationalistic celebrations of the community and propagandistic promotions of a city's cultural legitimacy.

Alongside the first archaic coins, a multitude of simple figural motives emerged as emblems representing various Greek cities. This repertoire quickly developed and continued to be utilized well into the 5th c. BC and even later. These images proved to have a highly effective impact on coin users, as is evident from ancient literary sources, where some widely circulated denominations were often referred to by their iconography[24]. A common theme on Greek coins was the mythological evidence of a god favouring a city[25]. For instance, the depiction of the winged horse Pegasus on the Corinthian staters (fig. 1) symbolized divine benevolence bestowed upon the citizens of Corinth[26]. Pegasus' taming by Corinth's hero, Bellerophon, was intricately linked to the city's most important deities: Athena Chalinitis, who aided the hero and whose head is depicted on the obverse, and Poseidon, the hero's father[27]. The type became so characteristic that it was extensively copied by Corinthian colonies, differentiated only by some symbols and inscriptions denoting their specific origin.

The Aeginetan "turtle" (fig. 2) was another popular Greek coin type, though its interpretation remains obscure despite numerous theories. The turtle has been suggested to symbolize the island's sea power or may trace back to the local name of the turtle-shaped pre-coinage ingots of silver. Most likely, this creature held some religious significance for the people of Aegina[28]. Regardless of the reason for this choice, the "turtles" circulated widely throughout Greece and the eastern Mediterranean between the end of the 6th and the beginning of the 5th c. BC, becoming universally recognizable. The turtles depicting on the reverse incuse squares with special geometric character, namely the Union Jack and later the "skew" pattern, left an indelible impression on the visual memory of the Greeks. This type was copied, either entirely or partially, by many island cities of the Aegean within the Aeginetan sphere of influence, signifying political or economic bonds. The symbolic power of this type was so potent that the Aeginetans maintained the Archaic type with some slight differentiations until the end of the Classical period.

These examples associating money with its iconography demonstrate that the first users of coinage paid significant attention to the images on coins. Issuing communities gradually began using more condensed imagery in order to emphasize and convey their political and other messages. This shift in the distribution of the carried symbolic loads of the coin occurred at a time when a constant affirmation of the political power of the state became imperative. In the Classical period, the non-figurative incuse squares on the reverse were replaced by images. Symbols of sacred character were combined with others of a political nature along with inscriptions added by issuers, thus making the delivered information more composite. Consequently, the conveyed messages became more subtle

[24] For example, Aeginetan staters were commonly known as "turtles", Corinthian ones as "colts" etc. Τσαγκάρη 2017, 22-23.

[25] See also Stefanakis in this volume below, 20-21, for gods on Cretan coins.

[26] Ravel 1936; see also Ravel 1948; Kraay 1976, 80.

[27] Kraay 1976, 80. For a Bellerephon and Pegasus myth's analysis, see Graves 1981, 85-86.

[28] Sheedy 2012, 106.

and complex, often operating at the level of the unconscious like certain modern means of visual propaganda. Hence, throughout ancient Greek coinage, literal and symbolic interpretations evolved, allowing us to understand the conveyed messages being on more complex levels.

Perhaps the most compelling example illustrating the adaptation of numismatic iconography to transformations in the civic political systems in the late 6th c. BC is the transition of Athenian coins. They shifted from the so-called Wappenmünzen[29] or heraldic coins (fig. 3) supposedly bearing the badges of aristocratic families to the iconic "owls" representing the entire state. Athenian "owls" (fig. 4) depict the head of Athena on the obverse and the image of an owl[30] accompanied by a sprig of olive and a crescent on the reverse. The bird's image became the iconographic symbol of the city as proof of allegiance to its patron goddess. This design remained essentially unchanged for over two centuries, eventually acquiring a stylistically archaic character. It was a common practice to depict gods and their symbols on the Greek coins of the Archaic and Classical periods, demonstrating the close connection between the city and a specific deity. In the case of Athens, their portrayal conveyed that the city was under the auspices of a god, guaranteeing military, political, and economic superiority, a message that the Athenians aimed to emphasize with this coin type.

Coins were occasionally issued to commemorate alliances or agreements with other city-states or rulers, reinforcing the idea of mutual support and cooperation[31]. This use of political symbolism is evident in a coin type of coordinated issue by eight cities in western Asia Minor (Byzantion, Ephesos, Iasos, Knidos, Kyzikos, Lampsakos, Rhodes and Samos). Released in the context of a pro-Spartan alliance after 405 BC[32], these issues feature civic types on the obverse, while they all depict the infant Heracles strangling a serpent on the reverse (fig. 5a-c). This appears to be a reference to Lysander, the Spartan naval commander, who, being a Heraclid, was praised by Ion of Samos for breaking the force of the snake-shaped Kekrops, a symbol used for Athens[33].

Beyond alliances, coins served as a means of real political unification as well[34]. The use of a particular currency could symbolize economic and political unity, as was the case of the federal bronze coinage issued by the Achaean League in the first half of the 2nd c. BC[35] (fig. 6a-c). The Achaean tetrachalka, which were struck at the same time by 45 cities during the League's biggest expansion, bore common types and two ethnic names –that of the Achaeans and that of the individual city. These issues symbolized, more than any other act, the political union of the federation members, as described by Polybius[36].

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[29] Kroll 1981; Davis 2015.

[30] On the Athenian "owls", see Τσαγκάρη 2012. On the owl as a symbol of goddess Athena and its establishment as an emblem of the city of Athens, see Pollard 1977, 143-144; see also Lamberton and Rotroff 1985, 12-13.

[31] See also Stefanaki in this volume below, 91-108.

[32] A comprehensive presentation of the theories about the dating and the exact political context of these issues can be found in Γεωργίου and Στεφανάκη 2018, 93-94. Also, Στεφανάκης and Δημητρίου 2015, 132-133.

[33] Karwiese 1980.

[34] See also Carbone in this volume below, 69-73; Stefanaki in this volume below, 91-92.

[35] For the bronze coinage of the Achaian Koinon, see Warren 2007.

[36] … *ὥστε μὴ μόνον συμμαχικὴν καὶ φιλικὴν κοινωνίαν γεγονέναι πραγμάτων περὶ αὐτούς, ἀλλὰ καὶ νόμοις χρῆσθαι τοῖς αὐτοῖς καὶ σταθμοῖς καὶ μέτροις καὶ νομίσμασι* … (Polyb. *Hist*. 2, 37, 10).

Another intriguing case of symbolism on coins is counterpropaganda. A distinctive issue aiming to boost the citizens' morale in a time of turmoil is evident in the staters of Stymphalos struck around 370-360 BC (fig. 7). Following the Boeotian victory over the Spartans at Leuktra in 371 BC, an anti-Spartan democratic movement emerged in Arkadia in the central Peloponnesos. This movement materialized through a series of staters issued by several Arcadian cities, symbolizing their independence against Spartan rule[37]. However, the refounded city of Stymphalos took the symbolism on its coins one step further. Stymphalos struck staters featuring the town's patron deity, Artemis, on the obverse and a fighting Herakles on the reverse. Known as the home of the Stymphalian Birds and the site of the relevant Labor of Herakles, the hero was a common subject on Stymphalian coins. Yet, on this particular issue, Heracles appears in an iconographically unique pose –striding left, preparing to strike with his club held over his head in his right hand. Notably, this type serves as a visual quotation of Harmodios from the well-known statue group of the Tyrannicides in the Athenian Agora commemorating the blow against Spartan tyranny[38].

A clear instance of the political use of coin types can be seen in the intrusion of extraneous symbols to reflect control by outsiders. In 494 BC, Anaxilas, then the tyrant of Rhegium, encouraged a force of Samian refugees from the Persian suppression of the Ionian revolt to cross the strait and take over Zankle[39]. Upon occupying Zankle, the Samians issued coins using the types from their home city of Samos. On the silver coins, the lion's scalp decorates the obverse (fig. 8), an image previously used on Samian coins. On the reverse, the prow of Samaina –the Samian-type ship created or popularized by the tyrant Polycrates of Samos (539-522 BC)[40]– was depicted in commemoration of their arrival in the West.

Similarly, when Theron of Acragas captured Himera in ca 483 BC, the crab of Acragas was featured on the reverses of coins of the occupied city[41] (fig. 9a-b). Another striking example is the tetradrachm of Leontinoi from the period of Hieron's domination of the city (476-467 BC), which reflects a strong influence from the contemporary coinage of Syracuse known as Demareteion[42] (fig. 10a-b). The obverse type of the quadriga is directly drawn from Syracusan tetradrachms struck under Hieron I, while the head of Apollo on the reverse takes cues from that of Arethusa on the Syracusan issues. In a similar fashion to the regular encircling of the head of Arethusa by four dolphins, the head of Apollo here is encircled by three laurel leaves and a lion as a punning allusion to Leontinoi.

The need for political propaganda during the Classical period led monetary issuers to take the next step in numismatic iconography by incorporating a direct mention of historical events. Anaxilas, after conquering Zankle and renaming the city to Messana in 486 BC, initiated the production of Attic weight coinage for both Rhegion and Messana

[37] Such cities were Pheneos, Tegea and Messene (Grandjean 2009, 6, n. 13).
[38] Schefold 1964, 112-113; Weir 2010, 135.
[39] Caltabiano 1993. See also Howgego 1995, 63.
[40] Kuciak 2020.
[41] Kraay 1976, 209.
[42] Kraay 1976, 210-211.

bearing the same types[43] (fig. 11): a biga of mules driven by a bearded charioteer on the obverse and a hare springing on the reverse. The depiction of the muleteer served to commemorate Anaxilas's victory in 484 or 480 BC, at the Apene, the mule-cart race at the Olympic festival[44]. At the same time, the use of the hare on the obverse is a reference to the abundance of the animal in the vicinity of Rhegion (according to Aristotle, Anaxilas is supposed to have introduced it to Sicily) and to the cult of Pan. The seated muleteer and the springing hare, which was first introduced by Anaxilas, became so distinctive that Messanians continued to use them on their tetradrachms until the end of the 5th c. BC.

Over a century later, another ruler, King Philip II of Macedonia, took a significant step in Macedonian coinage by introducing the type of the winning charioteer to commemorate his Olympic victory and convey political messages. Prior to Philip II, the coins of the Macedonian kingdom bore symbols and images that referred either to fundamental values of the Macedonian aristocracy, such as warfare and hunting (fig. 12), or to heroes and mythical symbols, exemplified by Hercules and the lion[45]. The latter was often associated with the Argead's mythical past, since Hercules was the great-great-grandfather of Temenus, the legendary ancestor of the Temenid dynasty of Argos from which the Argead dynasty claimed its ancestry. As depicted on his coins (fig. 13a), Amyntas II even replicated the symbol of the wolf from Argos' coins (fig. 13b), emphasizing their descent from this city[46]. One can see in this iconography the intention of the Argead kings to highlight their aristocratic superiority and to stabilize and legitimise their rule on the kingdom of Macedonia through the recurring projection of their mythical past.

Philip II introduced a new type on the reverse of his silver and bronze coinage featuring a naked youth astride a large horse (fig. 14a). The young man, adorned with a *taenia* and carrying a palm branch as a sign of victory, is interpreted as the king himself, celebrating his thriumph at the Olympic games of 356 BC[47]. This type does not only serve as a visual narrative of Philip's Olympic victory, but it also acts as a symbolic representation of his position and ambitions within the Greek world. It solidified Philip's status as a Greek ruler of the Macedonians and deflected questions about his dynasty's "Greek origin", thus enabling him to advance his plans for pan-Hellenic hegemony. A similar symbolic interpretation can be applied to his later gold issues (fig. 14b) featuring a racing *συνωρίς*. Although the representation of a chariot in action carries a more visual narrative character, it still serves to reinforce Philip's political and symbolic standing.

The reference to historical events on coins for propaganda purposes was widespread in the Hellenistic period, since this trend was continued by the Antigonides and other Hellenistic rulers. An example is Demetrius Poliorcetes who, shortly after his defeat at the battle of Ipsus in 301 BC, minted silver coins depicting Nike descending on a prow of a ship on the obverse and Poseidon brandishing his trident on the reverse[48]

[43] Caltabiano 1993.

[44] Anaxilas' victory is commemorated by Aristotle (Arist., *fr.*, 578 R).

[45] For a historical approach of the Macedonian coinage before Philip II, see Ψωμά 2002.

[46] Μουστάκα 2000, 404-405.

[47] Price 1974, 23; see also Kraay 1976, 145-146; Le Rider 1977, 366.

[48] Newell 1927, 16-17, 24. For the representation of Nike on coins in general, see Σταμπολίδης 2017,

(fig. 15). With this type, Demetrius aimed to publicize and remind the world of his significant naval victory at Salamis in 306 BC that earned him the title of king[49]. This coinage served as a testament to his unbroken fighting spirit despite recent defeat. Moreover, it declared his reliance on naval forces for his ultimate victory, symbolically aligning himself with Poseidon, as was seen in the naval battle of Salamis.

Some scholars suggest that the tetradrachms of Demetrius Poliorcetes represent the monument of the Nike of Samothrace, proposing that the Battle of Salamis provided the occasion for the erection of the famous statue in the pan-Hellenic sanctuary of the Great Gods[50]. Without direct evidence, the hypothesis linking the Nike of Samothrace with the Battle of Salamis remains uncertain. However, if this correlation is accurate, it would explain why Demetrius chose to advertise his victory through his coinage as well. Unlike statues or trophies, coins had a broader reach as they circulated widely. The erection of a statue or the dedication of a trophy would be visible only to a limited number of individuals with access to the monument. In the ancient world, a considerable number of people within the territory of a vast empire were informed about significant events with delays or, in some cases, were never informed at all if their lives were not directly affected. The continuous production of "Nike" coinage, spanning almost a decade (from 301/300 to 292 BC) in various mints of Demetrius –Salamis, Miletus, Ephesus, Tarsus, Pella, and Amphipolis– ensured that the message would reach as many people as possible[51].

The Aetolian League followed the same practice by advertising its glorious past through coins[52]. On its gold staters issued between 275-245 BC (fig. 16), the obverse features the head of Athena resembling that on the staters of Alexander III, which had become internationally recognized throughout the Mediterranean world in the 3rd c. BC[53]. The reverse type depicts the personification of Aetolia seated on a pile of Gallic shields and holding Nike, representing a statue erected by Aetolians at Delphi after the famous repulse of Gallic invaders in 279/8 BC. Building upon the glory of this victory, which did not only save the great Panhellenic shrine from the barbarians, but it also prevented the Celts from advancing further south into Greece, the Aetolian League expanded and became a Greek power capable of opposing the Macedonian kings.

One of the most recognizable forms of propaganda on Greek coins was the portrayal of rulers[54]. Regal portraiture on Greek coins, especially from about 300 BC, served a political purpose. These portraits were often idealized to present the rulers in the best possible light by depicting them in a heroic or god-like manner in order to emphasize their power and authority. The "Porus medallion" series of Alexander III (fig. 17), which depicted Alexander the Great's campaigns in India and introduced some entirely new Greek coinage types, stands as a distinct example of royal propaganda. On the obverse of the decadrachm, the largest denomination in this series, Alexander is

201-202.

[49] Mørkholm 1991, 77-78; Hoover 2016; Howgego 1995, 377.

[50] Hamiaux 2015, 78; Smith 1991, 79.

[51] Hoover 2016, 380. For a concise picture of the spread of the coins in the Hellenistic world, see Meadows 2014.

[52] Λιάμπη 2017, 233; Tsangari 2007, 201.

[53] Price 1991, 46.

[54] Martin 1985.

depicted in action, mounted on Bucephalus and thrusting his sarissa toward King Porus, who is seated on the back of an elephant with an attendant[55]. What is particularly intriguing about this type, besides being one of the earliest numismatic representations of an elephant (with the large animal also symbolizing the military might of the opponent), is that the duel shown here –according to historians' descriptions of the battle– seems to have never actually occured. However, when examining the type, especially together with the reverse showing Alexander crowned by Nike, it suggests a direct victory over Porus in personal combat. On the reverse, there is a full-figure image of Alexander crowned by Nike, fully armed and armored, holding the thunderbolt of Zeus in his right hand. This type appears to be related to a lost painting known as "Alexander wielding a thunderbolt", executed by the court painter Apelles.

These coins are believed to have been produced in limited quantities from the battle of the Hydaspes River (327 BC) to the return of the expeditionary force to Babylon. They are interpreted as special commemorative editions for the veterans of the Indian campaign, acting as a donative paid out to the army for their services on the battlefield. The use of martial types may have aimed to remind the Macedonian army of their former glory in the East, especially at a time when soldiers were fatigued from Alexander's campaigns and sought a return to their homeland. Another perspective, derived from the geography of the few coin finds[56] and the mixed Macedonian-Persian attire in Alexander's depiction, suggests that these coins were given to native auxiliaries. This interpretation sees the coins as commemorating the Macedonian-Persian alliance in the Indian Campaign and serving as symbols of Alexander's policy of "concord and community"[57].

If we consider the date of the issue to be before Alexander's death and acknowledge that the figure on the reverse is Alexander himself, this series of coins marks a remarkably significant numismatic development. It would not only be a unique surviving depiction of Alexander produced during his lifetime[58], but also one of the earliest known images of an identified living person on coins. If accurate, these designs underscore once again that coins could be employed as a form of propaganda, serving continuously to promote a leader's success and status to his subjects. Even more significantly, the alignment of these depictions with Alexander's ambitions to be recognized as a divine individual during the latter part of his reign does not seem entirely implausible.

The fact that the Porus coinage does not seem to have originated from a large mint or been distributed as a regular circulating currency does not diminish its propaganda value. In the face of resistance from older, more traditional Macedonians uncomfortable with the notion that a king might assert divine status or even claim to be a living god, it's possible that Alexander initially chose to incorporate such imagery on a very limited issue of coinage. This small sample, intended for local circulation and directly tied to a recent victory, could have served as a means to justify such claims. It also highlights a

[55] Holt 2003.

[56] Price 1991, 63-72.

[57] Hollstein 1989.

[58] On the portraits of Alexander, see Bieber 1965; Bopearachchi and Flandrin 2005.

clear understanding, once again, of how coins could function as a medium for conveying important ideas about the ruling authority issuing them.

Another distinctive example showcasing the high level of symbolism achieved in Greek royal coin portrayal can be observed on the gold oktadrachms (*Mnaieia*) issued under Ptolemy III Euergetes (struck under his son Ptolemy IV) and his grandson, Ptolemy V Epiphanes[59] (fig. 18a-b). These issues that featured radiate portraits of the kings are part of an iconographic program representing the beneficence of the Ptolemaic kings under two related aspects. Firstly, in correspondence with the radiate cornucopia on the reverse, their role as guarantors of abundance and perpetual regeneration is depicted. The second aspect emphasizes the divine order in defending Egypt and engaging in foreign wars, notably the Syrian Wars. This is symbolized through military emblems, such as the aegis in the case of Ptolemy III and the spearhead on the coins of Ptolemy V. Additionally, the two stars on the reverse of Ptolemy V's coins seem to allude to a pair of comets, marking the king's birth and ascension to the throne. The imagery on these coins pertains to the divine, solar nature of the kings, promoting the royal cult.

To summarize the points made, ancient Greek coinage emerged as a powerful tool of propaganda, serving not only as a medium for trade but also as a significant instrument for conveying political, religious, and social messages. The strategic use of imagery on coins allowed city-states to communicate their power, identity, and political ideologies both within their own borders and across broader territories. The evolving iconography —from the simple heraldic symbols to complex depictions of gods, heroes, and political figures— demonstrates how coins became deeply embedded in the mechanisms of power, identity, and governance. The role of coins in Greek society was not limited to their practical function as currency; they were meticulously crafted symbols that reinforced civic unity, divine favor, and the legitimacy of rulers.

Greek coins also reflected the dynamism of the political landscape. As the city-states expanded, so did the use of numismatic propaganda. The introduction of historical events, political alliances, and royal portraits on coins reinforced the rulers' authority and their relationship with both their citizens and the gods. For example, coins struck in honor of significant victories, such as those depicting the goddess Nike or celebrating military achievements, exemplified the way in which coinage could commemorate and celebrate key moments in Greek history. Furthermore, coins often reflected shifts in power and ideology, as seen in the changing portrayal of gods, mythological figures, and rulers, adjusting their symbolism to align with the political needs of the time.

Ultimately, the study of Greek coinage provides valuable insights into the intersection of art, politics, and social identity in the ancient world. Coins were far more than mere currency; they were cultural artifacts laden with meaning and used to craft narratives of power, legitimacy, and divine favor. Through their widespread circulation, these messages reached not just local populations but also distant foreign markets, enhancing the scope of their impact. The use of coinage for propaganda continued to evolve in the Hellenistic period and beyond, underscoring the enduring role of visual symbols in the shaping of political and cultural narratives throughout history.

[59] Lorber 2012; Iossif and Lorber 2012.

Propaganda, communication and local identities on the coinages of Classical and Hellenistic Crete

To date, there is a paucity of research in the field of propaganda with regard to the coinages of Classical and Hellenistic Crete (see Map of Crete, p. vi), although the numerous mints of the island offer a rich iconographic repertoire, through which they attempt to affirm their origin, ethnicity and religion, as well as their political identity and economic interests[60].

Cretan coinage utilized a diverse range of iconographic types, many of which drew inspiration from the island's rich mythological background[61] and depicted various symbols associated with their heritage, aiming to affirm their autochthony and distinguish themselves from one another.

A significant number of these myths, for example, were associated with Zeus, who was born in Crete, according to the local version. Consequently, depictions of Zeus and symbols linked to him adorned the coins of several Cretan cities, such as those of Praisos and Lyttos. These cities claimed to be the birthplace of the god and asserted sovereignty over the other cities of the island[62]. Moreover, Cretan coins often incorporated local myths, such as the depiction of the labyrinth on the Knossian staters[63], and local cults, exemplified by Artemis Diktynna and Kydon on Kydonia's coins[64]. Gortyna, claiming primacy over Cretan cities due to the mythical union of Zeus with Europa in its territory, initially featured the common motif of Europa on the back of the bull on its silver staters[65]. However, around the mid-4th c. BC, Gortyna introduced a new type, portraying a likely representation of Europa sitting on the branches of a tree on the obverse and a bull on the reverse. Scholars interpret this depiction of Europa in a private moment as a political decision by Gortyna's authorities to assert the exclusivity of Zeus' spouse and mother of all Cretans. Similarly, in the contemporary Phaistos staters, Europa is depicted in another distinctive scene just before her union with Zeus, seated on a rock and extending her hand to the approaching bull[66]. Additionally, shortly after 300 BC, the bronze giant Talos, a gift from Zeus to Europa, appears on the reverse of Phaistos' staters.

In other cases, local products and activities may be depicted, such as in the case of Praisos, whose silver staters showcased the typical activities of their community, featuring symbols like the goat and the bee, representing goat breeding and apiculture[67].

Propaganda on Cretan coins from the 5th to the 1st c. BC may be examined in three distinct areas: within myth, religion and cult expressing identity and ethnicity, and as a form of economic control.

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[60] For a general overview of Cretan numismatic iconography see Svoronos 1890. A review of the basic iconographical types on the Cretan coins (5th-2nd c. BC) in Γιαννοπούλου 2019.

[61] Some enlightening remarks on the representation of mythical figures on Cretan coin imagery can be found in Stefanakis and Konstantinidi 2020. On the association between myths and the iconography of the ancient Greek coins in general, see Τσαγκάρη 2011.

[62] See Στεφανάκης 2014, 606-607. Also, Stefanakis in this volume below, 32-35.

[63] Svoronos 1890, 70-79, pls V-VII.

[64] Στεφανάκης 2019, 45-46, pls 9-11.

[65] Carbone 2014-15; Στεφανάκης 2011-12, 75-76.

[66] Στεφανάκης 2011-12, 73-74, pls 10-11.

[67] Γιαννοπούλου 2019, 26. See also Stefanakis in this volume below, 34.

There are various models of religious communication and propaganda encoded on the Cretan coins, through the commemoration of mythological, religious and cultic traditions. These indicate attempts to communicate the main cults of the city (patron deities and distinct figures of local nymphs, heroes and mythical episodes), all of which aim to propagate primacy and autochthony (often connected to the Minoan past), to support locality and ethnicity, as well as to declare supremacy over neighbouring or rival cities[68].

In addition, iconography offers the opportunity to explore and define ethnicity within the monetary economy of Crete. Cretan mints follow specific strategies, outlining dynamics in the selection of types among cities and communities, with the presence of deity names on coins and the sharing of iconography among different cities and communities, promoting or claiming regional identities[69].

Finally, coinage was broadly used on Crete to declare "alliances", or simply control or influence of mighty city-states over the less powerful or dependent poleis of the island. The Cretan coinages therefore often testify to the economic control of authority over a particular area with the use of common types, weight standards and denominations, elements that may be considered as means of economic and political propaganda[70].

Seen in this light, Cretan coin imagery and weight standards can provide a good insight into the processes that shaped local identities in Crete and the intricate religious, political and economic relationships among its cities.

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[68] See Stefanakis in this volume below, 38-39.

[69] See Carbone in this volume below, 76-77.

[70] See Stefanaki in this volume below, 98.

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Figure 1. Corinth, AR stater, ca 515-450 BC. British Museum Collection, n. 1866, 1201.2813.

Figure 2. Aegina, AR stater –"turtle"– ca 479-456 BC. Alpha Bank Numismatic Collection, n. 3939.

Figure 3. Athens, AR didrachm, "Wappenmünzen", ca 545-510 BC. CNG 66, May 2004, lot 382.

Figure 4. Athens, AR tetradrachm –"owl"– ca 440-420 BC. Alpha Bank Numismatic Collection, n. 2137.

Figure 5. (a) Kyzikos, EL stater, ca 405/4 BC, (b) Ephesos, AR tridrachm or double siglos, ca 405/4 BC, (c) Samos, AR tridrachm or double siglos, ca 405/4 BC. Γεωργίου and Στεφανάκη 2018, εικ. 14 (α), 15 (b), 16 (c).

Figure 6. Achaean Leagues, AE tetrachalka, ca 191-146 BC, minted in Argos (a), in Elis (b) and Sikyon (c). GmbH Auctions 10 Lot 27 (a), 9, Lot 10 (b) and 21 Lot 35 (c).

Figure 7. Stymphalos, AR stater, ca 360-350 BC. CNG Electronic Auction 419, Lot 615.

Figure 8. Zankle under the Samians, AR hemiobol, ca 494/3 BC. Nomos Auction 26, Lot 144.

Figure 9. (a) Acragas, AR didrachm, ca 480-470 BC, and (b) Himera, AR didrachm, ca 483/2-472 BC. Heritage Auction 3019 lot 23021 (a) and Numismatik Naumann Auction 43, lot 117 (b).

Figure 10. (a) Syracuse, AR tetradrachm "Demareteion type", ca 475-470 BC, and (b) Leontinoi, AR tetradrachm "Demareteion type", ca 470 BC. Roma Numismatic Limited Auction 19291 Numismatica Ars Classica AG Auction 126, Lot 21.

Figure 11. Rhegion, AR tetradrachm, ca 475-474 BC. RNL Auction 6, Lot 347.

Figure 12. Alexander I, AR octadrachm, ca 460-454 BC. Alpha Bank Numismatic Collection, n. 1218.

Figure 13. (a) Amyntas II, AR obol, ca 395-393 BC, and (b) Argos, AR triobol, ca 490-470 BC. Nomos AG obolos 11, Lot 106, Dec 2018 (a) and BCD Peloponnesos, n. 1017 (b).

Figure 14. Philip II, ca 359-336 BC (a) AR tetradrachm and (b) AU stater. British Museum Collection, n. 1926,0402.1 (a) and Alpha Bank Numismatic Collection, n. 9353 (b).

Figure 15. Demetrius I Poliorcetes, AR Tetradrachm, Salamis, ca 300-295 BC. Münzkabinett Berlin n. 18203025.

Figure 16. Aetolian League, AU stater, ca 220-205 BC. NAC Auction 106, Lot 225.

Figure 17. Alexander III, AR decadrachm or "Porus medallion", ca 326/5 BC. British Museum Collection n. 1926,0402.1.

Figure 18. (a) Ptolemy III, AU Mnaieions, ca 221-205 BC and (b) Ptolemy V, AU Mnaieions, ca 204/3 BC. Iossif and Lorber 2012, fig. 1 (a) and fig. 3 (b).

CULTIC IMAGERY AS A MEANS OF COMMUNICATION AND PROPAGANDA ON THE COINAGES OF CLASSICAL AND HELLENISTIC CRETE*

Religion, Cult and Propaganda on the Cretan Coins

Coins in antiquity served various purposes other than their purely transactional use. Their iconography was used for religious, political and national propaganda, reproducing narrative scenes or figures and symbols from the past and the history of each city[1].

The depiction of the patron deity or a deity with an important cult on the civic coinage is considered to be the most usual form of religious propaganda in the Greek world[2]. Religion was indeed an important factor in providing legitimacy to the city-state and at the same time played an important role in the "survival" of a city-state in the Greek world. The protective and apotropaic nature of Greek religion was responsible for a great deal of rituals and the creation of many new images in art and literature[3]. De Visser argued convincingly that "*religious power relies on the ability to influence political or military action as a result of this superstitious anxiety or fear of the wrath of the gods*"[4]. In this context, coin types may have been carefully chosen by the states based on their protective efficacy. Coins could not only communicate the identification of political power with a specific deity and the bondage of the city with certain rituals, but they could also invoke an uncommon force or energy, and work on behalf of the issuers and most certainly of the users[5].

It is the aim of this chapter to seek possible models of religious communication and propaganda messages encoded on coins struck by selected Cretan mints (see Map of Crete, p. vi) from the 5th to the 1st c. BC. Through religious coin imagery and careful

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[1] On coinage and propaganda in general, see Λιάμπη 2017. On roman coinage and propaganda, see indicatively Alföldi 1956.

[2] Hansen and Nielsen 2004, 9; Kraay 1976, 3. On earlier studies on the religious character of Greek coin types regarding religious motives, origin from temples and the placement of Gods on coins to guarantee alloy and weight, see De Callataÿ 2016, 123-124.

[3] Borba Florenzano 2018,104.

[4] De Visser 2009, rejecting Finley's suggestion that "there is neither documentary evidence, nor reason to think that policy making was ever determined or deflected by reference to divine will or divine precept" (Finley 1983, 26).

[5] Borba Florenzano 2018, 105-106. See, however, De Callataÿ 2016, 126-127 on the recent scepticism about the use of coins as a means for "propaganda" and the capacity of the users to fully understand the messages.

selection of the represented deities and mythical figures, Cretan cities bonded their citizens with a certain religious and cultic heritage[6], offering a sense of blessed belonging, continuation and ethnic pride in addition to differentiating themselves from other ethnic groups and city-states of the island[7]. The religious imagery of Cretan coinage is characterized by a multitude of iconographic types, in many instances communicating religious beliefs and claims, which may be divided into three major categories:

Religious and cultic images are likely to aim at:

1. The notification of the main cult of the city
2. The association with major religious and mythic figures and episodes
3. The claim of major cult places and festivals

To understand religious propaganda on Cretan coins we will apply the Processual Model of Propaganda by Jowett and O'Donnell, a more general model that does not exclusively focus on communication but is at the same time specific to the study of propaganda[8]. It has been reviewed by Kamil Kopij and suggested as a most suitable tool for application in ancient numismatics[9]. It consists of a set of ten issues that should be answered to obtain a comprehensive description of the propaganda campaign: (1) *"To what ends,* (2) *in the context of the times,* (3) *does a propaganda agent,* (4) *working through an organization,* (5) *reaches an audience through the media* (6) *while using special symbols* (7) *to get a desired reaction?* (8) *If there is opposition to the propaganda,* (9) *what form does it take?* (10) *how successful is the propaganda in achieving its purpose?*"

In this context, a few cases have been chosen out of the great variety of Cretan numismatic iconography to elucidate such claims.

1. The notification of the main cult of the city: patron deities

Almost every Cretan mint during its production depicted the head of its patron deity on their silver staters, bearing their characteristics and attributes. Most depictions refer to the known panhellenic pantheon, for example, Zeus, indicatively on the silver coins of Polyrrhenia[10], Eleutherna[11] and Praisos[12]; Hera, who featured on the obverses of the silver staters of Tylissos[13] and a silver issue of drachms at Knossos[14]; Poseidon, on the obverse of the silver staters of Rhaukos[15] and the reverse of the silver staters of Priansos[16]; Apollo, on the obverse of the silver staters of Eleutherna[17], Rithymna[18] and many other examples that are not to be listed here.

Other mints chose as main coin types deities uniquely local to Crete, such as

[6] On the definition and use of the terms "religion", "ritual" and "cult", see Mazarakis Ainian *et al.* 2021, 9-10.

[7] Stefanakis and Konstantinidi 2020, 772.

[8] Jowett and O'Donnell 2012.

[9] Kopij 2017.

[10] Στεφανάκης 2013, 9-11, 19, 37; 2019a, 52-53; Svoronos 1890, pl. XXV, 21-30.

[11] Στεφανάκης 2019b, 70-71; 2020, 131; Svoronos 1890, pl. XI, 26-28.

[12] Στεφανάκη 2019b, 122-123; Svoronos 1890, pl. XXVII, 21-28; XXVIII, 1, 5, 7.

[13] Svoronos 1890, pl. XXX, 29-32.

[14] Carrier 2013; 2020, 206; Στεφανάκη 2019a, 98; Svoronos 1890, pl. VI, 6-7.

[15] Στεφανάκη 2019a, 102; Svoronos 1890, pl. XXIX, 6-24.

[16] Στεφανάκη 2019a, 101; Svoronos 1890, pl. XXVIII, 21-22.

[17] Στεφανάκης 2019b, 70-71; 2020, 131; Στεφανάκη and Στρατίκη 2007-08; Svoronos 1890, pl. XI-XII.

[18] Στεφανάκης 2019b, 72; 2020, 131; Svoronos 1890, pl. XXX, 1.

Ariadne featuring on the silver staters of Knossos[19]; Britomartis on the silver staters of Chersonessos[20]; Welchanos on the coins of Phaistos[21], to mention the most distinctive. Diktynna, an important goddess of western Crete, present on the coins of Kydonia[22], Aptera[23] and Polyrrhenia[24] will be discussed more thoroughly below.

All these deities, apart from guaranteeing the quality of the alloy and safeguarding the wealth of the city-state, served as strong propaganda symbols, communicating the main or other cults of the city to whoever received a coin of their mint in his hand. However, this is only the obvious meaning of the religious figures on coinage.

2. The association with major and powerful religious and mythic figures and episodes

The diversity of Cretan iconography, however, points also to the promotion of powerful figures of the Cretan myth, nymphs, heroes and oikists, many of whom no doubt had a specific cult in the city. Three indicative such examples will be brought up here: Gortyna, Phaistos and Aptera.

2a. Gortyna: from nymph Europa to goddess Hera

Among the nymphs Europa was used as a strong symbol of religious –and not only– propaganda by the city-state of Gortyna and her myth was among the most famous myths of Crete during antiquity. According to the myth, Zeus, who fell in love with her, transformed himself into a gentle white bull and abducted the nymph, bringing her to the Diktean Cave or to Gortyna, where the sacred wedding took place[25].

The imagery of Europa on the bull is traced back to the early archaic period[26] and the type became common in the sixth and fifth c. BC vase painting[27] and architectural sculpture[28]. Her arrival in Crete seated on the back of the bull is persistently represented on the obverse of the earliest silver –and presumably alliance coinages– of Gortyna[29] and Phaistos[30] (figs 1a-b) around the mid-5th c. BC[31], and again on the silver issues of both cities of the late 5th and early 4th c. BC (figs 2a-b)[32].

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[19] Svoronos 1890, pl. IV, 33-35, V, VI, 1-5; Στεφανάκη 2019a, 98. On Ariadne, see Willetts 1962, 193-197.

[20] Στεφανάκη 2019a, 104; Svoronos 1890, pl. III, 17-26.

[21] Στεφανάκη 2019a, 103; Carbone 2022, 93-94, Group K; Svoronos 1890, pl. XXIII, 24-26.

[22] Stefanakis 1997; Στεφανάκης 2019a, 44-47; Svoronos 1890, pl. IX, 2-5; X, 1-2.

[23] Στεφανάκης 2019a, 48-49; Svoronos 1890, pl. I, 7-10.

[24] Στεφανάκης 2013, 15-18, 30, 32-33, 38-39, 41; 2019a, 52-53; Svoronos 1890, pl. XXVI, 19-22.

[25] On the myth of Europa, see Andrews 1969; Bühler 1968; Reeves 2003; Ρούσσος 1986, 259-166.

[26] Sporn 2013, 402-403.

[27] See *LIMC* IV, Europa I, 24-59. On the depictions of Europa and the bull in ancient Greek art in general, see also Αποστολακοπούλου 2016; Silvestrelli 1998; *LIMC* IV, Europa I, 1-220; Zahn 1983.

[28] See, for example, the depiction on the archaic metope from Temple Y of Selinus (ca 550-540 BC): Marconi 2007, 90-96; Østby 1987; Kähler 1949, 37-38.

[29] On the mint of Gortyna, see Carbone 2014-15, 70-83, 91-113; Στεφανάκη 2019a; Jackson 1971; Le Rider 1966, 129-172 (sporadically); Svoronos 1890, 153-182.

[30] On the mint of Phaistos, see Carbone 2014-15, 84-90, 114-123; 2022; Στεφανάκη 2019b; Le Rider 1966, 129-172 (sporadically); Svoronos 1890, 253-265.

[31] Carbone 2014-15, 70, 91, 109, 120 (ca 470-425 BC); 2022, 67, Group A, series 1, N.1; Le Rider 1966, 194 (ca 450/425-360? BC). Also, Στεφανάκης 2011-2012, 73; Stefanakis 1999, 257-258. Federico Carbone is the latest main researcher on the coinages of Gortyna and Phaistos, and their dating in his thorough, well-

Around the middle of the 4th c. BC, Gortyna issued a new series of silver staters[33] with new types, depicting on the obverse Europa seated on tree branches, while a bull is depicted on the reverse[34]. The specific type was copied by the neighbouring mint of Sybritos for a short period[35].

The earliest coins of the series around 360-330 BC[36] depict on the obverse the nymph sitting pensively within the branches of a tree (turned half right or left) (fig. 3a), while on another issue possibly of slightly later date (360/50-322 BC)[37], the nymph releases her concentration, extending her left arm to the right in a gesture of invitation (fig. 3b). On the coins dated between 322 and 300 BC[38] the trunk of the tree is transformed into the head of an eagle (fig. 3c), while on another issue of the same period an eagle seats on a branch to the left, next to the nymph (fig. 3d). In the next three series, all dated between 300 and 270 BC[39], the nymph is presented as a legal spouse, lifting her veil with the left hand and looking towards the eagle standing left on the left (fig. 3e). Next, the eagle, with his wings wide open, couples with the half nude nymph, who keeps her veil up with the right hand and holds the eagle with her left in her lap (fig. 3f)[40]. Finally, in the third issue of the period, as a sign that the Holy Wedding has taken place, the nymph is represented as a legitimate wife of Zeus, bearing the symbols of Hera, that is, wearing a *polos* cup on her head and holding a cuckoo-tipped sceptre (fig. 3g)[41]. The legitimate spouse revealing herself to the eagle is again represented on the one and short-lived issue (fig. 4) of the next period (260-250 BC)[42] characterized by a debasement of coinage in the major mints[43].

The earlier representation of Europa riding a galloping bull reappeared eventually on the new coinage of Gortyna around after the middle of the 3rd c. BC. This time, on the reverse of the new silver drachms of the city the mantel of the nymph is filled with

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documented research has been widely accepted. On the early case of common types between Gortyna and Phaistos, see Carbone in this volume below, 59-61.

[32] Carbone 2014-15, 109 (ca 425-350 BC); Le Rider 1966, 194 (ca 450/425-360? BC); Also, Στεφανάκη 2019a, 94; Στεφανάκης 2002, 53-54; 2011-2012, 71-74.

[33] Carbone 2014-15, 110-111 (ca 350-260 BC); Le Rider 1966, 194 (ca 360/50-280/70 BC).

[34] Stefanakis and Konstantinidi 2020, 759-761; Carbone 2014-15, ser. 59-102. See also Svoronos 1894, 3.

[35] Stefanakis and Konstantinidi 2020, 12; Στεφανάκης 2019b, 74; Carbone 2014-15, 445-447; Στεφανάκης 2002, 54; 2011-2012, 74-76. On the mint of Sybritos in general, Στεφανάκης 2011-2012, 74-76; 2019b, 74-76b; Guarducci 1949; Naster 1947; Svoronos 1890, 313-317, pls XXX, 12-XXXI, 13; Also Carbone in this volume below, 69-70.

[36] Le Rider 1966, 194. Carbone (2014-15) has not attempted any specific dating for the various individual issues of the series, dating all of them to the years 350-260 BC.

[37] Le Rider 1966, 194.

[38] Le Rider 1966, 194.

[39] Le Rider 1966, 194.

[40] This last representation seems to copy –or at least is likely to be influenced by– the well-known statue complex of Leda and the Swan, the work of the sculptor Timotheus from Epidaurus, of the early 4th c. BC. Στεφανάκης 2002, 52; Stefanakis 2000, 85. On the "Leda and the Swan" of Timotheos, see indicatively, Rieche 1978; 2010; *LIMC* VI, 5-7, 73.

[41] Στεφανάκης 2002, 52-53; 2011-2012, 78; Stefanakis 2000, 85. Comp. *LIMC* IV, Hera 154 and 168 for similar depictions on pottery.

[42] Carbone 2014-15, 111 (ca 260-250 BC). The issue was wrongly dated by Στεφανάκης (2011-2012, 77) to the years 300-280/70 BC and thus identified as an issue of the earlier series.

[43] On the shortage of silver in the east Mediterranean in the early 3rd c. BC, see Στεφανάκης 2011-2012, 79-82; Stefanakis 2000, 201.

the wind over her head floating like a sail[44] (fig. 5). In some cases, on the large bronze fractions of the same period, the tree-nymph (obverse) is associated with Europa seated on the back of the bull (reverse) (fig. 6)[45].

It is evident that Europa featured on the coinage of Gortyna for almost three centuries as a strong symbol of autochthony[46], but it was not only that. Europa has convincingly been identified with a tree goddess, a custom deriving from Minoan times, with her nature being that of an earth goddess/chthonic deity and her cult is well attested in the organization of the *hellotia* festival at Gortyna[47]. Although the nature and the content of the festival are not known, the fourth and third c. BC iconographic evidence – the BM (fig. 7) sculptural group of Europa seated on bull with two dolphins supporting the front (ca 100 BC) in natural size that was dedicated to the town[48] in addition to the coin iconography– may imply a re-enactment of the nymph's abduction during the festival[49] and of her subsequent coupling with Zeus under the sacred plain tree (*Platanus orientalis*) of Gortyna (Theophr., *Hist. pl.* 1,9.5 and 7-10; Plin., *HN* 12.1)[50], where she became a goddess equal to Hera and bride of the Cretan Zeus[51].

Let's not forget that Hera was married to Zeus on Crete[52], and according to Diodoros, a temple still marked in his days the spot in the territory of Knossos close to the river *Theren* ("Θηρήνος ποταμοῦ")[53], where the local people offered annual sacrifices and imitated the marriage ceremony in a traditional fashion. According to Willetts, this ritual possibly derived from an earlier Minoan palace cult involving the symbolic marriage of sun and moon[54]. It is then possible that Gortyna tried to counterbalance the knossian cult of the sacred marriage by promoting the episode of the marriage of Europa and Zeus in her territory, transforming Europa into Hera through the most elegant and powerful means, the coinage.

Applying then the Processual Model of Propaganda one may suggest that the Gortynians: (1) spread their propaganda on autochthony and priority through myth and religion, (2) as soon as their economy was monetized in the second quarter of the 5th c.

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[44] In accordance with the description of Moschus, *Europa*, 129-130: "*the robe went bosoming deep at the shoulder like the sail of a ship*".

[45] Svoronos 1890, pl. XV, 20-28.

[46] Stefanakis and Konstantinidi 2020, 761.

[47] Reeves 2003, 15-18, with all earlier bibliography. On the cult of Europa in Gortyna, see also Sporn 2002, 165-168.

[48] From the great theater of Gortyna. The British Museum inv. no. 1862,0201.01 https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G_1862-0201-1 (last accessed 29.11.2025). See also *LIMC* IV, Europa I, 206; Spratt 2007, 58-59; Χατζηδάκης 1931, 9-10; Waldhauer 1915, 63-68.

[49] Malalas, *Chron.* 2.8.31, reports such a festivity in Tyre.

[50] Ρούσσος 1986, 260-62; Στεφανάκης 2011-2012, 78-79. On the *Platanus orientalis,* still growing around Gortyna, see Καργιολάκη 1997; Nikolakaki 1989; Νικολακάκη 1997.

[51] Verbruggen 1981, 52. On the identification of Hera with Europa, see Willetts 1962, 166f. On cults of Hera on Crete, see *IC* II xx 1 (Kydonia); II xv 2 (Hyrtakina); III iii 4 (Hierapytna); III iv 8 (the Itanos citizens' oath); *IC* I viii 4 (Knossos or Tylissos); I xxx (Tylissos); I xxiv (Priansos), I xvi 5 (Olous); IV 3 and *LSCG* 146 (Gortyn).

[52] On the sacred marriage, see Willetts 1962, 252-253.

[53] Diod. Sic. 5.72.4. On the river Theren and its disputed location, Chaniotis 1992, 90 and n. 262; 98 and n. 317; 99.

[54] Willetts 1962, 50-51, 110-111; See also, Elderkin 1937, 424-435; Verbruggen 1981, 52-53.; Capdeville 1995, 43.

BC, (3) using their powerful local coinage, (4) a legally tender means of exchange issued by the state mint, (5) to reach all civilians and Cretans. (6) Neighbouring Phaistos in the late 5th-early 4th c. BC and Sybritos in the mid-4th c. BC adopted the numismatic iconography of Gortyna and carried this mythological and religious propaganda further in central Crete using the same type and symbolism of the gortynian coinage, i.e. episodes of the life of Europa that led to her sacred marriage with Zeus. (7) The gortynian preference for untold details and scenes of Europa's life was broadly used to proclaim Gortyna as the holy place of the sacred marriage of Zeus with Europa and thus the spot on the island where everything had started, as well as to link an old Cretan tradition with the contemporary Greek religion. (8) It seems that there was no opposition to the gortynian propaganda since (9) no other mint claimed the image of Europa after the end of the 4th c. BC –at least no such evidence exists– and (10) it probably succeeded in its purpose, strongly connecting Gortyna –Phaistos and Sybritos soon receded from any claims of Europa's iconography– with the image of Europa, who became a legitimate spouse of Cretan Zeus. Thus, the nymph and goddess featured solely on the coinage of Gortyna for the next five centuries as a strong symbol of past legacy, autochthony, religion and cult, proclaiming the gortynian primacy over the island through Gortyna's strong ties to the mother of Minos, Rhadamanthys and Sarpedon and consequently of all Cretans as well as strongly bonding the city to the new era of Greek Gods.

2b. Phaistos: from the old Cretan tradition to the Dorian Herakles

Soon after quitting Europa and the bull iconography[55] the mint of Phaistos –retaining a female head, possibly Europa, sporadically on larger and smaller silver denominations[56] and the bull throughout– turned for a short period towards the last decades of the 4th c. BC to a local figure inscribed as *Welchanos*[57], while it introduced at the same time the local figure of Talos[58], who more intensively continued in the first half of the 2nd c. BC period[59].

Welchanos (fig. 8) is a unique figure of phaistian imagery and unique for Cretan coinage, where he is shown as a male figure seated to the right of an oak(?) tree with a cockerel standing to the right on his knee. As a cult image, he is associated with vegetation and Cretan Zeus[60] and his imagery recalls the contemporary series of Gortyna (fig. 3a-b) with Europa seated among the branches of a plane tree. He has a documented presence in the local cult of central Crete. Archaeological evidence for his cult comes from Hagia Triada, which in the 4th c. BC came under the control of Phaistos and was reinstated as a place of worship. In this period, a small shrine was established over a Minoan stoa in honour of Zeus Welchanos. In the same location, a bullhead was also found, dated around the 2nd c. BC, which has been attributed to the shrine of

[55] Carbone 2022, groups A-C, series 1-3 (ca 470-320 BC).

[56] Carbone 2022, group E, series 7-11 (ca 410-350 BC) and group O, series 52-54 (ca 350-300 BC).

[57] Carbone 2022, group K, series 35-37 (ca 320-300 BC).

[58] Carbone 2022, group S, series 86-94 (ca 320-300 BC).

[59] Carbone 2022, group U, series 98-99 (ca 300-250 BC). On the figures of Welchanos and Talos on the coinage of Phaistos, see Carbone in this volume below, 65-67.

[60] Schofield 2011, 106-108; Sporn 2002, 202-203; Willetts 1962, 250-251; Verbruggen 1981, 144; Carbone 2022, 20, n. 20.

Welchanos[61]. Although no other source exists, Welchanos' main festival, the *Welchania*, was likely celebrated in the Cretan poleis of Gortyna, Lyttos and Knossos[62].

The similarity with the contemporary prevailing coin type of Europa in Gortyna should be taken not only as a unique depiction of a local male god of vegetation and fertility[63], but also as a symbolism of his distinct –and rival– character to the nature of the gortynian goddess.

Talos, the winged bronze giant, is said to have been made by Hephaestus at the request of Zeus to protect either Minos or Europa. He circled the island's shores three times daily, keeping away pirates and invaders[64]. He is represented on the silver staters of Phaistos with the inscription Τ-ΑΛ-ΩΝ (fig. 9) facing and striding to l., hurling a stone and holding another. He is an important mythological figure and a symbol of power for the island of Crete, while he is associated with Zeus in his solar sense[65] as an older, pre-Greek deity[66]. The depiction of the giant on the coinage of Phaistos is regarded as the earliest in the pictorial narrative in the Greek world, thus a local myth (and cult?) may be assumed for the city of Phaistos[67]. If we were to take for granted the genealogy of Phaistos narrated by Kinaithon, in which Talos was the offspring of Kres and father of Phaistos, the founder of the city and grandfather of Radamanthys (Paus. 8, 53, 5)[68], then Talos would hold a considerable place within the phaistian mythological tradition[69]. Thus, Talos would well imply the autochthony of the Phaistians from Cres, the father of Cretans[70].

Despite those two traditional and unique local figures of myth and cult that the authorities of Phaistos chose for their late 4th c. BC coin types, there is another one that prevailed, again unique for the south-central Crete: the Dorian Hero and God (*Hêrôs Theos*) of Pindar[71], Herakles.

Herakles is depicted on silver staters in various episodes and labours, in six different depictions –with variations– and the order in which they are presented follows the relative chronology of Carbone.

1. Head of young Herakles r. / two bulls ΦΑΙΣΤΙΟΝ (fig. 10a)[72].

2. Herakles standing with bow in l. and club in r. hand. In the field l., lion skin/

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[61] Banti 1984, 70-71; D'Agata 1998, 24-25; Sanders 1976, 133, 137.

[62] Willets 1962 250.

[63] Nilsson 1927, 482.

[64] Apollod. *Bibl.* 1.9.26. Talos is a gift to Europa only in Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 4, 1643. On Talos, see Willetts 1962, 100-101 and 248-249. Federico 1989, 95-120; 2008, 290-292; Sporn 2002, 204; Carbone 2022, 154-155.

[65] Hesychii Alexandrini: *ταλῶς· ὁ ἥλιος.*

[66] Schofield 2011, 105; Nilsson 1923, 148; Cook 1964, 729 ff.

[67] Sporn 2002, 204; 2013, 402.

[68] Kinkel 1877, *Cinaetho*, v. I, 196-197. See also, Federico 2008, 288, 298-99.

[69] Talos was also considered to be the lover of Radamanthys and protector of the ephebe during the passage rituals (Athen. XIII, 603d; Federico 2008, 290-91, 295), or the protector of the laws on behalf of Radamanthys (Federico 2008, 297).

[70] See also, Γιαννοπούλου 2019, 26, n. 17.

[71] Burkert 1985, 208-209 at the same festival sacrifice was made to him, first as a hero, with a chthonic libation, and then as a god, upon an altar: thus, he embodies the closest Greek approach to a "demi-god". On Herakles in Pindar, see indicatively, Nieto Hernandez 1993; Pike 1984; Shapiro 1983; Pavese 1968.

[72] Carbone 2022, group F, series 12 (ca mid-4th-end of 4th c. BC).

bull to l., legs stranded (fig. 10b)[73].

3. Heracles seated l. atop lion's skin draped over rock, head slightly r., club resting against l. leg; before him, tree upon which his bow and quiver are hung; behind, large amphora. Rev. ΦΑΙΣ (fig. 10c)[74].

4. Herakles at the garden of Hesperides, naked, standing to front, holding club and lion's skin in lowered hands. To l., serpent. To r., tree (fig. 10d)[75].

5. Herakles fighting a serpent. The hero nude, standing facing, turned slightly to the r., holding bow across his waist with his l. hand and preparing to swing his club in his r. hand at a serpent on the r., coiled up and striking toward him (fig. 10e)[76].

6. Herakles fighting the hydra, standing in fighting attitude to l., wearing Nemean lion skin, with his r. hand preparing to strike with club; at feet, crab –most likely copying a lost masterpiece of Lysippus (fig. 10f)[77].

The obverse types 4, 5 and 6 reflect labours of the hero already known from the Greek mythology and contemporary art, namely the stealing of the Golden Apples of the Hesperides protected by the dragon Ladon (4-5)[78] and the kill of the Lernaean Hydra (6)[79]. Types 1 and 2 allow the identification of the labour thanks to the reverse type: the Capture of the Cattle of Geryon (1)[80] and the Capture of the Cretan bull, with his legs stranded with rope (2)[81]. The third type is not connected with some known labour, but it may depict the hero seated and resting, probably during an interval between two labours[82].

Herakles, although very popular in archaic Greece, did not appear in the Cretan pictorial narrative before the classical period. Indeed, the first documented depiction of the hero occurs for the first time on a single relief from Knossos together with Eurystheus[83]. His mythological circle remains a rare imagery for Hellenistic Cretan coins, appearing on three more Cretan mints of the Hellenistic era apart from Phaistos, namely

[73] Carbone 2022, groups G-H, series 13-17, 22-23 (ca 350-300 BC).

[74] Carbone 2022, group L, series 38-43 (ca 320-300 BC).

[75] Carbone 2022 group H, series 16-23 (ca 320-300 BC).

[76] Carbone 2022 group Q, series 59-68 (ca 320-300 BC).

[77] Carbone 2022 group S, series 69-85 (ca 320-300 BC).

[78] On the type in ancient Greek art, see *LIMC* V, 2690-2699.

[79] On the type in ancient Greek art, see *LIMC* V, 2032-2057. On the suggestion of the phaistian coin type being a copy of a lost masterpiece of Lyssipos, see Στεφανάκης 2002, 47, n. 18. According to Mørkholm (1991, 160), the rare reverse type of the silver staters of Selge of ca 280-260 BC (pl. XXXVIII, 581) may have been influenced by the phaistian reverse type.

[80] On the type in ancient Greek art, see *LIMC* V, 2533-2535c.

[81] On the type in ancient Greek art, see *LIMC* V, 2326-2336.

[82] For comparison, see the examples of the beardless resting Herakles on the AR states of Croton in the first half of the 4th c. BC (*SNG ANS* 375, 378; *SNG München* 1459). As to the posture of Herakles, close parallels can be traced to the marble statue of Herakles of the 1st-2nd c. AD, an adaptation of a Greek prototype of the late 4th-early 3rd c. BC in The Metropolitan Museum, N. York (*LIMC* IV, 774, no. 942, pl. 508) and the "Terme Boxer", a Hellenistic bronze statue at the Museo Nazionale Romano di Palazzo Massimo, Rome (Arenas 1999; Zanker 2005).

[83] Sporn 2002, 122, pl. 25, 1.

Allaria[84], Chersonessos and Praisos. Of these three, Praisos and Chersonessos used Herakles imagery in their late 4th-early 3rd c. BC coinage[85]:

The kneeling archer Herakles originally on the reverse and later on the obverse of the early (3rd quarter of the 4th c. BC) silver series of Praisos[86] refers to the kill of the Stymphalian Birds (such a bird was possibly depicted on the reverse of the staters), while on another, later issue (end of 4th-early 3rd c. BC) Heracles is depicted on the reverse standing to the r., holding bow in the outstretched left and club in the raised right hand[87].

On a similar type on the reverse of the silver staters of Chersonessos ca 330-270 BC[88], the hero seems to copy the much earlier type of Stymphalos in Arcadia[89]. These two cases have been suggested to reflect a rather strong influence of the Peloponnese on central-east Crete. Adding the types of Phaistos, one then can speak of propagandized relations of Cretan cities with the Peloponnese[90], where a cult of Herakles may have been introduced[91]. It may not be a coincidence after all that Phaistos was the name of the king of Sikyon and son of Herakles, who imported his fathers' cult into the city and who was offering sacrifices not to the hero Herakles, but to the god (Paus. 2.10.1).

The appearance of Herakles on the Phaistian coins together with the only evidence from an inscribed sherd dated to the second half of the 6th c. BC from Phaistos[92] render likely the existence of an otherwise unattested local cult of the hero[93]. Let us keep in mind that according to myth Phaistus, the eponymous founder of the city, was either the grandson of Herakles (Stephanus of Byzantium s.v. *Φαιστός*; Eustathius of Thessalonica, ad Homer 237) or even the son of the hero, who founded the city after an oracle (Paus. 2.6, 6-7)[94]. Other than the coins, only Kydonia in the west has provided sporadic archaeological and epigraphic evidence for a cult of Herakles[95], while it has been also suggested that the ancient place name Heraklion may imply the existence of a sanctuary of the Hero[96]. A few mythological episodes denote his connection with Crete, such as his

[84] Svoronos 1890, pl. I, 1-2. On the later, 2nd c. BC inauguration of the mint of Alaria, see Stefanakis 1997, 239.

[85] The coinage of Allaria with resting Herakles standing on the reverse is rather later, early 2nd c. BC (Στεφανάκης 2020, 134, n. 39) and not of ca 280-270 BC as Le Rider (1966, 190, 198 248, n. 4) suggested. On the coins, see Svoronos 1890, 2, 1-3, pl. I, 1-2.

[86] Svoronos 1890, pl. XXVII, 1-3 and 4-10 respectively. Στεφανάκης 2014, 610-611; 2017, 226. For the date, see Le Rider 1966, 197.

[87] Svoronos 1890, pl. XXVII, 21. For the date, Le Rider 1966, 197.

[88] Svoronos 1890, III, 18-23.

[89] Στεφανάκης 2017, 226. The form and the movement of Herakles resemble the depiction on the phaistian coins with the fight of the Hydra. See also Τασούλας 1994, 88.

[90] On the relations of Cretan mints with the Peloponnese in general, see Στεφανάκης 2017; Stefanakis 2007, 310-311.

[91] Στεφανάκης 2017, 226. Also, Babelon 1914, 921-922.

[92] Scirpo 2012, 213, n. 1871; Scirpo 2014, 80; Guarducci 1952-54, 172.

[93] Scirpo 2012, 213 and La Rosa 1996 on the assumption of the existence of a temple dedicated to Herakles and Gortys in the area. Sporn 2002, 199-200.

[94] On Herakles' cult in Phaistos, see Sporn 2002, 199-200.

[95] Τζανακάκη 2020b, 366-367 on a pedestal of the late 5th-early 4th c. BC bearing a dedicatory inscription to Herakles and 368-369 on scarce evidence for his presence in the city of Kydonia; Sporn 2002, 271. On the evidence for the cult of Herakles on Crete in general, see Scirpo 2014, 78-81.

[96] Chaniotis 1996, 163, n. 1042.

raising and training in archery by Radamanthys[97] or his labour regarding the capture of the Cretan Bull on the island[98]. All the above, along with the fact that Crete was dorianized early, point out that the patron hero of the Heracleids would have an eminent position and cult among the Dorians of Crete[99]. His adoption by the Phaistians would possibly denote their supremacy in Crete[100] and their descent from the Dorians of the Peloponnese[101].

Applying then the Processual Model of Propaganda one may suggest that the Phaistians: (1) to spread their propaganda on autochthony and priority through myth and religion (2) –as soon as Gortyna established and largely promoted her numismatic propaganda with the figure of Europa in the middle of the 4th c. BC– (3) used their powerful local coinage, (4) a legally tender means of exchange issued by the state mint (5) to reach all civilians and Cretans. (6) They quit the earlier Gortynian numismatic types of Europa and the bull and adopted, in the second half of the 4th c. BC, a different numismatic iconography using indigenous figures, originally the cult image of Welchanos, possibly as a counter-tree figure to Europa, and then proclaimed autochthony and supremacy by promoting the powerful figure of Talos, the protector of Europa and possibly a key figure for their autochthony. It was, however, the figure of Herakles that prevailed as a main type on the coinage of Phaistos from the end of the 4th to the 3rd c. BC. The iconography of Herakles coincided with the gortynian iconography of Europa on the plane tree (350-270 BC), emphasizing four labours of the Hero other than the kill of the stymphalian birds adopted at the time by Chersonessos and Praisos. (7) The political decision to promote Heracles, who was likely to have had a cult in the city, as a main religious and mythological figure was used to create a shift of interest in the city's past, which was now strongly connected to the greatest of the Dorian Greek heroes, the ancestor of royal clans who claimed to be Heracleids, thus proclaiming Phaistos as the centre of the Dorian world of Crete. The city, however, retained at the same time its bonds with the Minoan past through the contemporary iconography of Talos. (8) It seems that there was no opposition to the phaistian propaganda (9) –at least no such evidence exists– (10) and it probably succeeded in its purpose, strongly connecting Phaistos with the otherwise rare in Cretan coinages (one known type in Praisos and one in Chersonessos) image of Herakles, the prime hero and semi-god of the Dorian Greek world.

2c. Aptera: the eponymous hero/city-founder

Apart from sporadic appearances on coins[102], there is no solid evidence for an

[97] Aristophanes, *FGrH.*, 379, F8: Tzetzes, Lycoph. 50.

[98] Apollod., *Bibl.*, 2.5.7; Diod. Sic. 4.13.4; Paus. 1.27.9-10. On the cult of Herakles on Crete in general, see Sporn 2002, 337-338.

[99] On the movement of Dorians towards Crete, the process of cultural change and adaptation, see Willetts 1962, 39-40; Willetts 1965, 32-34. Also, Schofield 2011, 199.

[100] Scirpo 2012, 212, in the same way Spartans used Herakles in their propaganda regarding their supremacy in Peloponnese.

[101] Federico 2008, 295-296. On the mythological relation of Dorians, mainly from Argolis, with the foundation of Cretan cities, see also Scirpo 2012, 92.

[102] Schofield 2011, 99-100; Sporn 2013, 399. Diod. Sic. (5.78.1) lists Minos, Rhadamanthys and Sarpedon among the most renowned heroes of Crete.

ancestor or any other hero cult on the island of Crete[103]. Hero-cults may be implied only for Minos and Idomeneus[104]. Neither the oikist/city founder cult is documented on Crete except for individual disputed attributions on coins[105]. In that context, the interpretation of the figure on the reverse of the silver coinage of Aptera (fig. 11) is questionable. A helmeted hero, naked or wearing a cuirass and most often armed with a spear, always carries a shield decorated sometimes with a star, stands to the left in front of a small laurel tree towards which he raises his right hand. The inscription on the field reads *Ptolioikos*, which should be explained as the "founder/founding dynasty of the city" (πτόλεως οἶκος)[106].

Although the figure is not mentioned in any written sources, it likely depicts the oikist of the city. Pausanias associates the city's foundation and name with the mythical hero Pteras of Delphi, who built the second temple of Apollo out of bird feathers and beeswax there, by adding an initial A[107]. According to Capdeville, however, the completely absurd etymology, the absence of any chronological data and any detail on the event –to the point that it does not even appear that Pteras went to Crete– seem to indicate that the story was fabricated in Delphi based on an approximate resemblance of names and strong affinities between Crete and the sanctuary at Delphi[108].

The depiction of a hero-worshipper of the Delphic laurel tree may echo an early colonization tradition like the one known for the nearby Kydonia, colonized by the Arcadian Althaimenes sometime in the early Iron Age[109]. Archaeological evidence indicates that habitation on the hill of Aptera began in the proto-geometric period[110] and one can speculate that Pteras or Apteras, who was the leader of the new group of settlers who had undertaken a colony foundation task, would have been worshipped as the founder of the city (*ptoleos oikistis*)[111] and become the eponymous hero with an appropriate oikist cult, as usually happened during the great Greek colonization[112].

His association with the laurel tree, to which he pays his respects, may not only

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[103] Sporn 2002, 340.

[104] Sporn 2013, 399. See, however, Sporn 2002, 339-342 for more possible cults. On the birth of the hero-cult in early Iron Age, Antonaccio 2006, 386-394; on the emergence of hero cults and their relation to the early Greek social organization and the development of the epic tradition in the late geometric-early archaic Greece, van Wees 2006.

[105] Sporn 2013, 399, with reference to Gortys and Kydon; Sporn 2002, 123 for Minos; 167-168 for Gortys; 272 for Kydon.

[106] Rather not as *πολιούχος* ("patron, protector of the city") as Capdeville 1995, 42 suggested.

[107] Paus. 10, 5, 9-10. See also, Philostr. (*VA*, 6, 10, 4; 11, 14). Capdeville 1995, 45; Niniou-Kindeli and Tzanakaki 2019, 41; Willetts 1962, 188-190.

[108] Capdeville 1995, 45 and notes 78-80.

[109] Althaimenes of Argos is reported to have moved from the Peloponnese to Crete (Str., 14.653; Photius 186 Bekker p. 141a), to end up on Rhodes in the Dodecanese. According to Pindar (*Ol.* VII, 25-38), Thucidides (7.57, 6) and Aelius Arsitides (44, 568-569 [839]), the Rhodians were descendants of the Argives and the Peloponessians. On the myth of Althaimenes, see Αστυρακάκη and Στεφανάκης (forthcoming).

[110] Niniou-Kindeli and Tzanakaki 2019, 46. See also, Τζανακάκη 2020a, 110-111, 117-119.

[111] Sporn 2002, 262.

[112] On the oikist cult in general, see Malkin 1981; 1987. Direct reference to an oikist on coins is extremely rare, known so far only from the silver series of Croton, where the founder Herakles is inscribed ΟΙΚΙΣΤΑΣ on various silver denominations of the city (see, for example, AR Nomos, ca 420 BC (*SNG ANS* 334-335; *SNG Lloyd* 610); stater, ca 420-390 (*SNG Lockett* 614-615; *SNG Copenhagen* 1773); Diobol ca 300-250 BC (*SNG ANS* 425; *SNG Lockett* 634-635; *SNG Lloyd* 626).

reflect his connection to the Delphic Apollo[113], but it could easily be taken as an undeniable gesture of dendrolatry that places the figure within the Minoan[114] and early Iron Age[115] religious contexts on Crete[116], where trees were worshipped either as symbols of gods or as directly associated with them[117]. Numismatic iconography of the fourth and third c. Crete is indispensable evidence of such a continued tradition, especially in south-central Crete. Europa anticipated her coupling with Zeus seated on the branch of a plane tree on the coins of Gortyna (figs 3a-g) and Sybritos[118], while Welchanos, accompanied by a cockerel, seats on the branches of a tree in Phaistos (fig. 8).

Although a plausible reference to the Delphic tradition, the Ptoloiikos reverse is combined with a well-groomed female head on the obverse of the silver staters of Aptera, known in the western part of Crete with the local name Diktynna (fig. 11)[119].

Diktynna indeed seems to be a leading figure in the local –western Crete– cult (see below, pp. 35-37) and the possible existence of an ancient cult is evidenced by the only known reference to the calendar month *Diktynnaios* in the first decree granting asylum to Teos in 201 BC[120]. In addition, archaeological evidence points out that she retained a place of worship by the nearby port of Minoa –which was controlled by Aptera at certain times– at the cave *Marathospilios* in use since Minoan times[121]. She was replaced in Hellenistic times by Artemis, since the only temple of the city –most likely the two-room temple built in the 5th c. BC over an earlier place of worship[122]– attested epigraphically is that of *Artemis Aptera*, mentioned in the second decree for the asylia of Teos (after ca 170 BC) as being the place where this document and that which had preceded it were to

[113] Apollo is the only figure on coins closely related with the laurel tree or a laurel branch. See, for example, the silver staters of Tylissos, Crete, of ca 320-270 BC with Apollo standing left before small laurel tree, holding bow in left hand and goat's head in outstretched right hand on the reverse (Svoronos 1890, pl. XXX, 29-32) –Sporn (2001, 60-62) has suggested, however, that it may be just a mortal hunter of Hermes depicted; the AR Nomos of Metapontion ca 440-430 BC with Apollo standing left, holding small laurel tree and bow on the reverse (Noe 1931, 314-319; *BMC Italy*, 46); the AR tetradrachms of Apollonia Pontika, Thrace, of the early 2nd c. BC with the cult statue of Apollo Iatros standing facing, holding long laurel branch in right hand, upon which a bird is perched, and bow and arrows in left hand (Topalov 2007, 624, no. 98).

[114] See, for example, the clay sealing from Chania with a female figure adoring a tree (*CMS* V Suppl. IA. 176) or the infamous "Minos' ring" with a complex scene of dendrolatry (Marinatos 2015; Dimopoulou and Rethemiotakis 2004; Warren 1987; Pini 1987).

[115] See, for example, Hermes Kedrites mounted on the branches of a cedar tree on a bronze cutout plaque from the sanctuary of Hermes and Aphrodite in Ano Symi,Viannos (Λεμπέση 1985, πίν. 15 Α21; Lebessi 2021, fig. 6; Sporn, 2001, 60).

[116] Capdeville 1995, 42.

[117] On the tree-cult of the Minoan religion, see indicatively, Marinatos, 1989; Nilsson 1950, 262-288; Evans 1901. For the tree cult in the Bronze Age Aegean in general, see indicatively, Rutkowski 1984; Tully 2018.

[118] See above, notes 34 and 35.

[119] See Capdeville 1995, 46-50; Svoronos 1890, pl. I, 10. On Diktynna and her cult as Artemis in Aptera, Sporn 2002, 263-264, 285-286. On the Diktynna and her cult on Crete in general, see Scirpo 2012, 253-255, 262-264, 271-273; Sporn 2001; 2002, 268-280, 323-325; *LIMC* III.I, 391-394; Willetts 1962, 179-193; Guarducci 1935.

[120] *IC* II, 3, 1, l. 13. See also, Willets 1962, 105-106, 188-191; Capdeville 1995, 46; Sporn 2002, 267; Niniou-Kindeli and Tzanakaki 2019, 49.

[121] Faure 1964, 186-187; 1967, 114-115; 1972, 423-424; Capdeville 1995, 48.

[122] Niniou-Kindeli and Tzanakaki 2019, 49, fig. 4, 3: 3; Drerup 1951, 105, pl. 72.

be exposed[123].

It was possibly this goddess that could have given the actual name to the city, since early Iron Age Artemis was often combined with the mistress of the animals (*Potnia Theron)* of the Minoan religion[124] and the early Iron Age era winged counterpart[125], who eventually discarded her wings to become the goddess of the forests and the animals, the Greek Artemis[126]. Starting from the epithet *Aptera*, one is naturally tempted to accept the meaning conferred on it by its apparent etymology, i.e. "without wings", that would qualify the iconographic type of the local Artemis probably as heir to the Minoan Potnia Theron[127]. Given, however, that the toponym *a-pa-ta-wa/*Ἄπταρϝα* –and the corresponding ethnonym *a-pata-wa-jo/Ἀπταραῖος*– is well documented on the early fourteenth c. BC Linear B tablets from the Knossos palace and identified with the later Greek Aptera[128], Capdevielle's question as to who, the city or the goddess, gave the name to the other, becomes more complex[129]. It is therefore more likely that Artemis *Aptera* borrowed the epithet from the city, or, more likely, from the ancient divinity that she supplanted as a patron deity, and who, possibly again, bore the name of the city as an epithet. This was to be Diktynna, who, as a huntress, offered her an easy succession[130].

A recently discovered sculptural group representing Artemis and Apollo from the Roman House[131] and the representation of Apollo on the city's third c. BC silver fractions[132] indicate that Apollo was also worshipped at Aptera, although there is no other evidence. Maybe the city's foundation myth (Stephanus of Byzantium, *Ethnica*), which involves the Muses and therefore their protector Apollo, may be another indirect reference to his cult, while there has been a suggestion that Artemis and Apollo were co-worshipped in the small, fifth c. BC two-room temple mentioned earlier[133].

Applying then the Processual Model of Propaganda one may suggest that the Aptereans: (1) to spread their propaganda on autochthony and priority through myth and religion, (2) as soon as their economy was monetized in the late 4th c. BC, (3) used their local coinage, (4) a legally tender means of exchange issued by the state mint (5) to

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[123] «…ἐς τὸ ἱερὸν τὸ / τᾶς Ἀρτέμιδος τᾶς Ἀπτέρας…» *IC* II iii 2, l. 55-56. This no doubt means that it was at that time the main urban sanctuary, most likely identified with the large two-celled temple studied by Drerup (no. 41, 99-105, pls 71-75 [plans = pls 73-74). See also, Capdeville 1995, 49; Niniou-Kindeli and Tzanakaki 2019, 49.

[124] Willetts 1962, 190. See, for example, the goddess on the Minoan seal at the Archaeologial Museum of Heracleion (*CMS* II, 8, no 256).

[125] See, for example, the winged figure on a PG B pithos from tomb 107 of the North Cemetery of Knossos (Coldstream 1984) and the figure(s) on the two sets of plaques depicting orientalizing heads and mistresses of lions from the Tomb of Jewels of Kamiros, Rhodes, ca 720-650 BC, London, British Museum, reg. no. 1861,1111.1-4 (Mazet 2019, 136, fig. 4 and n. 10 with bibliography. See also, Marshall 1911, no. 1120 pl. XII; nos 1121-1130, pl. XI).

[126] Hom., *Il*., 21.470: *πότνια θηρῶν Ἄρτεμις ἀγροτέρη*.

[127] Capdeville 1995, 49.

[128] Papadopoulou 2022; Kanta and Tzedakis 2021 743; Παπαδοπούλου 2018; Bennet 2011, 137-168, esp. 145, 148-149, fig. 13.1; Kanta 1984. On the tablets, see Melena and Firth 2019, 43, Ce 144; 49, Co 909.1; 51, C 902.9.

[129] Capdeville 1995, 49. On the name, see also Astyrakaki 2022, 112.

[130] Willets 1962, 105-106, 188-191; Capdeville 1995, 50; Sporn 2002, 267.

[131] Niniou-Kindeli and Tzanakaki 2019, 49, 72, cat. no. 15.

[132] Svoronos 1890, 14-24. See also, Στεφανάκης 2020, 131-132.

[133] Niniou-Kindeli and Tzanakaki 2019, 49. On the cult of Apollo in Aptera, Sporn 2002, 262.

reach all the civilians and Cretans. (6) They used as symbols the head of their patron deity Diktynna/Artemis *Aptera* on the obverse and the image of the founder and eponymous hero of the city, Apteras –who is related to the Delphic tradition and was likely to have an established hero cult in the city– on the reverse, both figures directly related etymologically with the city's name. (7) This aimed to make known the main cults of the city, but also to proclaim autochthony and ancestry from a Dorian hero connected with Apollo Pythios and the Delphic oracle with hints to the ancient Cretan –Minoan– cult of the tree. (8) It seems that there was no opposition to the apterean propaganda (9) –at least no such evidence exists– and it (10) probably succeeded in its purpose, rendering Aptera a major city in west Crete.

3. Powerful gods: competition for control over pan Cretan/Hellenic sanctuaries

Deities and cults of pan Cretan –and panhellenic– sanctuaries had been also claimed by various neighbouring cities through coin imagery, often amidst inter-state conflicts[134]. The sanctuary of Zeus Diktaios at Palaikastro in eastern Crete and the temple of Diktynna at Menies in western Crete are two such cases that can be traced through coin imagery.

3a. Praisos (Lyttos and Hierapytna): claiming the "Bethlehem" of Crete[135]

In eastern Crete, a cave in the Aegean Mountains in the wider area of Lyttos is noted by Hesiod as the birthplace of Zeus[136]. However, although to date the identification of "Dictaeon Andron" has not been possible[137] and its exact location remains unknown, three large cities of east Crete, namely Lyttos, Praisos and Hierapytna, seem to have claimed the upbringing of Zeus in their area through numismatic evidence. This is hinted at by their coin iconography, while it is known from the sources and epigraphic evidence that the last two cities sought to control the sanctuary of Diktaeus Zeus at Palaikastro from time to time[138].

Following Strabo's (10.4.6.) testimony[139], the sanctuary was under the influence of Praisos in Classical and early Hellenistic times and under the expansion of Praisos in the first half of the 3rd c. BC[140]. In the late 140's BC, after the destruction of Praisos and the occupation of its territory by Hierapytnians, the sanctuary came under the control of Hierapytna[141], although it was not conceived as a civic sanctuary, as Chaniotis suggests, at

[134] Schofield 2011, 169-170.

[135] Thanks are owed to Ms Eleni Petropoulou for reading drafts of this chapter and for her useful remarks.

[136] Hes., *Theog.*, 477-484. On the reasons Lyttos was considered as the birthplace of Zeus, see Faure 1964, 95-96. On the complex myth of Zeus' birth and raising on Crete and the various candidate places, see Στεφανάκης 2014.

[137] Faure 1965, 431: "*Le mot Diktè au Diktos etait alors un terme général qui désignait 'la montagne divine'*". On other possible candidate birth-places in east Crete, see Στεφανάκης 2014, 608.

[138] On a general view of the sanctuary and the conflicts of the three cities in relation to its control, see indicatively, Bosanquet 1939-40, 64-75; Perlman 1995, 163-165; Chaniotis 1988, 26-28; 2009, 63-64; Sporn 2002, 45-49; Prent 2005, 350-353 and 532-550; Verbrunggen 1981, 135-138.

[139] Prent 2005, 534-535.

[140] *IC* III, 6.7; Perlman 1995, 165.

[141] Chaniotis 2009, 64; Prent 2005, 534; Spyridakis 1970, 56-57; On the destruction of Praisos, see Whitley 2023.

least "*in the Hellenistic period it was an extra-territorial sanctuary, the centre of an amphictyony of some kind*". Inscriptions of the 2nd c. BC provide information about two wars fought by Hierapytna and Itanos for the control of a disputed territory near the sanctuary. The judges from Magnesia on the Maeander, who arbitrated in this dispute, granted the disputed grounds to Itanos, not to the sanctuary itself, which likely stayed under the control (administration and cult) of the Hierapytnians[142].

In the area of Lyttos, a pig is reported by Neanthes of Cyzikus (*FHG* III, 25) and Agathokles of Babelon (*FHG* IV, 289, 2) in the 3rd c. BC, and Atheneus (*Deipnosophistae* 9.18, 1-13) in the early 3rd c. AD, that it nursed the infant Zeus and covered its cries with its grunts[143]. For this reason, as the animal was considered sacred, pig meat was not eaten in ancient Crete. The Praisians were said to make offerings to the she-pig and usually sacrifice it before weddings[144]. The silver series of Lyttos (fig. 12), already from the end of the 5th c. BC[145], with the depiction of an eagle in flight on the obverse and a boar's head on the reverse, may well document these literary traditions, while also supporting the more ancient tradition of Hesiod, who pointed out the wider area of Lyttos as the place of birth and upbringing of Zeus[146]. The wild boar head is combined on the coins with a flying eagle, who apart from the symbol of Zeus was also his nurse (Moero, *Fragm.* 1, 5-6· Ath., *Deipnosophistae*, 11.80, 38), bringing him ambrosia, according to another mythological version of the 3rd c. BC[147].

The raising of Zeus by a she-pig seems to be hinted at also by the coin iconography of Hierapytna, where an early series of silver didrachms of the second half of the 4th c. BC bear a boar within a laurel wreath (fig. 13) on the reverse and a *triskeles* within a laurel wreath and the inscription IP AΠ V on the obverse[148]. The image of Zeus on the obverse and the presence of the eagle under the palm tree on the reverse of a short-lived silver stater series of ca 330-270 BC (fig. 14) may be a reference to an early involvement at the sanctuary of Zeus at Palaikastro, not known due to lack of other evidence. However, according to Stefanaki, the combination of the palm tree and the eagle symbolizes the sacred marriage of Zeus and Leto, as well as the fruit of their union, Apollo, whose worship as *Pythios* and as *Decatophoros* held a special place in the city's pantheon. It must be though the later, the second c. BC (fig. 15a-b) bronze series of Hierapytna with the six or eight-rayed star and the palm tree, as well as the Artemis head and the bee, that may again refer to the conquest of Praisos, the hierapytnian revendications against the Itanians and the gained control of the sanctuary at Palaikastro after 145 BC[149].

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[142] Chaniotis 2009, 303-310, inscr. nos 47-49; Stefanaki 2021, 64-68, 124-127; *IC* III, 4.9; Spyridakis 1970, 56, 64.

[143] Στεφανάκης 2014, 608-609; Willetts 1962, 216. On the various nurses of Zeus on Crete, see Στεφανάκης 2014; Verbruggen 1981, 39-49.

[144] On the pig cult in eastern Crete, see Cook 1964², I, 653; Willetts 1962, 218. Also, Σπυριδάκης 1989, 101; Ψιλάκης 1996, 25-26.

[145] Le Rider 1966, 195: ca 450-320 BC.

[146] See above, n. 136.

[147] Στεφανάκης 2014, 607; Verbruggen 1981, 40.

[148] On the specific issue of Hierapytna, ca 340/30-300 BC, see Stefanaki 2005, 74-87 and 82-83 for the type of the she-pig. See also, Stefanaki 2021, 218, 259-262.

[149] See Stefanaki in this volume below, 97-98. Also, Stefanaki 2021, 292-294.

It was, however, the neighbouring Praisos that most clearly claimed Zeus: a unique representation of an animal nurse on the obverse of an early series of silver didrachms of the city, ca 350-325 BC[150] (fig. 16), has been considered to echo an unknown mythical variant of the raising of Zeus in eastern Crete by a cow[151]. Although there is no similar reference in the ancient sources, according to Svoronos and ancient sources' implications, the constellation of the Little Bear –the transformed nymph Kynosura, the nurse of Zeus– was sometimes perceived as the representation of a cow in the sky[152], while for other scholars the cow is considered the transformed Ios and the infant Zeus[153].

Diktaeus Zeus himself, however, took his place on the obverse of the city's silver didrachms (fig. 17) at the end of the 4th c. BC[154], a sign most likely of the city's control over his sanctuary. He is depicted enthroned with a high backrest, the lower body in profile to the left, while the bare torso is rendered three-quarters to the left, almost frontal, and the head sometimes frontal and sometimes in profile. He projects the left leg while bringing back the right leg bent at the knee. The left hand, raised and bent at the elbow, rests on a vertically rendered sceptre, while the outstretched right hand bears an eagle pointing to the right[155].

Zeus is matched on the reverse either by a butting bull or by a goat, probably a reference to the animal husbandry of the region, although an association with the nurse goat Amaltheia cannot be excluded. Finally, the presence of the bee on the reverse of the silver hemidrachms of Praisos at the end of the 4th and the early 3rd c. BC (fig. 18)[156] is likely to be a reference both to the beekeeping of the region and to the raising of Zeus on the Aegean Mount by the sacred bees, nurturers and protectors of the divine infant[157].

Applying then the Processual Model of Propaganda one may suggest that the Praisians: (1) to spread their propaganda on autochthony and primacy over the eastern Crete and the control of the extra mural sanctuary of Zeus Diktaios through myth and religion, (2) as soon as their economy was monetized around the middle of the 4th c. BC, (3) they used their local coinage, (4) a legally tender means of exchange issued by the state mint, (6) where they initially employed a local myth of the nursing of Zeus in her territory by a cow (with the cases of the goat and the bees not to be rejected) and a bit latter presented Zeus Diktaios himself seated on his throne. (7) The aim was to declare their connection with the birthplace of Zeus Kretagenes and claim control of the important sanctuary of Zeus Diktaios in the nearby Palaikastro, which they were most likely administrating until the middle of the 2nd c. BC. (8) Praisian propaganda, at least

[150] Le Rider 1966, 197.

[151] Στεφανάκης 2014, 609; Verbruggen 1981, 42.

[152] Σβορώνος 1893, 8-12.

[153] Weber 1896, 19.

[154] Le Rider 1966, 197, pl. VIII, 8-13. For the cult of Zeus Diktaios, see indicatively, Cook 1964², II, 927-932; Willetts 1962, 207-220; Verbruggen 1981, 134-138.

[155] On possible influences on the type, especially from Peloponnese, see Στεφανάκης 2017, 227-228.

[156] Le Rider 1966, 197, pl. XXVI, 21-27.

[157] The myth, handed down by Antoninus Liberalis (with reference to the *Ornithogonia* of Boius of the 2nd or 1st c. BC), seems to have been much earlier and more widely known in the Greek world. The mythical episode with the four invaders of the sacred Andron of Zeus (Laio, Celeo, Cerberus and Aegolius), where they were mercilessly attacked by wild bees (Verbruggen 1981, 41-42), is depicted on an attic black-figured amphora of the second half of the 6th c. BC from Vulci in Etruria, British Museum: B177. See *BAPD* 4330, with further bibliography.

regarding the birthplace and nursing myth of Zeus, was challenged by the mints of Lyttos and Hierapytna already by the mid-4th c. BC, and again by Hierapytna after the middle of the 2nd c. BC, (9) who claimed the nursing of Zeus by a she-pig in their territory in their early 4th c. BC coinage, while Hierapytna not only portrayed Zeus and his eagle in the late 4th-early 3rd c. BC staters, but even waged a war against Praisos in ca 145 BC and managed to gain control of the sanctuary. This last action may have been propagandized in a couple of second c. BC bronze issues of the city. (10) In each case and regarding the political and historical circumstances, religious propaganda on coinage was strong and probably succeeded in its purpose.

3b. The temple of Diktynna

Diktynna as a local goddess of Crete seems to have had a rather persistent presence in the west part of the island[158] and her well-groomed head appears on the coins of Polyrrhenia[159], Kydonia[160] and Aptera (see above, pp. 28-32). While the imagery of Diktynna on the Apterean coins is related to a local cult, as is discussed above, her depiction on the coins of Kydonia and Polyrrhenia is most likely related to the nearby temple dedicated to the goddess at the promontory of Spatha[161].

The temple was founded by Samians who colonized Kydonia in 524 BC (Herodotus 3.59) and was most likely under the control of Kydonia. In the late 4th c. BC it was claimed by Polyrrhenia[162], who retained control until the end of the 3rd c. BC. It seems to have become again a Kydonian territory after 200 BC when Kydonia attempted to impose a hegemony over western Crete[163]. In the age of Augustus, the temple passed once again into the control of Polyrrhenia[164].

Diktynna must have been the patron deity of Kydonia since her head figures on the silver series of the city from ca 330 BC onwards, wreathed with vine-leaves and a bunch of grapes (fig. 19). Callimachos (*Artemis*, 199-200) refers to the Kydonians setting up altars and making sacrifices to Diktynna, having established a festival of Diktynna in which garlands of pine or mastic were worn, an element that might associate her with vegetation. It is, however, the Bacchic nature of the garland in her hair that may offer further implications for the guise of the goddess on the kydonian coins[165]. Firmer

[158] On goddess Diktynna, see above, n. 119.

[159] Στεφανάκης 2013, cat. nos 23-31; Svoronos 1890, pl. XXVI, 4-6.

[160] Stefanakis 1997, pl. 7, 156-160; pl. 8, 161-162.

[161] On the history and topography of the sanctuary Cigaina 2020, 210-228; Sjögren 2003, 143; Sporn 2002, 277-280; 2001, 226-228; Φαράκλας *κ.ά.* 1998, 22-23, 40; Buxton 1995, 113-18; Gondicas 1988, 287-296; Kirsten 1952; 1980; Welter and Jantzen 1951; *IC* II, xi, 128-140.

[162] Martínez Fernández 2012, 45-48, αρ. 1-2; Μαρκουλάκη and Martinez 2000-01; Μαρκουλάκη 2000; Buxton 1995, 113-118; *IC* II, xi, 1.

[163] Stefanakis 1997, 237-240· Στεφανάκης 1996, 147-148; 2019c, 12. See also Str., X, 4.12.

[164] *IC* II, xi, 3.

[165] Links between Artemis and Dionysos are not lacking. In Egypt, she and Apollo were considered the children of Dionysus and Isis, with Leto being only a nurse (Hdt. ii 156, 18-20). Artemis probably had a temple next to that of Dionysus at Alagonia in West Laconia (Paus. iii 26, 2) and probably shared a temple with Dionysus and Asklepios at Korone in Messenia (Paus. iv 34, 6). She is found wearing an ivy wreath on a Bacchic scene on an Attic crater in Berlin dated to the beginning of the 4th c. BC (*LIMC* II, Apollo, 753), while she is present at the birth of Dionysos on a votive marble relief of 330 BC at the Agora Museum, Athens (*LIMC* II, Artemis, 1280).

evidence for the identification of the nymph on the coins with Diktynna and her relation to the Diktynnaion temple is provided by the fact that vine leaves, grapes and ivy leaves are found as part of the relief decoration of the temple; surviving pieces of upper and lower architecture depict in relief vine leaves, grapes, and ivy leaves, as well as Pan holding a hare[166]. If we accept that this was a Diktynnaion without any separate cult of Dionysos himself (a plausible view since any references to Dionysus are lacking), then one may add another aspect of the nature of Diktynna, at least in the area of Kydonia, that of the Bacchic goddess or perhaps the female side of Dionysus himself[167].

It may not be a coincidence that the change of control over the Diktynnaion temple after 200 BC was followed by a new series of silver coinage by Kydonia: an early second c. BC silver series of the city depict a female dog breastfeeding an infant, leaning her head towards it (fig. 20). The inscription ΚΥΔΩΝ is engraved in the exergue.

There has been a long discussion for over a century about the identity of the infant[168], who has been rather identified with Kydon, a son of Akakallis and Apollo, or with Hermes[169], the famous founder of Kydonia[170], while Zeus Cretagenes is another interpretation[171]. Regardless of the interpretation, the representation of Diktynna as a divine nurse accompanied by Kouretes (fig. 21) on a silver coin of Trajan (AD 115-117), possibly issued by the Diktynnaion temple[172], and the relation of Diktynna to dogs and her alleged "theriomorphic" nature as a she-dog[173] may be an indication that an infant was raised by a dog of the local *kynossouris* breed[174] in western Crete. It could have been either Zeus nursed by a she-dog on Mount Tityros in the Spatha peninsula[175] perhaps according to a lost legend of Kydonia, part of a series of myths that wanted Zeus to have been bred by various animals in Crete[176], or Kydon, the oikist of the city. Given the lack of substantial evidence and the general context of Hellenistic times, when mythical ancestors were broadly commemorated in the Greek world[177], the identification of the infant with Kydon is currently preferred as it is in tune with the appearance of more heroic ancestors on Cretan coinage, such as Apteras (Ptolioikos), Gortys and Minos, mainly because of the inscription that accompanies the figure. Moreover, since animal-raised heroes became fashionable in the Hellenistic years, a possible political decision by

[166] Welter and Jantzen 1951, 110, pl. 84-86; Sporn 2001, 230-232.

[167] Stefanakis 1997, 95-96; Sporn 2001, 230-232.

[168] On the debate, see Στεφανάκης 2014, 613-615; Stefanakis 2000, 82-84; Stefanakis and Konstantinidi 2020, 769-771.

[169] Steph. Byz., sv. Cydon.

[170] Paus., *Description of Greece, Arcadia*, 8.53.4.

[171] Σβορώνος 1893.

[172] Sporn 2001, 229-230; Verbruggen 1981, 45-46; Kirsten 1980, 264; Hatzisteliou-Price 1978, 89, 191; 46; Svoronos 1890, πίν. XXXIII, 23-24.

[173] Sporn 2001, 230.

[174] Σχολ. Καλλιμάχου, *Ύμνος* 3, σχ. 94, 1-2.

[175] Στεφανάκης 2014, 613. Svoronos' interpretation was accepted by many scholars such as Sporn 2001, 230; Verbruggen 1981, 43-44; Hadzisteliou-Price 1978, 88-89; Willetts 1962, 276; Faure 1960, 210, n. 2; Jannoulides 1956, 80. For the problem of interpretation, see Stefanakis 1997, 189-191; 2000.

[176] On the myths regarding the birth of Zeus on Crete and the different nurses, see Στεφανάκης 2014, 606-614.

[177] Sporn 2013, 400.

the authorities of Kydonia to adjust accordingly the iconography on their coins should not be ruled out[178].

Diktynna/Artemis the huntress appeared again on the local tetradrachms and drachms of Kydonia in the late 2nd c. BC (fig. 22) and the nursing she-dog as a symbol in the pseudo-Athenian series of the early 1st c. BC (fig. 23)[179], apparently a direct reference to the huntress Diktynna depicted in various instances in sculptural remains of the Diktynnaion temple from the Hellenistic to the roman times[180].

Although the iconography of the early Polyrrhenian silver staters (ca 330-280/70 BC) promotes the head of Zeus[181], it is the head of Diktynna that features on the silver hemidrachms (fig. 24) of the mint[182]. Both gods are combined with the head of a sacrificial bull on the reverse. Zeus is known to have had an eminent place in the cult of Polyrrhenia[183], while Diktynna on the silver fractions of the early 3rd c. BC[184] should rather be taken as a direct reference to the control of the Diktynnaion temple at the end of the 4th and the 3rd c. BC[185].

Applying then the Processual Model of Propaganda one may suggest that Kydonians and Polyrrhenians: (1) spread their propaganda on the cult of Diktynna and the control of her extra-mural sanctuary at Spatha promontory, (2) as soon as their economy was monetized around the last decades of the 4th c. BC. (3) They used their local coinage, (4) a legally tender means of exchange issued by the state mint (5) to reach all the civilians and Cretans. (6) They both employed the image of Diktynna (7) to stress, on the one hand, their connection with the principal goddess of western Crete and on the other hand to declare their control over the important Diktynnaion sanctuary, which they were most likely administrating from time to time. (9) After ca 200 BC, Kydonians were likely to have taken numismatic propaganda further, at least regarding the birthplace and nursing myth of an infant, Kydon or Zeus, in their territory, in relation to Diktynna and her temple. (8) Propaganda was challenged from time to time by the two cities, mainly depending on their control over the Diktynna temple, with Kydonia prevailing and creating a nursing myth in western Crete that survived well until Roman imperial times[186]. (10) In each case and regarding the political and historical circumstances, religious propaganda on coinage was strong and probably succeeded in its purpose.

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[178] Stefanakis and Konstantinidi 2020, 771.

[179] On the coinage of Kydonia, see Stefanakis 1997 (corpus); Στεφανάκης 2019a, 45-47; Svoronos 1890, 96-119.

[180] Sporn 2001, 228.

[181] Στεφανάκης 2013, cat. nos 1-9, 32-33.

[182] Στεφανάκης 2013, cat. nos 23-31.

[183] Στεφανάκης 2013, 37.

[184] Στεφανάκης 2013, nos 23-31.

[185] It has been suggested in the past (Buxton 1995, 115-16; Head 1911², 474-475) that the depiction of the bull head combined with the head of Diktynna on the small silver denominatios is a reference to the control of the temple of Diktynna by the Polyrrhenians (see also, Στεφανάκης 2013, 37-38 and n. 7). The bull head, however, may rather be connected with sarcrifices taking place in Polyrrhenia itself or with the cult of the local hero Boudamos than with the temple of Diktynna at Menies.

[186] On the roman coins of Kydonia bearing the type of the nursing she-dog, see Stefanakis and Konstantinidi 2020, 771; Στεφανάκης 2014, 614 and n. 64.

Religious image and myth on ancient Cretan coins and local identities

Although figurative images, narrative scenes and mythical images of general Greek content are known on Crete since the early Greek centuries and myths connected with the island of Crete are numerous in the ancient sources[187], mythical and religious images in the earlier centuries of Crete are scarce in pictorial narrative and most of them are rather incomprehensible in terms of their meaning and character[188].

Sporn, who examined the spread of mythical episodes of local content in Crete and Cretan art before the late 5th c. BC suggested two possible explanations for their scarcity in the archaeological record[189]: a) the Cretans –unlike their Greek counterparts– did not feel the need to visualize local myths into pictorial art for many centuries, except for very few cases, since they considered oral tradition more important than pictorial representations, b) the Cretans only got to know and appreciate the myths associated with the island through their increasing contacts with the Greek mainland and the Peloponnese. In this way, they began to stress their otherness, which until then was emphasized by the Attic side, mainly in the 5th c. BC. The timing of the introduction of local cultic and religious figures on coins was most likely related to the increasing interaction and economic exchange with the rest of Greece, which also led to the inauguration of local mints.

The absence of heroic cults in Geometric times in Crete is suggested to have counted for the lack of mythical images in early Crete, while a hero cult was not established on the island since social life on the island was consolidated much earlier than in other regions of Greece and the upper class did not have to legitimize itself by tracing back to heroic ancestors[190]. In addition, because of the island's isolation Cretan cities did not need to legitimize themselves from the outside world.

It is most likely when coinage began in the 5th c. BC that the Cretans started to look for representative images to distinguish one from another by choosing from the myths and cults circulating in their territories. It was when internal conflicts, hegemonic tendencies and land claiming began in the Hellenistic period that the hero cults were introduced and pictorial figures of ancestors and city founders appeared on coins to declare legitimate rights of the city[191].

It was only in the late Classical and Hellenistic Crete that mythological, cultic and religious figures materialized on coins and were broadly used by Cretan mints, which employed coin iconography as a most effective means to communicate major cults of their city and to propagandize power, bondage with godly powers, primacy and autochthony on the island.

Patron deities and distinct, often unique, figures of local nymphs, heroes, oikists and mythical episodes were used to display the main cults of the city, almost always including direct or indirect references to the distant –Minoan– past to show connections with the old Cretan tradition and cult within a new Dorian order. The aim was to link the issuing state with a certain religious and mythical heritage, offering a sense of

[187] Sporn 2013, 398.

[188] Sporn 2013, 306. On the scarcity of early (7th-6th c. BC) Cretan narrative scenes see also Pilz 2014.

[189] Sporn 2013, 404.

[190] Λεμπέση 1987, 134-135; Sporn 2013, 405.

[191] Sporn 2013, 400, 405.

belonging, continuation, and pride to the citizens.

The application of the Processual Model of Propaganda on the coinages of Gortyna (local nymph-Europa), Phaistos (local figures-Welchanos and Talos; panhellenic hero-Herakles), Aptera (patron deity-Diktynna; hero oikist-Apteras), demonstrated exactly that need of the cities to establish a sound background of their existence and continuation. Their propaganda messages spread widely through coin imagery and apparently served their purpose, rendering the depicted figures unique and thus exclusive symbols for each city.

In a few cases, coin iconography was further used in a competitive manner between cities to invoke god's blessing and to demonstrate god's protection to proclaim rights upon extra-territorial sanctuaries of pan-Cretan or even panhellenic importance. The choices, besides their obvious religious message, have clear political meaning: not only could they compare the issuing authority to extraordinary divine strength, but they could also invoke this force's protection[192]. In that context, the divine could influence and support political or military positions or activity between neighbouring cities with contradicting interests[193].

The application of the Processual Model of Propaganda on the coinages of the cities claiming control of important extra mural sanctuaries and cults in our study case, namely the temple of Zeus Diktaios (Praisos-Itanos-Lyttos-Hierapytna) and the temple of Diktynna (Kydonia-Polyrrhenia), shows that all the involved cities demonstrated their claims by adopting coin types relevant to the cult of interest. Their propaganda is challenged and seems to have been successful from time to time, with the major powers of the group, namely Praisos and Kydonia respectively, being more successful over time.

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[192] Borba Florenzano 2018, 107.

[193] See De Visser 2009, 177, discussing points that relate to the power of religion in political and military activity in classical antiquity through the Protagoras myth (Pl. *Prt*. 322a-e) and thereafter.

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Figure 1a. Gortyna, AR stater (11.74 gr), ca 450-425 BC. Künker 136, 10.03.2008, lot 61.

Figure 1b. Phaistos, AR stater (11,87 gr), ca 450-425 BC. Svoronos 1890, pl. XXII, 34.

Figure 2a. Gortyna, AR stater (11,82 gr.), ca 380 BC. Le Rider 1966, pl. XI, 10.

Figure 2b. Phaistos, AR stater (12,04 gr), ca 380 BC. Le Rider 1966, pl. XX, 23.

Figure 3a. Gortyna, AR stater (11.67 gr), ca 360/50-340/30 BC. Künker 136, 10.03.2008, 67.

Figure 3b. Gortyna, AR stater (11.72 gr), ca 350-322 BC. Nomos, Auction 18, 05.05.2019, lot 130.

Figure 3c. Gortyna, AR stater (12,06 gr), ca 322-300 BC. Le Rider 1966, pl. XVIII, 15.

Figure 3d. Gortyna, AR stater (11,44 gr), ca 322-300 BC. Le Rider 1966, pl. XVI, 15.

Figure 3e. Gortyna, AR stater (11.25 gr), ca 300-280/70 BC. Ira & Larry Goldberg Coins & Collectibles, Inc. Auction 96, 14.02.2017, lot 1674.

Figure 3f. Gortyna, AR stater (11.22 gr), ca 300-280/70 BC. LHS Numismatics 100, 23.04.2007, lot 276.

Figure 3g. Gortyna, AR stater (11.76 gr), ca 300-280/70 BC. Roma Numismatics Ltd, Auction 17, 28.03.2019, lot 431.

Figure 4. Gortyna, debased AR stater (6.77 gr), ca 260-250 BC. Gorny and Mosch Giessener Münzhandlung, Auction 236, 07.03.2016, lot 207.

Figure 5. Gortyna, AR Drachm (5.19 gr), ca 250-230 BC. Roma Numismatics Ltd, Auction 7, 22.03.2014, lot. 498.

Figure 6. BC Gortyna, AE denomination (4.99 gr, 18 mm), ca 250-221 BC. Classical Numismatic Group Inc., Mail Bid Sale 76, 12.09.2007, lot 614.

Figure 7. Gortyna, Late Hellenistic (ca 100 BC) marble group of Europa seated on the back of a Bull with two dolphins forming support at the front. Max ht 185.5 cm. London, The British Museum 1862,0201.01. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Figure 8. Phaistos, AR stater, ca 330-320 BC. Roma Numismatics Limited, E-Sale 75, Lot 1108. PADUANS Electrotype: Crete. British Museum electrotype; stamped MB (Latin initials for Museum). For prototype, cf. BMC 19, pl. XV, 12.

Figure 9. Phaistos, AR stater (11.41 gr), ca 300-270 BC. Stack's, Stack & Kroisos Collections, 14.01.2008, lot 2224.

Figure 10a. Phaistos, AR stater (11.21 gr), ca 350-330 BC. Fritz Rudolf Künker GmbH & Co. KG, Auction 136, 10.03.2008, lot 292.

Figure 10b. Phaistos, AR stater (11.59 gr), ca 330-320 BC. Numismatica Ars Classica NAC AG, Auction 106, 09.05.2018, 1203.

Figure 10c. Phaistos, AR stater (11.65 gr), ca 350 BC. Numismatica Ars Classica NAC AG, Auction 132, 30.05.2022, lot 283.

Figure 10d. Phaistos, AR stater (11.56 gr), ca 330/20 BC. Gemini, LLC Auction VII, 09.01.2011, lot 431.

Figure 10e. Phaistos, AR stater (11.70 gr), ca 330-320 BC. Classical Numismatic Group, Inc. Triton XI, 08.01.2008, lot 194.

Figure 10f. Phaistos, AR Stater (11.47 gr), ca 300-270 BC. Roma Numismatics Limited, Auction 11, 07.04.2016, lot 290.

Figure 11. Aptera, AR Stater (11.24 gr), ca 300-270 BC. Leu Numismatik AG (1991-2007), Auction 81, 16.05.2001, lot 231.

Figure 12. Lyttos, AR Stater (10.78 gr), ca 450-300 BC. Stack's, Auction Stack & Kroisos Collections, 14.01.2008, Lot 2222.

Figure 13. Hierapytna, AR Stater (11,54 gr), ca 340/30-300 BC. Berlin, Imhoof-Blumer, 1900. Stefanaki 2021, 218, no. 2.

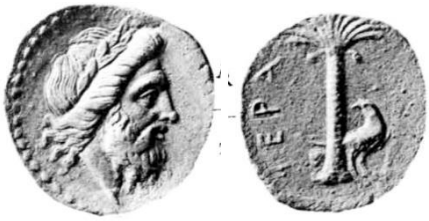

Figure 14. Hierapytna, AR Stater (10,89 gr), ca 300-270 BC. London (Svoronos 1890, 2, πιν. XVII, 7). Stefanaki 2021, 218, no. 3.

Figure 15a. Hierapytna, AE denomination, later second half of 2nd c. BC, (2,92 gr). Künker, Auction 136, 10 March 2008, Die Sammlung Dr Burkhard Traeger, no. 125. Stefanaki 2021, 229, no. 163.

Figure 15b. Hierapytna, AE denomination, second half of the 2nd c. BC. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, New College. Stefanaki 2021, 228, no. 146.

Figure 16. Praisos, AR Stater (11.68gr), ca 350-325 BC. The New York Sale Auction 27, 04.01.2012, lot 415.

Figure 17. Praisos, AR Stater (10.48 gr), 300/270 BC. Fritz Rudolf Künker GmbH & Co. KG, Auction 136 10.03.2008, lot 343.

Figure 18. Praisos, AR hemidrachm (2.39 gr), end of 4th-early 3rd c. BC. Stack's August 2009 Coin Galleries Sale, 18.08.2009, lot 4123.

Figure 19. Kydonia, AR stater (11.40 gr), ca 330-280 BC. Dr. Busso Peus Nachfolger Auction 380, 03.11.2004, lot 410; Stefanakis 1997, 160 l.

Figure 20. Kydonia, AR stater, early 2nd c. BC. Electrotype «Stater» (23.5 mm, 10.47 gr, 2h) [of *BMC Crete*, p. 28, 7 (9,05 gr)]. Classical Numismatic Group, Inc., Electronic Auction 445, 05.06.2019, Lot 859 (unsigned British Museum electrotype by Robert Ready or his sons); Stefanakis 1997, 298 c.

Figure 21. Koinon of Crete (Diktynnaion temple?), AR Drachm (17 mm, 3.06 gr, 6 h). Trajan, AD 98-117. Classical Numismatic Group, Inc. Electronic Auction 345, 25.02.2015, lot 95.

Figure 22. Kydonia, AR tetradrachm (13.74 gr), late 2nd c. BC. Classical Numismatic Group, Inc. Auction Triton V, 15.01.2002, lot 1389; Stefanakis 1997, 343a.

Figure 23. Kydonia, AR pseudo-Athenian tetradrachm (15,37 gr), ca 87/6-67 BC. Stefanakis 1997, no. 348.

Figure 24. Polyrrhenia, AR hemidrachm (2,77 gr), ca 330-280/70 BC. Stuttgart. Le Rider 1966, 114, 3, pl. XXVIII, 19. Babelon 1914, 1776, pl. CCLXI, 25. Svoronos 1890, 15, pl. XXVI, 4; Στεφανάκης 2013, 23α.

PROPAGANDA, COMMUNICATION, AND ETHNICITY ON THE COINAGES OF CLASSICAL AND HELLENISTIC CRETE

Definitions of ethnicity applied to the monetary economy in antiquity: a framework

The Cretan monetary framework shows how the integrated reading of several phenomena makes it possible to examine in detail certain specific local aspects. Such dynamics no longer appear to stem from a lingering background but rather reflect the specific traits of a regional context with its own unique identity.

The systematisation of three elements such as ethnicity, propaganda, and communication, with what can be deduced from the analysis of coins, is particularly enlightening as their systematisation allows one to analyse the complexity of a monetary scenario such as the Cretan one. It makes it possible to read the specificity of local policies and events, supplementing knowledge on phenomena that are partially known from other documentation or flattened on patterns that refer to other, better-known historical and monetary contexts.

The subject of ethnicity, in particular, is understood as an assumption of anthropological science, as the set of conceptions and norms that inspire and regulate the lives of groups that share the same language, are involved in the same historical events, share the same territory within this commonality groups, recognise their ethnic identity and take the opportunity to claim political and economic autonomy. Perhaps ethnicity represents an element that is at times taken for granted, but it is still unexplored and can provide us with an unexpected panorama of information.

Since this is an extremely complex subject, which would require a multidisciplinary approach to better appreciate the nuances of these components, this paper aims to trace the points (starting with the most significant cases) relating to the aspect of the monetary economy of the island of Crete and how these also have a bearing on the phenomena of propaganda and communication, which see coins as a privileged *medium*.

Before proceeding, it is necessary to take a step back to define –at least as far as a profile related to monetary history is concerned– some paradigms related to ethnicity, and then define the specific aspects that are most useful to us.

Even today, it is difficult to recognise ethnic elements of groups from antiquity, especially if one attributes these to an urban or regional scale, forgetting the vast articulation that societies may have had over their territory and the difficulty of placing labels on such complex anthropological systems. One may erroneously assume that for the person holding an ancient coin, the ethnic element is that information that can be

deduced from reading the legend, but the information panorama that can be deduced from the coin type, from less evident symbols and references, is much more complex.

It should be noted that the term "ethnicity" appeared for the first time in the 1950s in the English language[1], inspired by the Greek adjective *ἐθνικός*[2], in full correspondence with the tendency of English sociolinguistics of the time to seek inspiration from classical models, especially when it was functional to define a new term useful for expressing a particular idea. Probably the confusion in the definition of this recent neologism is due to the adaptation of this term to a much older and different concept. It must be said that since the earliest known uses in literature, the term *ἔθνος* appears in Homer not to indicate family groups, but rather to describe a large undifferentiated variety of animals or warriors, in a sense that could mean "crowd" or "swarm"[3], but progressively this has changed its meaning indicating both animals and men and, in the latter case, peoples perceived by the Greeks as alien to what they supposed as regular[4].

As for the most recent scientific field, the concept of "ethnic group" is attributable to Weber, who was the first to define "ethnic" as those human groups that shared "*the subjective belief of a common origin" through "the possession, really based on a commonality of origin, of similar natural dispositions, inherited and hereditarily transmitted*" regardless of whether or not there are real parental affinities[5]. From these reflections, and the sense of belonging or not to an ethnic group that was a nation or a different articulation of a group of individuals, many reflections have been born, giving new interpretations on the concepts of race, people, or distinctive characteristics of a community.

Regarding the definition of proper ethnic elements, in the past decades, there has been much discussion about the methods of investigation of the documentation. The anthropological analysis[6] has considered the material culture of ancient peoples, while regarding the coin as an object that is easy to read, only marginally understanding the specificity of some monetary contexts, such as the Cretan one. There are many reflections on the subject, but it is useful to take up some reflections conducted by Jones in the volume *The Archaeology of Ethnicity: Constructing Identities in the Past and Present*, according to which *"The question of ethnicity is highly controversial in contemporary archaeology"*.[7]

According to anthropologists, what we call "ethnic" is just one of several social "identities". It can be compared to others, such as gender, age class, caste, religious identity and what, depending on the case, is called status or social class, if not simply

[1] Hutchinson and Smith 1996, 4.

[2] Str., 2.3.1; 4.1.1; 14.2.28; Polyb., 30.13.6; 4.21.2; *New Testament*, *Galatians*, 2.14; Diod. Sic., 18.13.

[3] See, for example, Hom., *Il.*, 2.87, 2.91, 4.59-69, 12.330.

[4] An example of this is the thought of Plato and Aristotle with their proposal of division according to concepts that are close to today's concept of "race", on this subject see Berti 2003, 365-381; Kamtekar 2002, 1-13; Lott 2002, 14-37.

[5] Weber 1980, 87; A critical reading of Weber's reflections is in Banton 2007, 19-35; Laurano 2020, 32-33, with extensive previous bibliography.

[6] The analysis of the ethnic definition of peoples or groups of individuals has its roots in the definition of the anthropological discipline. In this regard, the reference to the work of G. Stockin is useful, although it refers to contexts of investigation far removed from the ancient world or archaeology (see Stocking 1968). More recent reflections, also useful for the historical contextualization of the elaboration of these concepts, are in Gruen 2020 and Terrell 2001 (with extensive previous bibliography).

[7] Jones 1997, i.

class. In our case, identity is the economic/monetary one that determines the identification of a community in a political and economic dimension.

In the social sciences, the term "identity" is used both in formulations that refer to groups and in characterizations that refer to the individual. The term "ethnicity" has been applied to such a wide range of phenomena that its analytical usability is questionable. The problem posed by generic meanings to the point of applying to other forms of social identity has been answered by specifying the term "identity", either with meanings more restrictive than it (with the risk of loss of comparative virtue), or with the elaboration of subcategories, certainly potentially useful, but in any case, underlying a general definition exposed to the usual problems of classification.

When we find ourselves in such a complex dimension, so much so that we can fragment it into very circumscribed contexts, we then end up looking for a definition capable of summarizing them all, which will have to remain very general, while having to safeguard the uniqueness of the common node.

We are back to the difficult balance between genericity and specificity. How do we define it? These two terms describe the awareness of cultural differentiation and the perception of common ancestry, presented here as factors that can be co-present or alternative. A useful definition comes from Fabietti[8], according to whom, to be ethnic, the interested group must elaborate "*a specific representation of itself*" that not only includes "*an idea of difference or separateness*", but it also "*refers to a mythical and symbolic substratum*", which is "*kept alive*" by what the author calls "*ethnic memory*"[9]. This is perhaps the greatest force that can be found in the coinage of the ancient world –and therefore also of Crete– to be used as an instrument of ethnic representation, a means of propaganda and a device of communication.

If the group is ethnic, it is the perception of the possession of distinctive traits that are believed to derive from the common origin of the members of the group. On the contrary, Poutignat and Streiff-Fenart[10] point out that the problem becomes that of studying the *"fixation des symboles identitaires qui fondent la croyance en l'origine commune"*.

The crucial and distinctive element of ethnic groups is to be found in the myth of common descent or the myth of common origin[11]. It is, in this case, a terminological extent that represents a distinctive level of ethnic groups: they are identified in a "myth of common descent" as well as in a "myth of common origin", a differentiation that involves a whole bearing that is typical of the cultural and mythological panorama of a community[12].

However, it is also true that, at times, different types of myths appear to be intertwined with each other. Moreover, the concept that the members of an ethnic group have of their origin can be expressed, discursively, in articulated narratives with more or less elements alongside those that refer strictly to the commonality of ancestors.

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[8] Fabietti 1998, 24, 144-153.

[9] This expression refers to the "device" of "historical selection" which, over time, makes identity symbols elements consisting of representations of commonalities in terms of language, culture, religion, territory, history, descent.

[10] Poutignat and Streiff-Fenart 2008, 154.

[11] It is true that the notion of "origin myth" is applicable to a wide range of phenomena: for example, it can be creation myths, or foundation traditions (of cities, city-states, kingdoms, etc.).

[12] Jones 1997, xiii; Hill 1997, 25.

Some insights from the analysis of Cretan coinage

In the case of Cretan numismatics, coins come to our aid. In the same cultural, economic, and monetary context, since the production of the first coins, the need for two groups –such as that of Gortyna and Phaistos– to differentiate themselves in a clear, evident way is highlighted.

To analyse the concept of ethnicity in the Cretan monetary context, it must be reiterated that there is a terminological problem for the monetary economies of the ancient world: the ethnic element is often misunderstood with that indicated by the legend of the obverse.

Ethnicity could also be seen by the type chosen by the community to represent itself. Concretely, this matter corresponds to the issuing authority, while it does not convey the complexity of the social identity of that group that allowed the production of coins. This is the sign of a "civic identity" behind it, but this does not always correspond with the ethnic element that the coin itself demonstrates or implies.

In the case of the first coin striking in Crete, this is particularly complex and with new research all its specificities are emerging, demonstrating the impact on the monetary economy of certain phenomena such as weight adjustments, imitation, overstriking, etc.

Nevertheless, precisely in the light of the specificity of this material, it is now worth exploring further the aspects of identity that can be read from the analysis of the material. Cretan coins are produced by single mints, which is customary, but sometimes also jointly, and these are the clearest evidence –together with epigraphic evidence–[13] of political and economic alliances. So much so that sometimes it is precisely these alliances that define coin production[14]. There are also coins that do not only show the ethnic (therefore the issuing authority), but also refer to cults. These references are very important because they concern inter-state cults that have a strong identity, sometimes with a regional dimension[15].

In addition, one should take into consideration the unofficial coins, evidently produced by a mint not managed by a city, but by a group of citizens who needed them for their transactions and who used the types already known in that monetary circuit; or even the coins produced on the island by foreign entities in the context of some war events: it is sufficient to recall, for example, the pseudo-Rhodian emissions for which production on the island has been hypothesized[16].

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[13] Analyses related to the ethnic components that are identifiable from the inscriptions are in Vagionakis 2019, 86-96 (regarding Cretan ethnics) and Vagionakis 2020, 221-234 (for ethnics in onomastic formulas), both with extensive previous bibliography. The same author is also the curator of the *Cretan Institutional Inscriptions* database project [https://ilc4clarin.ilc.cnr.it/cretaninscriptions/ (last accessed 29-11-2025)], aimed at collecting epigraphic documentation and analysing the institutional arrangements of Cretan political realities from the birth of the *poleis* to the Roman conquest of Crete (see Vagionakis 2021).

[14] This is the case with the coins of the Oreioi confederation (Stefanakis 2000a, 195-207; Traeger 2005, 411-418; Sekunda 2002, 338-339). A framing of the eastern area of the island during the Hellenistic period is in Spyridakis 1970, 51-61.

[15] See Stefanakis in this volume above, 19-53.

[16] On pseudo-Rhodian coinage see Apostolou 1995, 7-19; Ashton 1987, 29-36; 1988, 21-32; Στεφανάκης and Στεφανάκη 2006.

Fortunately, Cretan coinage is rich in those characteristics that allow us to delve into monetary uses. Of these, one can mention at least the main ones, such as:

a) Joint production between two or more cities, which occurs not infrequently and not always when the administrative and political unions are clear.

b) The striking by inter-state or regional entities. Sometimes it is these alliances that define the production of coins, as in the case of the koinon of the Oreioi[17].

c) The question of coinage which does not bear the legend of authority but that of type, specifying that there are monetary types that are linked to the authority that produced them, and generally these are regional cults with a strong identity value.

d) Sharing types from other cities, which are also borrowed from larger communities.

e) The production of imitative issues is particularly significant because those who produce coins need to relate to something already known and in use, and do not need to guarantee its value through their authority.

f) Finally, the production of coins is carried out by authorities external to the internal politics of the island but involved in local dynamics.

Identity strategies in the first Cretan coins: between cities and communities

A case in point is that of the first Cretan coins. It is a particular case that has made literature for at least two reasons, namely: the sharing of typologies and the commonality of the legend would be a sign of closeness between the two cities, even if it has been proposed in the past that they are united in a single administrative structure. However, worth noting is the presence of a similar legend that expresses the pride of both cities in starting their coinage[18]. These coins may have been the first ever produced by the two cities and possibly even on Crete, followed shortly thereafter by Knossos and Lyttos.

Valuable information for understanding the ethnic aspects behind the early coin production in Crete would be the synoecism between the two cities and the pride of the communities in producing their coinage. Such information is probably all valid, however, the situation allows us to set methodological questions about the kind of analysis we can handle. To find out more, we need to take a step back and analyse those coins in detail.

When analysing the first silver issues of Gortyna, it is evident that the type, at least on the obverse, differs from that of Phaistos. Here the legend is present on both staters and drachmas, but their production is rather limited. A good number of specimens are

[17] The confederation of the Oreioi, whose existence is attested only in Hellenistic times, is formed by the cities of Lissos, Elyros, Hyrtakina and Tarrha, perhaps for a time also Kantanos. Their membership of the koinon can be deduced from the adoption of a common currency, distinguished by the legend Ὀρ(είων) (see Stefanakis 2000a, 195-207; Traeger 2005, 411-418); on the sources related to the Oreioi (Chaniotis 1996, 70; 2015, 377-385). The Oreioi, in the orbit of Gortyna at the beginning of the 3rd c. BC and of Polyrrhenia in the years of the Lyttos War (*IC* II, 17 1; Polyb., IV 53.6), are responsible for the stipulation of agreements with King Magas of Cyrene in the treaty of 278-270 BC (*IC* II, 17 1), in which they appear though their own collective ethnicity. The ethnic Ὀρειοί is also mentioned in an epitaph from 275-250 BC (*IG* V, 1 723), in which the deceased affirms that his *patris* is the Oreioi. A further treaty (*IC* II, 17 1) provides for the placement of the document in the Diktynnaion of Lissos, a sacred place that would therefore seem to have been identified as a federal shrine of the confederation (Capdeville 2011, 19-41). See Stefanaki in this volume above, 93, 95.

[18] On the coinages of Gortyna and Phaistos see Carbone 2015 and Carbone 2022.

struck with two obverse and two reverse dies, the same used for drachmas, suggesting that they were produced at the same time and without specific dies.

In addition, the same obverse is also associated with some reverses without legend. Thus, the coins with the legend are chronologically close to the anepigraphic ones. It may also be that –following a principle of progressive enrichment of the type and legend– the anepigraphic specimens could much precede these, as indicated by the type without further depictions on the obverse, by the greater weight and by an initial position in the minting sequence.

As for the first coins of Phaistos, these are only staters produced with two obverse dies and two reverse (only three specimens are known[19]) probably used occasionally since no other similar issues are attested.

The first key point is related to the correct reading of the legend of the coins of Gortyna. On closer inspection, the only attestation for the first coins is ΓΟΡΤΥΝΟΣ ΤΟ ΠΑΙΜΑ, as Svoronos rightly points out[20], while the interpretations of ΓΟΡΤΥΝΙΟΣ or ΓΟΡΤΥΝΙΟΝ are interpretative errors or in any case referable to later issues[21] (figs 1-2). This is a frequent aspect in past studies, perhaps due to the poor legibility of the specimens and the similar legend of the coins of Phaistos ending in the -ION form of the formula which, in full, is ΦΑΙΣΤΙΟΝ ΤΟ ΠΑΙΜΑ. Therefore, one would indicate the name of a town, the other of a community, at least in the early phase of coinage in Crete.

Still, on the subject of legends, it is worth noting that some later Phaistian coins, already in the most abundant production of the Hellenistic phase, bear the legend FAISTIKON. Again, the reference is not to the name of the city but to the ethnic group. These are again the "coins of the Phaestii" where the ending -IKON of FAISTIKON should refer to the earlier ΤΟ ΠΑΙΜΑ. On these coins, one can see how at some point the coinage is reworked, cancelling this epigraphic rendering in favour of the one in use from this time onwards, namely ΦΑΙΣ[ΤΙΟΝ]. These coins, however, while responding to the same criterion as before, are used in a quite different monetary context, where the identity of Phaistos' economic intentions can be deduced from the analysis of the weight system.

As mentioned, the coinage of Gortyna and Phaistos has been read as closely related due to the sharing of types. This also conditioned the interpretation of later production, adding other common elements, such as countermarking, similarity of types, introduction of new nominals, etc. When observing the material, differences that highlight a certain distinction between the two monetary contexts are discernable. One concerns the standard of weight: while at the time of the beginning of the coinage mints start from a common standard, when it becomes abundant for both mints, then differences in weight can be noticed, that underline the presence of two different circuits of use and authorities able to regulate its production and circulation (Tab. 1).

[19] Carbone 2022, 67.

[20] Svoronos 1890, 158-159. The scholar sometimes points out some inconsistencies (see the case of the coin described by Sestini in Svoronos 1890, 161, no. 29).

[21] The term Γορτυνίων is widely attested in the inscriptions, for reference of this formula in relation to that of Phaistos, see Sutherland 1959, 47.

Federal institutions and weight systems: the "Cretan staters"

The cross-referencing of numismatic and epigraphic data allows us to read other contexts, such as the more general one on the lines of convergence for the determination of a system of identity weights of the Cretan community.

Suffice it to say that in the sanctuary of Delos, some inventories of the treasure of the temple of Artemis records "Cretan staters" counted together –but in such a way as to specify the difference– with other "Aeginetan staters"[22]. This specification of Cretan provenance occurs at least six times between 279 and 262 BC and the same expression is also attested in Crete in official epigraphic documents.

The formula "Cretan staters" refers to the vastness of the island's production and this makes us understand how it had an element of identity of a federal nature: an example is a *stele* from Chersonessos dated to about 220 BC, containing a treaty between Knossos and Gortyna and their territories of influence which provided for the possibility of imposing fines for the enormous sum of 1000 staters if one of the officials listed did not repeat the oath annually and a public reading of the treaty[23].

According to Melville-Jones, this could be a generic label of coins that can be traced back to some specific city of which the coins must have been well known[24].

The dating of the inventories of Delos probably coincides with the foundation of the "Cretan koinon", i.e. before 267 BC[25], and with the revival of the idea of Cretan unity that emerges from the epigraphic documentation through the attestation of the ethnic-political term *Κρηταιεῖς*.

The term "koinon" in Cretan inscriptions is used eminently about the assembly of the Cretan koinon, mostly referred to in the form *κοινόν τῶν Κρηταιέων* (or sometimes *Κρηταέων* or *Κρηταιῶν*) for the use of the term koinon concerning the type of political structure of a federal nature and the collectivity of the members of a federation[26]. It is

[22] *IG* XI 2, 161 B, 1.20; *IG* XI 2, 162 B, 1.16; *IG* XI 2, 164 A, 1l. 62-63; *IG* XI 2, 199 B, 1.44; *IG* XI 2, 203 B, 1.70; *IG* XI 2, 223 B, 1.29. Melville-Jones 1993, nos 243, 244, 246, 247, 248, 250 and Stefanaki 2008, 60.

As to how these coins came to Delos, it can be assumed that they were votive offerings of individual Cretan pilgrims who donated them or that they were linked to offerings from Cretan communities and cities, who had every interest in leaving something in deposit that was visually related to their provenance. The use of aeginetan coins and early attestations of currency in the Cretan economic context are described in Bile 1988, 325, who lists the terms used to indicate "coins" (δρακμά/δρακνά, ὀδελός, τριόδελον, στατῆρανς/στατῆρανς). Following Polosa (2005, 129-151) some inscriptions use the terms such as "stater", "drachm", and "obol" to prescribe the payment of fines and it is clear that from the late 7th to the 6th c. BC, fines were imposed in tripods, cauldrons, and spits, while in the late 6th and in the beginning of the 5th c. BC, these terms are replaced or flanked by the words "stater", "drachma", and "obelos" as *voces mediae* (as in Devoto 2019, 149; 2022, 62-63) to indicate both weight measures and coins. The assumption that they cannot refer to measures of weight but to coins could be suggested by the description of the amount used in the inscriptions. This is the case of the triobols (τριόδελον = τριώβελον) used in the aeginetan system, which was also common in Crete before the choice of a local standard, where the drachm is equivalent to six obols, so half a drachm corresponds to three obols. When it is a measure of weight, this amount is referred to as hemidrachmon, literally half a drachm; normally, the term τριώβελον is used for minted silver (Devoto 2019, 149-151 with previous bibliography).

[23] Chaniotis and Kritzas 2010, 180.

[24] Melville-Jones 1971, 128.

[25] Cigaina 2020, 65-66.

[26] Chaniotis 1996, 29-38, 99-100; 1999, 287-300; Faraguna 2010, 185-186.

worthwhile, therefore, to pause to define —albeit very briefly— the dimensions of this confederation and the internal and external relations that it had.

It should be noted that the existence of the "Cretan koinon" is known only from the Hellenistic and Imperial periods[27]. The federal assembly of the koinon, generally referred to by the expression *κοινὸν τῶν Κρηταιέων*, appears to be responsible for the deliberation in the decrees of the 2nd c. BC[28], which contains motions, cases, and sanctions. As for the agreements made by the Cretan koinon, two are known: the treaty of 183 BC (*IC* IV, 179) between the *Kretaieis* and Eumenes II and the one –no longer traced– between the koinon and Ptolemy VI, under which military aid was sent to the sovereign commemorated in the honorary decree of ca 150 BC[29]. The Koinon is also the promoter of honorary dedications[30] and embassies[31]; its members, usually referred to as *Κρηταιεῖς* and attested for the first time in the decree of Chremonides 269/8 BC (*IG* II3 1 912), are mentioned in numerous decrees of the end of the 3rd and even more so of the 2nd c. BC concerning the good relations between them and other external realities or the good behaviour shown towards them[32]. References to interesting wars, the *Kretaieis* are present in various decrees[33] and the soldiers sent by the Cretan *koinon*, moreover, seem to be the promoters of honorary dedications to their commanders dating back to the 2nd c. BC (*IG* IV^2, 1 244) and 142-131 BC (*SEG* 30.1640). A further honorary decree of the 2nd c. BC (*IC* I, 24 2) documents about the Cretan koinon a *Κρηταιέ[ων] πλῆθος*, mentioned in connection with the sending of ambassadors to the latter by Samos and the *eunoia* shown towards him by the latter, and probably indicating the assembly of the koinon.

The *synedroi*, i.e. the members of its federal council, are also attested in relation to the Cretan koinon. These figures are documented by a treaty of 222-189 BC (*IC* IV, 175), which provides that they may be fined if they fail in their duties, and by the decree of 200-150 BC (*IC* IV, 197), in which they appear within the sanction formula together with the *koinon* as responsible for the deliberation.

There is also information on the individual and collegial offices[34], celebrations[35], institutional practices and instruments, and public spaces of the confederation[36].

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[27] On the koinon and its sources, cf. Guarducci 1950, 142-154; Willetts 1975, 143-148; Buraselis 2013; Chaniotis 2015, 377-385; on its re-foundations in 222 BC and around 216 BC cf. Polyb., IV 53, 55 and VII 11.9; Cf. also, Chaniotis 1996, 75-76.

[28] *IC* I, 24 2 and *IC* II, 5 22, from 200-150 BC; *IC* IV, 197 and in the presumed forgery of ca 200 BC, *Magnesia* 40.

[29] Habicht 2007, 123-152.

[30] From ca 165 BC, *IMT* 550; from 154-151 BC, *FD* 2 135; from 154-152 BC, *I.Oro* 433 and of the Hellenistic period, *IG*VII 1859, as well as probably that of the end of the 3rd c. BC, see *Miletos* 450.

[31] *IG* IV^2, 1 66, dating to 74 BC.

[32] *IC* I, 5 53; *IC* I, 24 2; *IC* II, 3 4 C; *IC* II 5, 22; *IC* IV, 176, 177, 178; *IG* II^3, 1137; *Syll.*^{3} 560, *Mylasa* 92, 94, 95, 97, 101 and 104; *SEG* 42.1003, 1004 and 1005.

[33] For example, see *IG* IV, 756 of 205-201 BC; *IG* XII, 1.1033 of the 2nd c. BC; *Lindos* II 1007 Add.; *Mylasa* 101 and *Mylasa* 96 and, of the 1st c. BC; *I.Cos* ED 229. Mention of the *Kretaieis* also occurs in the decrees of 184-180 BC (*IC* IV, 176 and probably *IC* I, 8 9 regarding those of them residing in Miletus). See also *Mylasa* 443 (Κρησί) and in the treaties of ca 219-216 BC, *IC* I, 16 1 and ca 205-200 BC, *IC* IV, 174.

[34] In the documents of the koinon, the eponymous cosmos of Gortyna and Knossos are frequently mentioned (*e.g.*, *IC* IV, 197). An eponymous Kretarchas, Kydas son of Kydas, *archos* for the ninth time is known from the votive dedication of ca 67-31 BC (*IC* IV, 250) while the eponym son of Telemnastos, mentioned in the honorary decree of the 2nd c. BC (*IC* II, 16 9), probably a cosmos, is likely to be pertinent

These are many aspects that illustrate the complexity of the institutional organization and the networks of relationships the organization was able to maintain outside the island.

Returning to our discourse on the element of identity and its propagation, the institution of the *κοινὸν τῶν Κρηταιέων* would be configured as a unitary revival that could also have been propagandized through the coins produced on the island[37]. There are different theories, such as Gardner's according to which –with reference only to coins– this expression could refer to denominations of different cities but united by the same system of weights, which was the mirror of a centralized institution. In confirmation of this proposal, it must be said that the differentiation between coins of aeginetan weight and those of Cretan weight, attested by the inscriptions of Delos, makes it clear that the diversity must have been clear and the *koinon* had to figure as the responsible body; since the aeginetan ones referable not only to the mint of Aegina but to many others of the Cyclades and the Anatolian coasts. This differentiation appears to be linked to local weighting choices.

This explanation is all the more so if one considers the large attestation of aeginetan currency before the start of the coinage of the Cretan cities[38]. The aeginetan

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to one of the cities of the koinon. The possible existence of an eponymous priest in Hellenistic times is limited to the alleged forgery decree of the koinon of ca 200 BC (*Magnesia* 40), in whose dating formula the *hiereus* Agaimenis son of Lampaios is mentioned; the figure of the koinon *archiereus* is instead well attested in the imperial era *(IC* I, 7 9, *IC* IV, 275-276, 305-306, 330) on the subject see also Rouanet-Liesenfelt 1994 and Martínez Fernández 2010.

Regarding military settlements, there is evidence of the existence of soldiers sent by the Koinon, whose presence in battle is attested to by the treaty of 183 BC (*IC* IV, 179). The *hegemones* Telemnastos, son of Antiphatas of Gortyna and Diktys, also appear as beneficiaries of the honorary dedications of the 2nd c. BC (*IG* IV^2, 1 244; *Salamine* 92). The decree of ca 200 BC (*Magnesia* 40), on the other hand, recalls *a kathagemon*, Leukippos son of Lykios, designated as the leader of the planned Asiatic expedition, to whom it is expected that each Cretan city will pour a talent of silver. The soldiers sent by the *koinon* are also responsible for the deliberation in the honorary decrees of about 150 BC (Magnelli 1994-95, 47-48), in the first of which they are mentioned in the formula of sanction as well as with regard to the good behaviour shown towards them by the commander who was the beneficiary of the document, while the information of a Cretan embassy sent to the sanctuary of Apollo at Klaros possibly by the koinon is provided by the honorary decree of 130-110 BC for Ptolemaios of Colophon, an individual who is said to have given economic aid to ambassadors who arrived from Crete (*SEG* 39.1243, IV ll. 17-20).

Finally, three honorary decrees document the granting of proxenus status by the Cretan koinon to individuals from Megalopolis in the 2nd c. BC (*IC* II, 16 9) and Alexandreia Troas ca 165 BC (*IMT* 550) and to the Ptolemaic commander Aglaos, son of Theokles of Cos, ca 150 BC, Magnelli 1994-95, 47-48.

[35] It is known that there are competitions organized in Gortyna, these include isolympic pancratium (*IG* XII, 1 77; *SEG* 52.528; *IC* I, 18 55; *SEG* 51.1137).

[36] The existence of a court used to conduct trials in several cities belonging to the *koinon* is attested in a treaty of the late 3rd-early 2nd c. BC (*IC* III, 3-4), it is understood that the place of meeting of the jury is variable according to the circumstances.

[37] Cigaina 2020, 66.

[38] On the attestation of aeginetan coinage in Crete see Le Rider 1966, 168-175; Stefanakis 1999, 250-258; Stefanaki 2008, 48; Sekunda 2002, 332-334. In general, for an overview of the weighting systems in use in the Aegean Sea area, see Psoma 2015, 93, 95-98 (with previous bibliography). A remark on the cities that did not mint coinage and the influx of Aegina coinage is in Melville-Jones 2006a, 25-27.

coins were so widespread as also attested by two hoards[39], the oldest ever found in Crete –that it determined their imitation as the first form of coinage of the communities gathered around Kydonia[40], right there where the aeginetan currency must have been widely used also because it was available for the exchange needs of the local community.

It is no coincidence, then, that the earliest inscriptions mention "staters" even when local currency production had not yet begun. There are numerous inscriptions mentioning Aeginetan coins as a unit of account in a society where only foreign currency was used –at least for the first moment. While this confirms the wide attestation of these nominals, it also gives us a picture of the total indifference of local communities in producing currency on their account. It is impossible to say whether this is a matter of economic resistivity, a calculation related to possible production costs, or a total disinterest in producing value. The fact remains that Cretan political institutions used the staters as a unit of account despite never having produced it locally.

It has been hypothesized that the expression "Cretan staters" may have been in use even before the 3rd c. BC but in any case, their appearance is contemporaneous with the birth of a koinon in the 70s-60s of the 3rd c. BC. It is possible that the Cretan confederation coordinated the issuance of currency according to a weighting system shared among the mints of the island, perhaps also to curb inflationary phenomena (through the sharp reduction in the weight of silver coins)[41]. However, it should be pointed out that this is a fact that at the moment is not possible to confirm and that, on the contrary, studies for individual mints are highlighting a more articulated differentiation of the weight of the coins according to the economic needs that the Cretan cities had to face.

An attestation to the tradition of such a differentiation of Cretan standard coinage comes from an inscription of the 1st c. BC from Axos (*IC* II, v 35, 1.14)[42]. In this case, a decree states that in case of violations a penalty had to be paid in *ἀργυριον Κρητικόν*. Although this has been variously interpreted[43], it has been considered that this could no longer refer to the reduced aeginetan standard for the production of "Cretan silver" during the 3rd c. BC, but rather to a weight system in use in later times and therefore the Attic one (in its entirety or a reduction of it) used for the minting of tetradrachms or

[39] *IGCH* 1 composed of 70 aeginetan and one theran staters, found in 1943 in the Matala area and a hoard of four aeginetan staters (Stefanakis 1999, 259; Evans 1928, 5-7) found in the Palace of Minos at Knossos in 1923/24 (Stefanaki 2021, 491).

[40] Robinson 1928, 172-198; Price 1981, 461-466; Stefanakis 1999, 251-257. According to Melville-Jones – also based on the re-examination of the inscription *IG* XI, 2, 161– the clarification of "Cretan staters" in the inventories of Delos would have served to differentiate the official productions of Aegina from those imitated locally in Crete, with weights and types similar of the others. This hypothesis is still awaiting confirmation, especially in the light of the chronological distance, the circulation of imitations in a narrow geographical area and the fact that the Cretan standard will represent, in the phases following and closer to their accounting in Delos, the weighting reference for the silver issues of the island's mints (see Melville-Jones 1993, 194-195; Robinson 1928, 172-198).

[41] Cigaina 2020, 67 and note 391; Macdonald 1919, 296-300.

[42] Melville-Jones 1993, n. 310; Stefanaki 2008, 63.

[43] Melville-Jones dated this inscription to a time when issues with the same coin types had to be produced, specifically during the Tiberian or Neronian age (see Melville-Jones 2006b, 193). On more general lexical aspects, also referring to the topic of minted silver, see Faraguna 2003, 109-135.

possibly cistophoroi, issued between the end of the 2nd and the first half of the 1st c. BC[44].

It needs to be said that the differentiation between "Cretan staters" and "Cretan silver" could be a child of its time, in the sense that the term silver could imply the stater as a unit of account, especially if one considers that we are in a time when bronze coinage is widespread, which becomes the real currency in common use for everyday transactions.

Among other things, bronze issues also offer tools for interpreting inter-state and identity phenomena. This is the case (examined later) of the probable joint coinage between Gortyna and Knossos.

In addition, one should consider precisely how from this time onwards, Cretan silver re-appropriates a symbolism that is specific to the island, as an avocation of the identity of a group that now represents itself as a community gathered under a single emblem, propagated precisely by the coins: this is the case with the choice of the Zeus Kretagenes type.

Some reflections on the presence of names of divinity on coins

It is appropriate to start once again with the subsequent coinage of Phaistos because this allows for comparisons with other coinages. At least two cases are known for this city in which it must have been necessary to mark the deities with their names: this is the case of the staters with Welchanos[45] or Talos[46].

The type of Welchanos refers to an indigenous cult peculiar to the island that was worshipped in Hagia Triada and the Welchania –the Welchanus' main festival– of Gortyna, Lyttos and Knossos[47]. As for Talos (figs 4-5), the allusion to a solar deity, probably also referred to an ancient local cult, certainly represented as the protector of Europa, a shared symbol of the whole island[48]. And it is no coincidence that this typology appears perhaps at a crucial moment in the city, as a sort of civic pride.

Clearly, the coins show how these iconographies are linked to the specificity of local contexts and the common feeling of belonging to a shared identity landscape. However, in both cases, the heroes are depicted with their attributes and thus fully familiar to those who used the coins. One wonders, why it was necessary to mention their names. This practice is similar to other cases, which, however, were exceptions in the monetary landscape of the world of Greek culture.

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[44] At this stage, the mint of Axos is still active in the production of silver coins and the minting of sporadic issues of drachmas continued at least until the years of Caligula (see *RPC* I, 962).

[45] The identification of the type has long been discussed: the legend had first been interpreted as Selchanos, identifying the character with Idomeneus nephew of Minos, then an identification with Heracles was proposed and finally the more correct one with Welchanos (Carbone 2022, 20, n. 20).

[46] Carbone 2022, 154-155.

[47] *IC* I, XXIII.5; Halbherr 1906, 381. This cult is attested only in Crete –and referred to the centres of Knossos, Phaistos (through coins), Gortyna, Hagia Triada, Lyttos– and in Cyprus (Guarducci 1937, 184-186).

[48] The myth of Europa is extensively covered in Stefanakis and Konstantinidi 2020, 758-762 (with extensive previous bibliography). Following the reflections of scholars, this cult has a strong reference to autochthony. Surely the intention of the iconographic program is to emphasize the link of the city of Gortyna with the mother of all Cretans and legitimate wife of Zeus.

Similar is the case of the issues of one of the major centres of Sicily: in the second half of the 4th c. BC Syracuse struck a silver issue with the type of Zeus surrounded by the caption legend ΖΕΥΣ ΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΙΟΣ[49]. This represents the transformation attested in the city after the ousting of the tyrant Hiketas by Timoleon while the image of Zeus Eleutherios was a clear declaration of jubilation for the city's liberation from tyranny, supported by the Carthaginians. A coin type that must have been so eloquent and free of any misinterpretation that the reference to the divinity had to be quoted in full.

Similarly, the coins of Lokroi Epizephyrioi in Magna Graecia with types bearing the legend ΕΙΡΗΝΗ-ΛΟΚΡΩΝ on some staters produced around 375-330 BC[50] or the ROMA/PISTIS issue probably to be placed ca 275 BC[51], where this is used to describe a political position and the role of the city in a changing situation due to the balance changes caused by the expansion of Rome[52].

The above examples are just some of the cases that can be used to define the identity context of a polis through the production of coins; a choice of types that would later characterize many of the subsequent issues, especially in the Roman world, when the communicative impact of the flans became increasingly significant.

In this regard, it is appropriate to analyse two issues of Phaistos that present the names of divinities, Welchanos and Talos, in association with the legend referring to the city's ethnicity[53].

The first case is that of the coins depicting Zeus Welchanos seated on a tree with a rooster on his right knee and a bull clashing in a beaded border or a laurel wreath on the reverse (fig. 3). Regarding the divinity, the inscriptions of the Hellenistic age mention the cult of Zeus Welchanos as a divinity connected to vegetation, both because on a coin the god is represented seated on a tree, and because the Welchania (*IC* I, 11.3) was celebrated in Lyttos at the beginning of May, a moment of maximum strength of vegetation celebrated with the sacrifice of cattle. A cult certainly attested in Gortyna as early as the 7th c. BC[54], it must have been well rooted in the territory, so much so that it was also attested by a vascular inscription from Hagia Triada[55], dating back to the 5th c. BC, as well as by the discovery in Phaistos of tiles with the name of the divinity[56].What could be the reason for inscribing the name of a deity, not present on other coins, on a short-lived coin series[57], remains an unresolved question.

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[49] Calciati 1986, 177-178, nos 71-80.

[50] *HNI* 2001, 2310.

[51] *HNI* 2001, 2347.

[52] The Locrian stater was minted in the wake of the expansion of Roman rule over southern Italy. Several scholars attribute the Locrian coin to 275 BC or shortly after. Its low weight indicates the strain on the regional economy and its reverse type reflects Lokroi Epizephyrioi's capitulation to Rome after the Pyrrhic War. Not surprisingly, it was the city's last precious metal coin. The design and inscriptions make clear the servile nature of the treaty, as Rome is crowned by Pistis; both figures are identified in the side inscriptions and the name of the city appears at the bottom. We thus have a perfect expression of the *deditio in fidem* to Rome, by which the Lokrians relied on the goodwill of their Roman rulers (see Spinelli 2019, 38).

[53] On Welchanos and Talos on the coinage of Phaistos, see also Stefanakis in this volume above, 24-25.

[54] Willetts 1962, 250-251; Capdeville 1995, 160-162; *LIMC* VIII/1, 215.

[55] *IC* I, XXIII.24.

[56] Carbone 2022, 23-24, fig. 3.

[57] These are coins produced with one obverse and three reverse dies, Carbone 2022, 115-116.

The second case is roughly identical but with much larger production volumes and an even more emblematic type. These are first the staters, and then the bronzes with the image of the automaton Talos. Talos was already represented in an issue produced between the end of the 5th and the first half of the 4th c. BC, consisting of two series bearing the winged giant Talos on the obverse, between whose legs stands the dog Laelaps, the hound with an infallible nose that never lost its prey, in the act of sniffing on the ground, and on the reverse a finely crafted female head with her hair tied up. A second issue consisting of a single series differs in having a bull protome facing right on the reverse. According to tradition, Talos was forged by Hephaestus with the help of the Cyclops in the form of a bull and then given to Minos[58], or the latter was given as a dowry by Zeus to Europa as guardian of Crete[59]. In both versions, Talos had the task of guarding the island from the enemies who tried to land there. For this reason, every day he went around the island ready to throw hot stones at the invaders or to burn them by holding them in an embrace. According to Cretan myth[60], Zeus had given Hera two other gifts: a javelin that never missed its target and the dog Laelaps, which would later be depicted also on bronze coins in association with the representation of the automaton.

The Talos type reappeared after a long interval on the last silver issues of the second half of the 3rd and the first half of the 2nd c. BC at a time when the type was only one of the changes related to the currency. In this phase, however, there is also a change in the choice of slightly lower weights, the production system and the iconographic motifs. The type of the hero Talos was proposed again, this time represented again frontally in the act of throwing a stone, with the unmistakable legend on the obverse TAΛωN. On the reverse, a bull variously depicted, with the legend of the ethnic that –where present– is rendered in different forms[61].

It is striking how, at a certain point in the monetary history of the city, the need was felt to specify the name of the hero on the obverse, which in some cases –where the reverse is anepigraphic– remains the only reference written on the rounds. Certainly, the character is linked to Zeus and Europa and has a strong cultic value for the context of the island. It refers to a myth that highlights the warlike role of Phaistos, placing the city as the defender of the entire island. It is not certain whether these issues were part of one of the various war events of this historical phase –such as, for example, the Lyttian War of about 222-218 BC,[62] the First Cretan War (ca 205-200 BC) or the Second Cretan War (ca 155-153 BC)– and if they represent a jolt linked to the events related to the

[58] Apollod. *Bibl.,* I 9, 26. The author reports that Talos was Zeus' gift to Europa. The type was identified for the first time by Cavedoni at a time when it was still debated whether it was Icarus or a local hero; the scholar had the merit of clearing the field of this hypothesis by pointing out that the character depicted on the coins of Phaistos did not hover in the air, but remained anchored to the ground, since the type was always represented on the exergue line (Cavedoni 1835, 156-157). For more precise analyses of the figure of Talos see Federico 1989, 95-120; Pugliara 2000, 43-63; 2003; Ruggeri 2004, 63-70.

[59] Ap. Rhod. *Argon.,* IV, 1638-1693.

[60] Verbruggen 1981.

[61] It should be noted that the sigma is sometimes reported in lunate form, a characteristic linked to the legacy of archaic alphabetic forms or to an error by the engraver, see Carbone 2022, 144.

[62] Cardinali 1905, 519-551; Chaniotis 2005, 9-17. The military events that affected Lyttos were probably also justified on ethnic motivations (see Kotsonas 2002, 39-40).

destruction of the city around 150 BC[63]. Among these war events, the one that perhaps most actively involves the centre of Phaistos is precisely the war of Lyttos which, in the words of Cardinali, *"(…) è uno degli avvenimenti più importanti della storia Cretese del III secolo, un vero e proprio avvenimento di storia internazionale, non di storia locale"*; therefore an event so impetuous as to determine the increase in production of the major nominals and the construction of imposing buildings such as the fortification walls of the city[64]. The role of the Phaestii is quite clear since, thanks to the support of the Gortynian *neoteroi*, who won the conflict, they would have managed to regain a certain political and economic independence.

In the case of the reuse of historical memory through clear references to ancestral mythology on coins, the reference to Minos on a very rare stater of Knossos is also emblematic[65]. On closer inspection, it is a series of staters minted after a long hiatus in silver production: an issue with a bearded male head on the obverse and the usual labyrinth on the reverse.

The head on the obverse has been variously identified with Zeus or Minos, although as early as 1890 Wroth[66] argued that the presence of a diadem (and not a laurel wreath typical of Zeus), could be a good point for identifying the character with the mythical king of the city. The identification was later confirmed by a coin, now in the Münzkabinett in Berlin, which bears the legend ΜΙΝΩΣ on the obverse[67] (fig. 6).

As for the dating, owing to the studies of Le Rider, at least 13 specimens of this issue overstruck on foreign coins are known, allowing the undertypes to be used as *terminus post quem* for the definition of relative chronology[68]. The attestation of overstruck specimens on coins dating back to the years of Antiochus IX, i.e. in ca 113-108 BC, suggests that the minting of silver must have been resumed, at least in part, after 110 BC.

A type only known through these coins, but whose realization must necessarily be linked to the spreading of the name of the city hero, in addition to the legend of the ethnic. A choice that reflects –once again– the roots and ancestral characteristics of the community, through the reference to the founder from whom it descends.

Sharing types between cities and communities

As mentioned at the beginning of the coinage of Gortyna and Phaistos, the exchange of types between cities (and communities) is much more articulated in the broader analysis of Cretan coinage[69]. The sharing of types between issues of various

[63] The testimony of the destruction is reported by Strabo (X.479). On the analysis of traces of burn remains from archaeological contexts, see La Rosa 1990, 160-166; Portale in La Rosa and Portale 1996-97, 360-364.

[64] Longo 2017, 497-518.

[65] Known in only one specimen kept at the Münzkabinett der Staatlichen Museen in Berlin, this comes from the collection of the antiquarian Lambros, who was greatly active in the trade of coins –including Cretan ones– especially since his move to Athens around 1860.

[66] Wroth 1884, 22. On the attribution of the type, see also Le Rider 1966, 271, n. 1.

[67] Svoronos 1890, 67, n. 14; Stefanakis and Konstantinidi 2020.

[68] Le Rider 1966, 286-289. The specimen was part of the hoard found in 1942 (*IGCH* 322) in the area of Limin-Chersonisou. On the interpretation of the widespread attestation of overstriking in Crete see Garraffo 1974, 59-74.

[69] See also Stefanaki in this volume below, 91-108.

mints –a phenomenon often associated by scholars with the desire to produce joint coinage– is certainly not a new phenomenon but it is attested to a greater extent here than in other areas of the Mediterranean in the same period.

However, the question should be whether these are still joint currencies. For example, the relationship between Sybritos and Gortyna is not supported by elements as strong as the coins that share the same types, considering that even the attestations of treaties between the two cities are later and not so numerous[70] (figs 7-8).

On the other hand, it can be debated whether coins of Sybritos[71] were imitations rather than shared types. These are coins with a close resemblance –presenting on the obverse the type of a female figure seated on a tree and on the reverse a seated bull– and with a similar engraving style, elements that could suggest that they were produced by the same engraver if not in the same workshop.

Like the coins of Gortyna with the identical types, those of Sybritos must have been produced around 350-270 BC, an element that seems to be confirmed also by the attestation of some specimens overstruck on coins of Knossos, Gortyna or with Aegean types, at a time when the phenomenon of money recycling seems to be more pronounced.

This production, known from not many specimens, is composed only of staters whose average weight is about 11.50 gr[72], therefore below even the theoretical standard of 11.80 gr as a local reduction of the aeginetan standard attested in Gortyna itself. The articulation of the issue is rather compact, with a few dies that determine the existence of five series, all very similar to each other since they differ only in the presence or absence of the legend and its epigraphic rendering[73].

After this early production, the city of Sybritos issued with with her own types with Dionysus on the obverse and Hermes on the reverse.

Ultimately, are these coins in imitation[74] of those of Gortyna or are they the result of a relationship between the two cities? Once again, the first hypothesis can be excluded, because if all the communicative, propagandistic and identity significance behind the

[70] The treaty of alliance (*IC* IV, 183) is dated to ca 216-189 BC.

[71] Στεφανάκης 2002, 54; 2012, 74-76. On the mint of Sybritos see also Svoronos 1890, 313-317; Naster 1947, 35-40; Carbone 2015, 445-447.

[72] Out of a total of 22 specimens whose weight is known and whose shape of the rounds is entire.

[73] The collection of specimens and a first reconstruction of their articulation is presented in Carbone 2015, 445-447.

[74] Imitations of properly Cretan types are known, for a comparison with Knossos emissions see Carrier 2013, 231-241.

In addition, to provide another example from the same geographical and economic context, it is worth mentioning the case of Tylissos (Devoto 2023), whose staters and drachmas present an imitation of the obverse type with Hera of Argos struck in Knossos, both types of which can be related to that of the Argos coins, where the goddess is characterised by a palmetted *polos*. The reason for these Knossos and Tylissos references to the Argos coins remains unknown: it has been supposed that they may have been the choices of an engraver who had certain reference models (Le Rider 1966, 162-172) or that there was an intention to refer to an unknown form of interaction between the three cities (Stefanakis 2007, 310).

Ultimately, it remains an open topic especially in the light of new analyses on the phenomenon of imitation and sharing of coin types (most recently van Alfen 2005, 322-354, with previous bibliography); in general, the motivations range from the desire to make the own coin more attractive by affixing to it the types of currencies particularly appreciated for their good weight and quantity of precious metal, to sharing the mint, to the desire to strengthen or reaffirm alliances.

choice of a coin type were lost on the other hand it would not be clear why one should imitate a type when the cultural panorama of reference has then determined the adoption of other types in subsequent series.

The lowering of the weight, the reference to a common coin landscape and the proximity of the engraving style seem to allude to a political contingency in which there must have been a predominant role of Gortyna in a relationship of subordination of Sybritos.

Another case is that of an occasional production of bronze involving Knossos and Gortyna, perhaps a joint coinage, on which, however, it is good to note that we have only the legend of Knossos and therefore, perhaps this is not a single coinage on behalf of the two centres but an appropriation of a type that had to go beyond the boundaries of Gortyna itself. But, although we still know little about the production of bronze in Crete, this case seems to be exemplary of the reading of the internal political dynamics of the island and the consequent instrumentalization of the currency[75].

According to Strabo's testimony[76], the agreement between the cities of Gortyna and Knossos –at the time dominant over large portions of the island's territory– represented the prerequisite for a possible institution of a stable koinon[77]. In this regard it is significant to examine the emission produced with mixed types of the two mints: on a side the representative type of Gortyna, i.e. Europa on the bull[78], and on the other the labyrinth with the legend ΚΝΩΣΙΩΝ (figs 9-10)[79]. It is plausible that this particular issue was produced on the occasion of one of the "restorations" of the koinon and therefore would have been configured as a federal emission even though the representative types are attributable to the civic types, linked to local circulation, as is usually the case for bronze coins. It should also be noted that no specimen of this emission has ever been found during archaeological investigations in Gortyna and only a few have been recovered from the Knossos area[80].

Based on typological and stylistic correspondences with other Gortynian issues[81], the production of these coins is commonly dated to around 221 BC[82], when the alliance between the two centres seemed to be strengthening before the war against Lyttos.

What is evident from the analysis of the material is that this issue does not seem to be a sporadic production, struck for a single celebratory purpose, but that it is well articulated as shown by the variations in weight and rendering of the coin type. In this

[75] On the production and circulation of bronze coins in Crete, see Stefanaki and Carrier 2017, 470-474 (with previous bibliography); Carbone 2020, 129-146; Στεφανάκης and Στεφανάκη 2006.

[76] Str., X, 4.11.

[77] Polyb., IV, 53, 4. On this subject, see also van der Mijnsbrugge 1931, 58; van Effenterre 1948, 253-254.

[78] Zahn 1983.

[79] On the meaning and characteristics of the labyrinth image see Kotsonas 2018, 367-396.

[80] Price 1992, 325.

[81] Jackson 1971a, 46; on the basis of stylistic evidence, the scholar hypothesizes that the coins of the two cities could have been worked by the same engravers. This is a fact that awaits confirmation, at the moment there are no testimonies that seem to affirm this operation of the coin workshops.

[82] Jackson 1971b, 290-292; Price 1992, 325; Carrier 2020, 212-213; Devoto 2020, 402. It should be noted that, following Cigaina (2020, 68), this chronology could be revised downwards based on correspondences with the tetradrachms of Knossos and Gortyna minted after about 110 BC: this is a datum that awaits, however, confirmation on the evidence of the material, which is still little known.

regard, retracing the survey operated by Devoto, one can summarize the segmentation of the minting of these bronzes, which Jackson had already defined as *"the number of denominations in this issue and the quantities of each suggest that Knossos is turning to a more complete system of bronze coinage"*[83].

To sum up, the following groups are highlighted following the nomenclature indicated by Jackson, articulated on several values up to the lowest with the hypothetical value of half an obol:

1. Jackson 1971, XXII. O/ Laureate head of Zeus l; R/ Labyrinth. Above: symbol (head of Apollo Carneius?); diam. ca 24 mm; weight ca 8-10 gr (over 32 specimens);

2. Jackson 1971, XXIII. O/ Europa on the bull to l. Below: two dolphins with their heads pointing downwards. Circle of rays; R/ KNΩΣIΩN labyrinth; above star; diam. ca 18 mm; weight ca 3-4 gr (over 40 specimens);

3. Jackson 1971, XXIV. O/ Europa on the bull to l. Below: two dolphins with their heads pointing downwards. Circle of rays. R/ KNΩΣIΩN labyrinth; above star; diam. ca 12 mm; weight ca 1-2 gr (over 37 specimens);

4. Jackson 1971, XXVIII. O/ Europa on the bull to l. Below: one dolphin swimming l. Circle of rays; R/ Labyrinth. Above, star. Below: KN. Circle of dots; diam. ca 20 mm; weight ca 5-6 gr (over 16 specimens);

5. Jackson 1971, XIX. O/ Europa on the bull to r. Below: one dolphin swimming r.; R/ Labyrinth; diam. ca 17 mm; weight: ca 3-4 gr (over 8 specimens);

6. Jackson 1971, XXX. O/ Europa on the bull to l; R/ KNΩΣIΩN labyrinth; diam. ca 12 mm; weight ca 1-2 gr (over 5 specimens);

7. Jackson 1971, XXXII. O/ Europa on the bull to r. Below: one dolphin swimming r.; R/ KNΩΣIΩN labyrinth; diam. ca 19 mm; weight ca 4-5 gr (over 11 specimen).

To these groups should eventually be added those that have types that can be traced back to both Gortyna and Knossos[84]: these associate the head of Zeus –widely attested on the silver and bronze coinage of Gortyna– with the Knossian labyrinth, also structured according to a scale of different coin values.

The above is an articulation that is not surprising, especially if read in the light of the new interpretations on the organisation of Cretan bronze proposed by Stefanaki and Carrier[85] who have highlighted the presence of a system composed of several nominals – recognizable by different weights and modulus– widespread throughout the island. It remains to be understood why the values do not have a real differentiation of the type and whether this production is rather compact or diluted over time.

The question remains why these common types –all the more so if dictated by political reasons linked to a renewed alliance– appear only in the bronze coinage and not in the silver. Also, why is there only the legend referring to Knossos and not also to Gortyna, and why were these struck by only one mint when both were still in operation and that the circulation of bronze is useful for local areas. It is to be excluded that in the meantime Gortyna did not have her own currency. Rather, the key to interpretation may

[83] Jackson 1971b, 290.

[84] Jackson 1971a, groups XXII, XXVII, XXXI.

[85] To the two scholars we owe the first framework for the survey of nominals following pondometric characteristics, according to chronological phases and areas of production and circulation (Stefanaki and Carrier 2017, 470-474 with previous bibliography).

be in the type: not a political alliance, but more in a cultic and therefore social claim that placed Knossos at the helm of the island, replacing the antagonistic city.

It must be said that the testimony of Strabo (X 4, 11) has greatly influenced the previous interpretations, according to which only thanks to the agreement between the two cities it was possible to achieve that political balance useful for the construction and stability of a koinon on the island, but it is clear that it is not possible to see this from the single coin issue described above. Sometimes, indeed, coins have been given a value perhaps beyond their significance, for example in the search in other series for any correspondences that could attest to a political and economic alignment between the two centres: This is the case of the Knossos issue bearing a star on the reverse, which –as some scholars suggest[86]– would find a comparison in the radiated crown present as a border decoration on some later drachmas from Gortyna (fig. 11). The suggestion is certainly a stretch, considering that there are also aesthetic and iconographic trends that characterize the stylistic choices and the creation of dies.

The case of sharing or appropriation of types is different since this involves not only cities but also ethnic groups within them, as seems to be demonstrated by the case of the bronze coins with the same types as those of Gortyna, but with the legend AINAΩN[ΩN?][87].

Concerning these coins, although there are still questions about their attribution, they are of interest to explain the appropriation of types by a community that reuses the symbols –which must have been well known and part of the same system of use– of the hegemonic city of the area. Various attributions have been proposed for these coins, such as to an unknown city or some centre in Thrace or Macedonia. Only the discovery of a hoard of bronze coins (*IGCH* 300) in 1963 in Kastelli[88], near Gortyna, provided new data since the 61 coins are all from Gortyna except for 6-7 pieces bearing the inscription AINAΩN. The specimens are completely identical, both in weight and stylistic rendering, and their discovery in the Messara area suggested the existence of a relationship between this community and Gortyna itself.

The absence of other evidence for such a community is not surprising, because, as in the case of the treaty with the Milesians in the middle of the 3rd c. BC, some groups are mentioned that are known to historians only from epigraphic or numismatic sources, but of which no other archaeological evidence remains[89]. The inscriptions themselves hand down the existence of a tribe of Gortyna –that of the *Αἰνάωνες*[90]– which precisely because of its name and geographical proximity could have a correspondence with those who produced these bronzes.

Certainly, the issue of these coins would represent a much higher status of independence than that of a tribe in a city, but it would still refer to a similar cultural and institutional landscape[91]. This could be part of a moment of change in the turbulent

[86] Cigaina 2020, 68-69.

[87] Spyridakis 1977, 51-61. See also Stefanaki in this volume below, 94-95.

[88] Le Rider 1966, 234, note 1; Βαρούχα-Χριστοδουλοπούλου 1968, 209-204. The hoard was initially divided into two groups, then joined with the information recovered after the discovery.

[89] Spyridakis 1977, 52.

[90] *IC* IV, 196; *IC* I, xvii, 6 (Lebena); Perlman 2014, 93-197; Genevrois 2017, 383-385.

[91] Spyridakis 1977, 55.

history of Gortyna, determining a change in the dependencies of some of its ethnic components and the issue of these coins likely took place precisely at a time when also following the indications on the introduction of the bronze coin around the last quarter of the 3rd c. BC, it would correspond to one of the most difficult moments for the major city: both with the war of Lyttos (ca 221-220 BC) and with internal conflicts that were not determined by causes external to the island, but rather by reversals of the internal order. It is therefore probable that the issue of these coins is linked to a citizen group, rebelling against the order momentarily established in Gortyna, which claimed its ownership in minting its currency. And it is no coincidence that these are only small bronze nominals, evidently useful for daily retail transactions and mainly within their community.

The choice of such types had to refer to the same cultural landscape without presenting itself as a divisive element. Perhaps the iconographic aspects and metrological data of the coins allowed them to be considered Gortynian coins, as evidenced by their inclusion in the hoard *IGCH* 300.

A final note concerns the production data of these specimens in general: the smaller Gortynian issues represent in this phase a real explosion of production, carried out with a large number of dies with a tight chain, a sign of very fast production and in a short chronological span. We do not know the eventuality in which this occurred, but it is precisely this exception of the AINAΩN[ΩN?] legend coins that give us an image of the instability of the institutions of the time and the relationships between the various ethnic components of the same civic group.

Ultimately, even that of bronze coinage –which, unlike silver, used for large-scale transactions, had to be functional for use in a limited area as befits a small coin for daily purchases– must have been a particularly complex phenomenon that can be read from the specificity of coin production. An occurrence that must have lasted a long time because the Cretan identity must still have been strong, with all its internal components, before the Roman occupation.

The revival of the regional identity: the cistophoroi in the name of Kydas

A final note concerns the cistophoroi with the mention of the magistrate Kydas, useful to highlight how the title of Cretarch, which had been in use for some time but never appeared on coins, now becomes an element of identity at a time when the island is moving towards Romanisation[92]. This is perhaps the coin produced under the control of the "Koinon of the Cretans" already in operation since the 3rd c. BC, which until then had never been involved in the production of coins and the control of the monetary economy.

This is the latest case of a proper Cretan currency still used as a means of communication, propaganda, and ethnic identity within the island space. And it is no coincidence that Zeus Kretagenes is represented: the Zeus born in Crete as a supra-regional deity who embodies the entire island.

[92] On the latest research on the subject see Chevrollier 2016, 11-26; 2020, 173-184; Gallimore 2019, 589-617; Karambinis 2022, 233-268; Baldwin Bowsky 2023, 123-132; Coutsinas 2023, 79-101; Curtis 2023, 102-122; Stefanaki 2023, 38-57; Stefanaki and Carrier 2020, 245-259.

The debate has been stimulated by the survival of two specimens[93], which can be attributed to a person also known from epigraphic sources. It seems no coincidence that a Kydas who held the office of Kosmos and Cretarch[94] is the same one referred to in the legend ΚΡΗΤΑΙΕΩΝ ΚΡΗΤΑΡΧΑΣ on the obverse of the cistophoroi produced in his name (fig. 12). These follow the types and organisation of the proconsular coins of the province of Asia, but retain a local specificity in the type, such as the presence of Zeus Kretagenes as the island's supra-regional deity[95], a clear reference to the context.

The series was subsequently followed by a rich production of bronze coins, displaying Zeus on the obverse and the eagle on the reverse. Chapman speculated that both productions in the name of Kydas might be attributed to the same person, as supported by the shared iconography (fig. 13)[96]. As far as chronology is concerned, this issue was initially placed around 44 BC[97], but more precise analyses by Chapman have placed it between 37 and 31 BC[98].

The first piece of information concerns bronze coinage: between 40 and 30 BC, a series of large module bronzes was produced at Knossos. They bear the names of the magistrates responsible for the minting (Aristion, Mnésitheos, Sauramatas, Tauriadas and Tharsydikas, and Kydas[99]) and use the eagle type on the reverse, probably in imitation of the Lagid series[100]. The production of Kydas would therefore fit into an already structured issue at Knossos during a relatively restricted time frame.

The coins of the latter, moreover, turn out to be overstruck on those of Crassus –probably produced in 37/36 BC under Mark Antony[101]–, thus suggesting the small temporal gap between the two issues. It is evident therefore, that the coins of Kydas were produced after that date and during the production of the bronzes in the name of Lollius in Knossos. The coins now bear a Latin legend, reflecting the transformation of the ancient city into a Roman city known as *Colonia Iulia Nobilis Cnosus*[102].

The hypothesis that those of Kydas are coins –and in particular those in bronze– with a provincial role alongside the official production of Rome, seems to be confirmed by the discovery of a hoard found in Gortyna during excavations along the path of the fortification. According to Garraffo, this hoard consisting of 12 coins –one of which is provincial from Cyrenaica in the name of L. Lollius and 11 from Knossos, six of which can be referred to Kydas– due to the place of discovery and its composition suggests that

[93] On this topic see Chevrollier 2016, 11-26; Rouanet-Liesenfelt 1984; Chapman 1968, 1. One is from the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (inv. E 3141) (11.37 gr, 25 mm, 12 h); the second belongs to the National Archaeological Museum of Naples (see Fiorelli 1870, 7581) (11.90 gr, 25,4 mm, 12 h).

[94] *IC* IV, 281.

[95] This aspect must have lasted for a long time and at least until the Flavian age (Cigaina 2020, 238). See also Stefanakis 2000b, 195-207.

[96] Chapman 1968, 21-22.

[97] Raven 1938, 146.

[98] Chapman 1968, 21. On this subject, see also Carrier and Chevrollier 2016, 79, 254.

[99] Chapman makes a proposal on the chronology of these issues (see Chapman 1968, 22-23).

[100] Apostolou 2020, 343 (with previous bibliography), where the author proposes the fitting examples of Alexandria (Picard *et al.* 2012, 62-63, 104) and Laconia (Grunauer-von Hoerschelmann 1978, 51) opening new research perspective for the understanding of the nominal value of contemporary Cretan issues and the scope of production in the context of a coinage issued by the fleet prefects of Mark Antony.

[101] Grant 1946, 55; Chapman 1968, 21; Rouanet-Liesenfelt 1984.

[102] Baldwin Bowsky 2002, 75-89; Paton 1994, 141-153; Sanders 1982, 5.

they must have been federal series produced in Knossos with the favour of Mark Antony[103].

Although the chronology of the issues of Kydas has long been debated, a recent contribution by Apostolou, who analyses two coin finds from Rhodes, confirms what has been suggested so far. The discovery of those coins from emergency excavations conducted in Rhodes[104] –specifically, a bronze of Crassus and a bronze of Kydas– confirm the proximity between these two productions, and therefore their striking in the decade 40-30 BC, but above all allows their contextualization in the coinages struck by prefects of the fleet of Antonius and, therefore, in the complex scenario that was taking shape in the conflicts involving the central and eastern Mediterranean.

A frame that could support Chapman's hypothesis[105] that the Kydas on the coins of Crete is the close collaborator of Mark Antony. This allows us to understand how the role of magistrate would have given him the opportunity to be mentioned first on the bronze productions of Knossos, but also on valuable silver currency, as Cretarch of the whole island, and most probably in Gortyna, the city that was about to become the capital of the province of Crete and Cyrenaica[106].

In this context, it is significant to analyse the iconographic value of coins, also considering the substantial transformation of aristocracies, institutions, and society in general.

The first step concerns the in-depth study of the function of the figure of Zeus Kretagenes on a coin: this is a clear expression of an identity that is reaffirmed as the central representation of a pan-Cretan element.

It should be noted that this type of coin had already appeared on coins in Cydonia, where two types of reverse were minted: one with the infant Kydon on the reverse and the other with the image of Zeus[107]. In the latter case, the deity is identifiable just like the Zeus Kretagenes based on a comparison with a bronze issued by the Cretan koinon in the Flavian Age, which presents the same type. According to Cigaina, the little Zeus also depicted on the stephanephoroi could represent the reference to the Pancretan koinon which would seem to derive from a statuary prototype[108], probably a cult image[109].

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[103] The small hoard has been published (Garraffo 1999, 271-274) in the volume edited by Allegro and Ricciardi and described in the analysis of the collapse of tower IX of the city wall, which was supposed to have undergone restoration work during the years of the civil war (see Allegro and Ricciardi 1999, 284-286; 2020, 67).

[104] Apostolou 2020, 341-347. Another significant context is the one analysed by Tzanakaki and Skordou concerning a bronze specimen in the name of Kydas found in a context dating from 30-20 BC (Τζανακάκη and Σκόρδου 2020, 145-158).

[105] Chapman 1968, 22.

[106] For a summary of previous relations between Crete and Cyrenaica see Baldwin Bowsky 2002, 36-37 (with previous bibliography and contextualisation of literary sources). Gortyna had not been interested in Metellus' war operations, this suggested that the city remained faithful or neutral perhaps due to previous relations with Rome, on this topic Sanders 1976, 131-137; 1982, 5; Baldwin Bowsky 1999, 342; Gallimore 2019, 594; Karambinis 2022, 233-268.

[107] Cigaina 2020, 73 and n. 432; Stefanakis and Konstantinidi 2020.

[108] Cigaina 2020, 73-74.

[109] Thus, already in Σβορώνος 1893, 5, according to which it would be a reproduction of a cult statue. On this subject, see also Cigaina 2020, 74.

The same type is also used in the Cretan tetradrachms of the Tiberian age[110], thus completing a picture that suggests that starting from Kydas, and at least until the years of Vespasian[111], the type of the Zeus Kretagenes well represents the *sema* of a community (figs 14-15). Zeus seems to be often considered as a divinity of identity of large communities since the same happens for the Messenians, for the Achaean League[112] and therefore also in Crete where the divinity had to represent the identity of the entire island since the Hellenistic era.

Some considerations on the sidelines

In conclusion, it is possible to consider the importance of setting more detailed levels of interpretation. We have at our disposal useful features for delving into the specifics of coin production, but also for comparing these phenomena on a broader scale. This is the case with the choice and use of types –detailed by legends– that refer to supra-regional cults, the sharing of iconographies and their imitation by smaller communities, and others yet to be identified. What is characteristic is the choice of the identity of each coin-producing community, which varies according to historical, social, and economic contexts.

The depiction of legendary heroes or mythical creatures on Cretan coins linked the issuing state to a particular heritage and gave its citizens a sense of belonging, continuity, and pride. Through the images on the coins and the careful selection of the mythical figures depicted, the cities protected their identity by distinguishing it from that of other groups with different mythical narratives in their culture, thus strengthening intra-group ties. Finally, the iconography of coins could also be used to emphasise political links between cities. On the other hand, the use of currency as a vehicle for propaganda and communication of all kinds of messages is well known.

The Cretan monetary context, precisely as a function of its articulated and ubiquitous fragmentation, shows how coins also served to highlight peculiar aspects of the island's internal political dynamics: a starting point for establishing the ethnogenesis of the Cretan components, a process that has never been completed.

However, there remains a major cognitive obstacle, namely the detailed analysis of the specificity of the materials, and one must accept that we have only disparate information about an economic context that remains obscure, on which new light is shed from time to time. This is the case for the Cretan context as for many others in the ancient world.

Nevertheless, one should not despair, because the very aspects that emerge from the systematisation of the information available so far suggest the potential that can be achieved. It is now necessary to create a new deductive paradigm for the Cretan context, considering elements that have been less considered than others, to obtain new and more complex data, bringing out the articulation of the Cretan monetary landscape with all its regional and local specificities.

[110] *RPC* I, 955, 957.
[111] *RPC* II, 15.
[112] Cigaina 2020, 103.

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Figure 1. Gortyna, AR stater. Obv. Europa on bull to r., below dolphin/Rev. Lion head facing, within square frame, around ΓΟΡΤΥΝΟΣ ΤΟ ΠΑΙΜΑ (Fritz Rudolf Künker 136, lot 61).

Figure 2. Phaistos, AR stater. Obv. Europa on bull to l./Rev. Lion head facing, within square frame, around ΦΑΙΣΤΙΟΝ ΤΟ ΠΑΙΜΑ (American Numismatic Society 1944.100.40757).

Figure 3. Phaistos, AR stater. Obv. Zeus Welchanos as a young man seated in tree, with a cock on r. knee, CELKANOS/Rev. butting bull r., fly on his back, ΦΑΙΣΤΙΟ-Ν above (Bibliothèque nationale de France, 2753).

Figure 4. Phaistos, AR stater. Obv. Talos facing, holding stone in l. hand, between his legs, dog sniffing/Rev. protome of a bull r. (München, Staatliche Münzsammlung).

Figure 5. Phaistos. AR stater. Obv. Talos facing, holding stone in l. hand, between legs Τ-ΑΛ-ΩΝ/Rev. butting bull r., ΦΑΙΣΤΙΩΝ above (ex Ira & Larry Goldberg 96, lot 1680).

Figure 6. Knossos, AR stater. Obv. female head to r., within a frame with meandering band, ΚΝΩΣΙ-ΟΝ/Rev. Minos seated on a throne, holding sceptre in r. hand, the l. arm resting on the backrest of the throne, ΜΙΝΟΣ (Berlin, Münzkabinett der Staatlichen Museen, 18216380).

Figure 7. Sybritos, AR stater. Obv. Europa seated l. in a tree/Rev. bull galloping r., head turned back to l.; above, fly; below, dolphin (ex Fritz Rudolf Künker 143, lot 192).

Figure 8. Gortyna, AR stater. Obv. Europa seated l. in a tree/Rev. bull standing l., head turned back to r.; above (ex Gorny & Mosch 261, lot 284).

Figure 9. Knossos, AE denomination. Obv. Europa on bull l., below two dolphins/Rev. labyrinth; K-N-Ω-ΣI-ΩN, above (ex Fritz Rudolf Künker 124, lot 7981).

Figure 10. Knossos, AE denomination. Obv. Star/Rev. labyrinth (ex CNG).

Figure 11. Gortyna, AR drachm. Obv. diademed head of Zeus (or Minos?) l./Rev. warrior standing l., holding shield and spear; on l. ΓOPTYNIΩN, thunderbolt below, radiate border (ex CNG e-424, lot 201).

Figure 12. Gortyna? AR Cistophorus. Obv. Cista mystica ld, from which a serpent emerges to l., within ivy wreath/Rev. Zeus standing facing, head r., holding thunderbolt in r. hand and eagle in l.; KYΔAΣ KPHTAPXAΣ; KPH-TAI/E-Ω/N (in field) (Bibliothèque nationale de France, E-3141)[113].

[113] *RPC* I, 926.

Figure 13. Knossos, AE denomination. Obv. head of Zeus, r.; in front, thunderbolt; ΚΥΔΑΣ/Rev. eagle with wings open, r.; in exergue B (ex Nomos 14, lot 124)[114].

Figure 14. Cretan Koinon (under Tiberius), AR tetradrachm. Obv. radiate head of Divus Augustus, l.; ΘΕΟ[Σ ΣΕΒΑΣ]ΤΟΣ ΕΠΙ ΚΟΡΝΗΛΙΟΥ ΑΥΠΟΥ and monogram for ΑΝΘΥΠΑΤΟΣ/Rev. laureate head of Zeus Kretagenes, r.; ΤΑΝ Κ[ΡΗΤΑΓΕ]ΝΗΣ ΠΟΛΥΡ (Bibliothèque nationale de France, Fonds général 553)[115].

Figure 15. Cretan Koinon (under Vespasianus), AE denomination. Obv: laureate head of Titus, r.; ΑΥΤΟ ΤΙΤΟ […]/Rev. Zeus standing, r., hurling thunderbolt; stars in field to l. and r.; ΖΕΥΣ ΚΡΗΤΑΓΕΝΗΣ (Bibliothèque nationale de France, Fonds général 658)[116].

[114] *RPC* I, 934.
[115] *RPC* I, 957 [https://rpc.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/coin/155909].
[116] *RPC* II, 15 [https://rpc.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/coin/26934].

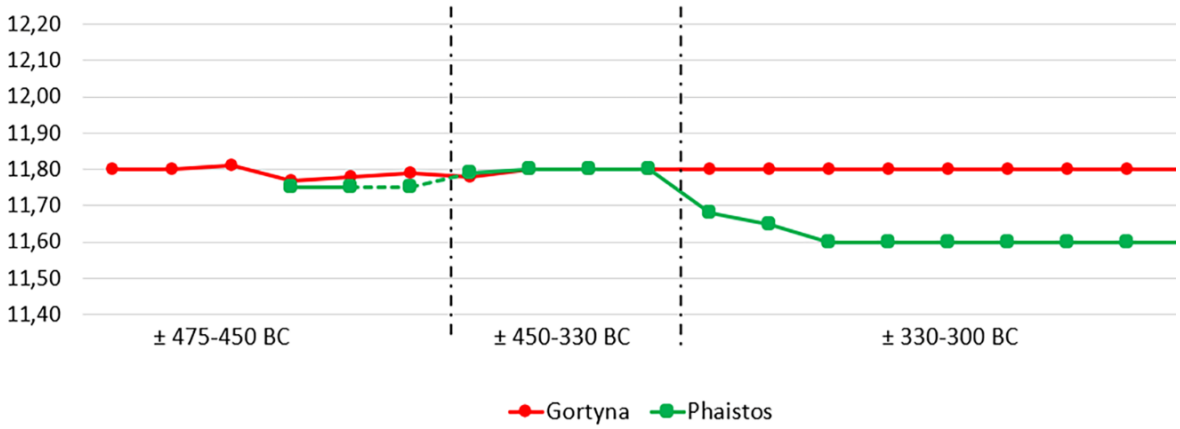

Table 1. Weight adjustments between Gortyna and Phaistos staters (Cretan standard).

ECONOMIC CONTROL AS A FORM OF PROPAGANDA AMONG CRETAN MINTS: THE SO-CALLED "MONETARY ALLIANCES" BETWEEN CRETAN CITY-STATES

Cretan numismatic iconography and economic control

The island of Crete was a world of cities, where the local and regional economies were interconnected, as is attested by the important number of their treaties of alliance and *isopoliteia* regulating interstate economic activities (such as agriculture, animal husbandry, commerce by land and sea, division of the booty gained during their continuous internal wars etc.). Therefore, the cities followed a partly common monetary policy, particularly regarding the weight standard and the denominations used for their coinage in order to facilitate economic cooperation and exchange, increase revenues and serve economic exigencies. Moreover, the Cretans' Koinon may have played a role in the monetary policy of the cities during its operation. Nevertheless, each city freely determines the volume of its issues according to its financial means and political and social circumstances. There is no doubt that different categories of coins were used for different exchanges and that the issuing authorities chose the coins they minted, their standard and their value. They also chose those they agreed to let circulate on their territory according to their monetary needs and their financial interests as well as the influence or direct control, exercised by political and commercial partners, namely the kingdoms and city-states of the Hellenistic world. Indeed, as shown in Table I, these external iconographic and metrological influences are numerous on the local coinages, not to mention those minted for special purposes by the cities on behalf of foreign authorities operating on the island.

In Crete, approximately 43 cities issue coins, mainly in silver and bronze[1], with a rich iconographic repertoire in Classical and Hellenistic times (see Map of Crete, p. vi). The use of common types and the sharing of the same dies[2], a practice which probably implies in most cases the presence of itinerant artists/engravers[3], are quite widespread among Cretan mints during these periods.

The choice of a common iconography depends on political, administrative and economic issues, which develop in the context of interstate relations and dependencies between cities. Thus, similarities in the iconography of coin types could be the result of dependence, economic control or alliance for political, economic and military reasons

[1] On the Cretan gold coinage, see Carbone and Stefanaki (forthcoming).

[2] See Stefanaki 2021, 263-264 (with bibliographical references).

[3] Mørkholm 1991, 89; Στεφανάκης 2002a, 54-55.

between two cities or communities, which are generally very close to each other, suggesting in some cases a "monetary alliance or agreement"[4].

However, research has shown that shared types are not always indicative of cooperative monetary arrangements and it is more likely that monetary imitations were not especially related to political motives, but mainly to artistic and economic ones[5]. Moreover, according to Sidiropoulos, the great frequency of this phenomenon in Crete, as well as the peculiarities of Cretan coinage, go against this hypothesis of "monetary alliances" between Cretan cities, neighbouring or not[6].

Indeed, the above term is conventional and in the current state of our documentation, we are not aware of any written monetary agreement between Cretan city-states. Therefore, as we shall see, it would be better to talk about the use of common monetary types between the Cretan city-states to either circulate their currency in specific markets and for specific purposes, or to declare financial and probably political support to their respective allies or powerful neighbours, or to strengthen their regional and ethnic identity.

The most well-known use of common monetary types on the island of Crete, interpreted as the result of a *sympoliteia*[7], is represented by the identical types (Europa on bull/facing lion) and the similar inscriptions (ΓΟΡΤΥΝΟΣ or ΓΟΡΤΥΝΙΟΝ ΤΟ ΠΑΙΜΑ and ΦΑΙΣΤΙΟΝ ΤΟ ΠΑΙΜΑ, written retrograde in the epichoric alphabet) of the first staters of Gortyna and neighbouring Phaistos[8], minted in the mid-5th c. BC (figs 1-2). Moreover, the head of Hermes on the staters issued by the above cities around 380 BC, also probably indicates the existence of political agreements and alliances[9] between the two cities, caused probably by military reasons. The same can be deduced in the case of Europa on the coins of Gortyna, issued in the middle of the 4th c. BC. The representation was adopted by Sybritos (figs 3-4), a fact that demonstrates the existence of a political/military alliance, possibly due to the Knossian expansionary policy and the disruption of relations between Knossos and Lyttos (an ally of Gortyna), which led to the destruction of the latter in 346 BC[10]. However, the long history of conflict between Gortyna and Phaistos could suggest otherwise, notably that the latter imitated the monetary types of its neighbour to take advantage of the regional acceptance of the Gortynian coinage[11]. The same could be also true in the case of Sybritos[12].

As Mackil and Van Alfen underline "*the numismatic evidence, which is often the only evidence for cooperative economic arrangements between cities, can be highly problematic and so must be handled with caution*"[13]. The contribution of written sources is therefore necessary,

[4] Στεφανάκης 2013, 63.

[5] Mackil and Van Alfen 2006.

[6] Σιδηρόπουλος 2006, 151, n. 23.

[7] Chaniotis 1996, 105-106, n. 631; Perlman 2004, 1163 and 1180; Stefanaki 2021, 55-56, n. 191; Carbone 2022, 29.

[8] Svoronos 1890, 254, no. 1, pl. XII.34 (Phaistos), 158, no. 1-2, pl. XII. 21 (Gortyna); Le Rider 1966, 162-172; Στεφανάκης 2011-12; Carbone 2022, 67 (Serie I) and 125. On a more detailed analysis see Carbone in this volume above, 59-61.

[9] Στεφανάκης 2011-12; Stefanaki 2021, 204 (with the previous bibliographical references).

[10] Le Rider 1966, 160-162; Στεφανάκης 2011-12.

[11] Mackil and Van Alfen 2006, 207, n. 17.

[12] On these cases see also Carbone in this volume above, 69-70.

[13] Mackil and Van Alfen 2006, 210.

but in the case of classical and Hellenistic Crete, they are few and sometimes absent from the specific and limited periods of monetary production of the various cities.

The cases which, according to written sources, could justify the use of common monetary types and reveal politico-economic relations and alliances, as well as regional and ethnic identities, are the following four:

- The dove, the dolphin, the bee and the goat's head (figs 5-6) are depicted on the local and federal coinage of the cities belonging to the Confederacy of the Oreioi in Western Crete[14], such as Hyrtakina, Lissos, Elyros and Tarrha, as well as Kantanos, probably a member of this Confederacy, whose existence is attested from the late 4th until the end of the 3rd c. BC[15]. This economic cooperation was probably motivated by "*an economic interdependence created by small settlement size, fragmented landscapes, and regional resource complementarity*"[16].
- The Argian Hera's head on the staters of Knossos and Tylissos (figs 7-8), minted in the beginning of the 3rd c. BC. These two Cretan mints imitated the head of Hera depicted on the staters and drachms of Argos of the beginning of the 4th c. BC[17]. The epigraphic sources, particularly the earlier treaty of alliance of the mid-5th c. BC that was concluded between Knossos and Tylissos with the mediation of Argos, attest to the close political relations and religious affiliations between the three city-states[18]. Moreover, Tylissos, as well as Lyttos, copied between the end of the 4th and the beginning of the 3rd c. BC the reverse types of the Argian coinage with its characteristic letter A for the minting of their first bronzes[19]. Lyttos went a little further by adopting also the Argian wolf's forepart, depicted on the obverse of its bronzes in question, a fact which certainly indicates the strong Peloponnesian influence on the island and probably a political-economic interaction between the three city-states, despite the absence of written sources[20]. However, Tylissos features among the eighteen cities of the Knossian group in the agreement with Miletus (293/2 or 250s BC) regarding the redemption of prisoners sold in Crete[21], while Lyttos appears among the cities of the Gortynian group.
- The Athena's head and the prow (figs 9-10) on the bronze issues of Lyttos and its harbour, Chersonessos, probably an independent city until its *sympoliteia* with Lyttos in 183 BC[22]. The minting of these similar issues could have begun before their *sympoliteia* or Lyttos could have adopted a little later the monetary types of Chersonessos, whose inhabitants are designated as the "Lyttians by the sea" in the epigraphic sources of the 2nd c. BC[23].
- Europa on the bull, the symbol of the two dolphins and the circle of rays (figs 11-12) of the bronze coins of Knossos and Gortyna. These *par excellence* Gortynian types

[14] Traeger 2007. On the Oreioi Confederacy see also Carbone in this volume above, 59 and n. 17 with further bibliography.

[15] Chaniotis 2015.

[16] Mackil and Van Alfen 2006, 235.

[17] Carrier 2013.

[18] Perlman 2004, 1189; Στεφανάκης 2017, 223-224.

[19] See Stefanaki 2021, 265, n. 1465 (with the bibliographical references).

[20] Stefanakis 2007, 310; Στεφανάκης 2017, 224-225.

[21] *StaatsV*. III 482. See also Stefanaki 2021, 83-84.

[22] Chaniotis 1996, 105-107 and 430-432.

[23] See Stefanaki 2021, 43 and 56 (with the bibliographical references).

and symbols were adopted by the Knossian mint and combined with the typically Knossian type of the labyrinth to commemorate the alliance formed between the two cities in 221 BC, immediately preceding the Lyttian war[24].

In some cases, the numismatic testimony of common types could be the only evidence of important historical events, such as the case of the bronze coinage with Athena's head, the two dolphins and the legend ΡΙΘΥ or ΑΡΣΙ (figs 13-14) that was issued by Rhithymna before and after its probable re-foundation as Arsinoe by Ptolemy IV (ca 223/2-beginning of the 2nd c. BC). Although, according to literary sources, a city under the name Arsinoe existed in the area of Lyttos, the similar monetary iconography and the probable sharing of the same obverse die between the bronzes with the legend ΡΙΘΥ and ΑΡΣΙ indicate that Rithymna probably represents another Ptolemaic re-foundation of a Cretan city[25].

The analysis of the imagery placed on Cretan coins may also imply hegemonic behaviour and supremacy over secondary and weaker cities or adoption by the latter of well-known coin types, driven by economic motives and intended for use in particular markets. In this category probably belong the following cases:

- The wreathed male head and the tripod (figs 15-17) on the staters of Axos, Apollonia and Kytaion[26]. Apollonia and Kytaion minted in the mid or second half of the 4th c. BC limited series of staters imitating the monetary types of Axos, a fact that probably indicates a connection between the three neighbouring cities. It has been suggested that Axos allied with Kytaion because it needed a port to strengthen its position when Knossos had started expanding, just after the middle of the 4th c. BC; the same could also apply to Apollonia. However, Kytaion was probably absorbed by Axos soon after[27].
- The head of Zeus and the bull's head (figs 18-19) on the staters of Polyrrhenia and Moda issued between ca 330/20 and 280/70 BC. Moda minted silver coinage after Polyrrhenian types. Its location is unknown, but it is more likely to be situated in the vicinity of the famous sanctuary of Diktynnaion in Western Crete, which the Polyrrhenians controlled at least during the first half of the 3rd c. BC[28].
- The Apollon's head and the butting bull (figs 20-21) depicted on the bronze coins of Gortyna[29] and Ainaeis (or Ainaones) in the second half of the 3rd c. BC[30].

The mysterious ethnic ΑΙΝΑΩΝ on a small bronze issue which borrows the Gortynian types, has been interpreted either as a shorter version of the genitive ΑΙΝΑΩΝ[ΩΝ], referring to the Gortynian tribe of Ainaones, or as the genitive of Ainaeis, probably a city or community in the vicinity of Gortyna. According to specialists, the tribe of Ainaones was among the anti-oligarchic Gortynian exiles, who occupied Lebena and Matala with the establishment of an independent city-state during the Lyttian War (ca 221-219 BC). However, as is stated above, the ethnic could be Ainaeis, a neighbouring

[24] Jackson 1971b, 289-290. See also Carbone in this volume above, 70-72.

[25] Le Rider 1966, 242-245; Le Rider 1968; Lorber 2018, 132-133.

[26] Σιδηρόπουλος 2006, 151.

[27] Stefanakis 1998, 102.

[28] Στεφανάκης 2013, 63-64.

[29] Jackson 1971a, 43.e.

[30] Βαρούχα-Χριστοδουλοπούλου 1968; Jackson 1971a, 43, n. 2; Spyridakis 1977-78; Genevrois 2017, 383-385.

city or community of Gortyna, which imitated the well-known Gortynian monetary types to benefit from their recognition in the local markets or contributed as an ally to the war effort of their powerful neighbour during the civil and the Lyttian wars[31]. These two bronze issues circulated together and formed part of the "hoard" Kastelli, Gortyna, 1963 (*IGCH* 300), buried at the end of the 3rd c. BC[32].

- The goat's head combined sometimes with an arrowhead (figs 5 and 22) depicted on the coinage of the cities of the Confederacy of the Oreioi and a small bronze issue of Polyrrhenia. This last Polyrrhenian imitation of the *par excellence* monetary type of the coinage of the cities of this Confederacy has been interpreted as an indication of its power and important role in the alliance of cities, led by Polyrrhenia, against the league of Knossos and Gortyna in the Lyttian war and of the economic ambitions of Polyrrhenia in the territory of its above southern allies[33].
- The spearheads and the arrowheads (figs 23-24) on the coinage of Polyrrhenia and Keraïtai[34]. The community of Keraïtai in Western Crete, which belonged to the alliance of Polyrrhenia during the Lyttian war, imitated the Polyrrhenian monetary images related to war for its silver and bronze issues dated between the end of the 3rd and the beginning of the 2nd c. BC[35].
- The hound, the three crescents facing outwards and the head of Athena-Roma with winged helmet (figs 25-30) depicted on the coinage of Polichne, Tanos and Allaria respectively. The city of Allaria located probably in Central Crete, as well as Polichne and Tanos, two minor cities in the vicinity of Kydonia, imitated at the beginning of the 2nd c. BC the monetary types of the latter. Specifically, Allaria borrowed for the issue of its drachms[36] (fig. 26) the head of Athena-Roma depicted on the Kydonian drachms[37] (fig. 25) of the first quarter of the 2nd c. BC. Polichne used for the reverse of its bronze denominations the Kydonian hound[38] (figs 29-30) and Tanos for its trihemiobols and obols either shared the same obverse die or had dies with similar reverse types with the crescent series of Kydonia[39] (figs 27-28). The "hoard" Chania 1922 (*IGCH* 254), buried in the first quarter of the 2nd c. BC, attests to the parallel circulation of the issues of Kydonia and Tanos. These imitations should be considered in the light of Kydonia's hegemonic tendencies into Western and Central Crete in the first half of the 2nd c. BC, which led to the occupation of Phalasarna in 184 BC (Polyb. 22, 15.3) and the

[31] The same could be seen in the case of the bronze coinage of Ariaioi of the same period. Ariaioi, located probably in the area of Arvi, were together with Lyttos, Arkades and Hyrtaoi, allies of Gortyna in the above-mentioned agreements of twenty-eight cities with Miletos, concluded probably in the beginning or in the middle of the 3rd c. BC. Although their coinage doesn't share the same types with the Gortynian issues, the fact that one part of the ethnic ΑΡΙΑΙΩΝ is inscribed on the obverse and the other part on the reverse recalls the disposition of the legend on the contemporary Gortynian bronzes, see Le Rider 1966, 227-229; Kitchell 1983, 216-220; Perlman 1996, 282 and 2004, 1146; Στεφανάκης 2001.

[32] On this coinage see also Carbone in this volume above, 72-73.

[33] Στεφανάκης 2000; Στεφανάκης 2013, 51, 65.

[34] On Keraïtai, see recently Sekunda 2021, 336-341.

[35] Στεφανάκης 2013, 66-68.

[36] Svoronos 1890, 2, no. 1-3, pl. I. 1-2.

[37] Svoronos 1890, 104, no. 39-42, pl. IX. 24-26.

[38] Στεφανάκης 1996, 152-156; 2019; Stefanaki 2021, 263-264, n. 1448; Sekunda 2021, 337.

[39] Stefanakis 2002b, 234.

destruction of Apollonia in 171/0 BC (Polyb. 28, 14; Diod. 30, 13)[40]. Tanos and Allaria, as well as three issuing authorities of Western Crete, Polyrrhenia, Keraïtai and Aptera[41], had also followed for the minting of their silver fractions the same reduced Cretan weight standard as Kydonia, one more indication of the expansionism of the latter in the first half of the 2nd c. BC. It is likely that these cities were allies of Kydonia and that their coins were minted during this period of warfare as a contribution for military expenditure and "were intended for use in a particular market confined to north-west Crete"[42].

From the aforementioned Cretan cities, for which the use of a common iconography is observed, none is a dependent community (πόλις ὑπήκοος)[43]. However, the short-lived issues of some of them could indicate indirect regional economic control by bigger neighbour cities. Therefore, the small settlements of Kytaion, Moda, Ainaeis (or Ainaones), Keraïtai, Polichne and Tanos, were probably, before their subsequent absorption by the other major cities, under their sphere of influence or control, serving as ports, periphery's strongholds or bases for military operations[44].

It is true that in many cases, the common types should be probably viewed as evidence of common traditions, worship practices and motifs, thus supporting or claiming locality, ethnicity and control of important local and Pan-Cretan cults, or simply of similar artistic patterns and iconographic influences between Cretan mints. The following Cretan examples probably belong to this category:

- The female's head and the facing bull's head (figs 31-32) on the coins of Phaistos and Praisos[45] between the end of the 4th and the beginning of the 3rd c. BC.
- The goat's head or the goat's forepart combined with an arrowhead (figs 5 and 33), as well as the bee with the rose (figs 5 and 34) on the coinages of the Confederacy of the Oreioi and Praisos issued during the aforementioned period[46]. It is worth noting that especially the city-state of Praisos used the rose as a secondary symbol together with the bee, the bull and the head of Persephone on its silver and probably bronze issues[47].
- The standing or seated Apollo accompanied by various symbols of his worship on the island (figs 8 and 35-39), depicted on the coins of the cities of the northern coast,

[40] Stefanakis 1997, 237-242.

[41] See Stefanakis 1997, 239-240; Stefanaki and Stefanakis 2013, 153-155. On the uncertain date of the staters of Chersonessos and Eleutherna minted on a reduced Cretan weight standard, see Stefanaki and Stefanakis 2013, 154-155.

[42] Stefanakis 1997, 240.

[43] See Perlman 1996.

[44] Stefanakis 1998, 102.

[45] Le Rider 1966, 97, n. 1.

[46] Svoronos 1890, pl. XII, XVIII and XXVIII.

[47] On the uncertain attribution of the bronzes depicting a facing head of Medusa on the obverse and the bee accompanied sometimes by the rose on the reverse, see CNG, Electronic Auction 148, 20 September 2006, no. 145; CNG, Electronic Auction 387, 30 November 2016, no. 112; Numismatic Naumann, Auction 56, 06 August 2017, no. 127; Roma Numismatics, E-live Auction 3, 25 October 2018, no. 149; Sol Numismatik, Auction 9, 10 December 2022, no. 3. If the above issues belong to the Praisian mint, which is far from certain, are probably minted during the period of the Rhodian control and influence in Eastern Crete, between the end of the 3rd and the beginning of the 2nd c. BC, giving the use of the Medusa's head which is also depicted on the pseudo-Rhodians didrachms of Gorgos and on the contemporary Gortynian triobols (see Stefanaki and Stefanakis 2013, 149, 152-153).

Aptera, Lappa, Rithymna, Eleutherna, Tylissos and Chersonessos[48], issued between the end of the 4th-beginning of the 2nd c. BC. However, the triobols of Aptera[49] (fig. 39) and the bronze coins of Eleutherna[50] (fig. 38), which bear the same reverse types of Apollo seated on a rock, holding a *phiale* and a spherical object respectively in his extended arm, could be an allusion to their treaty of alliance of the beginning of the 2nd c. BC[51]. It is worth mentioning that an important number of Eleuthernian coins of this type were countermarked in Aptera with its ethnic in the form of a monogram[52].

- The flying eagle or dove and the boar (figs 40-42) depicted on the coins of Lyttos, Praisos and Hierapytna. In this case, the Lyttian coins with the *par excellence* types of the flying eagle on the obverse and the boar on the reverse could be the model of the depictions of the boar, who suckled the infant god Zeus according to an Eteocretan tradition, on the first staters of Hierapytna and of the flying dove on the first Praisian coins, an allusion to the Heracles labour with the slay of Stymphalian birds in northern Arkadia. However, these stylistic similarities could also indicate a Lyttian influence in eastern Crete from the second half of the 4th c. BC, probably because of its territorial expansion during the 6th and 5th centuries or at the beginning of the 4th c. BC, towards the high plateau of Lasithi[53].
- The standing eagle (figs 43-44) on the bronze coins of Malla and Lyttos. The pose of the eagle on certain issues of Malla[54] between the end of the 3rd and the first quarter of 2nd c. BC is reminiscent of the eagle on Lyttian bronze coins[55], indicating probably a direct influence from Lyttos, which was separated by a short distance and to which it was bound by an alliance concluded in the second half of the 3rd c. BC[56]. As epigraphic sources attest, the main sanctuary of the city of Malla was dedicated to Zeus Monnitios, who was also worshipped in Lyttos and Hierapytna[57].
- The initials of the ethnics Y/P and K/A constituted the main monetary types of some bronze issues of Hyrtakina (fig. 45) and of the opposite island of Kaudos[58] before the change of its status to a dependent community from the city of Gortyna.
- The palm tree (figs 46-47) depicted on the coinages of Hierapytna and Priansos[59], which is accompanied by nautical and marine symbols, such as the acrostolion on the Hierapytnian bronzes of the late 3rd-1st c. BC[60] and the rudder with the dolphin on the silver and bronze issues of Priansos of the late 4th-2nd c. BC. The treaties of

[48] Στεφανάκη and Στρατίκη 2007-08.
[49] Svoronos 1890, pl. I. 15.
[50] Svoronos 1890, pl. XII. 4-5.
[51] Πετροπούλου 1991; Chaniotis, 1996, 278-280; See also Stefanakis 1997, 238, n. 21; Στεφανάκης 2020; Στεφανάκη and Στρατίκη 2007-08, 88.
[52] Svoronos 1890, 135, no. 39; Στεφανάκης 2020.
[53] For the bibliographical references, see Stefanaki 2021, 261.
[54] Stefanaki 2009, 282-283.
[55] Svoronos 1890, pl. XXI. 4-5.
[56] Chaniotis 1996, 208-213.
[57] Stefanaki 2009, 273, n. 8 and 278.
[58] Traeger 2007, 233.
[59] For the bibliographical references, see Stefanaki 2021, 266.
[60] Stefanaki 2021, Series III and VII.

alliance and *isopoliteia* between the two cities at the end of the 3rd- beginning of the 2nd c. BC attest to their close relations during this period[61].

- The bee and the six- or eight-rayed star (figs 48-49) depicted on the bronze coinage of Hierapytna. We have argued elsewhere[62] the probable political meaning of the bee and the six- or eight-rayed star, the *par excellence* monetary types of Praisos and Itanos respectively, which were adopted by the Hierapytnians for their bronze coinage issued probably in the second half of the 2nd c. BC to consolidate and legitimate their territorial expansion in Eastern Crete. Specifically, the bee is probably related to the destruction of Praisos by the Hierapytnians in 145 BC, and the star to their long-lasting territorial quarrel with the Itanians (140-112/1 BC), as well as their possible control of the sanctuary of Zeus Dictean during this period. Nevertheless, the bee is a very common type among Cretan mints, although mainly in Western Crete, and the star can also be found on the coins of Olous in Eastern Crete, as well as on the coins of Lyttos and Knossos in Central Crete.

To sum up, we notice that apart from those cases of common monetary iconography related to locality, ethnicity and religion –explored elsewhere in this volume too– there exist cases directly or indirectly justified by written sources, which are related to politico-economic motives mainly due to wars, alliances and control between the Cretan city-states, but also to the need of use, acceptance and circulation of their coinages in specific regional markets. Therefore, the coins, apart from the symbolic and historical properties of coin types as expressions of civic identity and pride, act as agents for the communication of political, economic, social and religious messages, possibly exerting an impact on the users. It is commonly accepted that the coins served above all as monetary instruments, having mainly an economic function, since they are minted to meet the specific needs of the issuing political authority, then fuelling the respective monetary circulation.

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[61] Stefanaki 2021, 116-121.

[62] Stefanaki 2001.

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External Iconographic Influences and Special Purpose Money	**Cretan Mints**	**Denominations**	**Date of issues**
AEGINA	Kydonia (Pseudo-aeginetan)	Triobols and fractions	5th-3rd c. BC
PELOPONNESE			
Argos	Lyttos (wolf's forepart/ letter A within incuse square)	Bronzes	End of 4th c. BC
	Tylissos (letter A)	Bronzes	End of 4th c. BC
	Knossos, Tylissos (Head of Hera)	Staters	ca 300 BC
Arkadian League	Hierapytna, Eleutherna (Head of Zeus)	Staters	300-280/70 BC
	Arkades (monogram AR)	Bronzes	3rd c. BC
Stymphalos	Chersonessos (the Labour of Heracles with the Stymphalian birds)	Staters	ca 300 BC
Sicyon	Confederacy of Oreioi (two doves)	Gold	Late 4th-early 3rd c. BC
Elis	Lyttos (flying eagle)	Silver and bronzes	5th-3rd c. BC
ALEXANDER III	Praisos (Zeus seated)	Staters	300-280/70 BC
	Olous (Zeus seated)	Staters	330/20-280/70 BC
PTOLEMIES	Gortyna (Phoenician/Ptolemaic standard)	Didrachms	270-250 BC
CYRENE	Knossos (Apollon Karneios/Thunderbolt between two stars)	Bronzes	First half of 3rd c. BC
RHODES	Pseudo-rhodian coinage	Didrachms and drachms (semi-official Rhodian issues and local imitations)	End of 3rd-beginning of 2nd c. BC
	Gortyna (Meduse)	Triobols	Late 3rd-early 2nd c. BC
	Lato, Olous ("plinthophoric")	Bronzes	End of 2nd- 1st c.
ATHENS (*stephanephoroi*)	"Wreathed" coinage with local types	Tetradrachms, fractions and bronzes	90-67 BC
	Pseudo-athenian coinage	Tetradrachms, drachms and bronzes	87-83 BC
SELEUCIDS	Gortyna (Athena Parthenos)	Tetradrachms	90-67 BC
	Polyrrhenia (head of Apollo)	Tetradrachms	
	Polyrrhenia (Apollo standing)	Hemidrachms	
MITHRIDATES VI	Kydonia (star within crescent)	Bronzes	90-67 BC
ROME	Kydonia (head of Athena-Roma/suckling infant)	Drachms	Early 2nd c. BC
	Knossos (circular labyrinth)	Tetradrachms	90-67 BC
	Hierapytna (male heads)	Bronzes	80s-70s BC
	Gortyna (Metellus)	Tetradrachms	ca 69-67 BC

Table I: External iconographic influences on Cretan mints and special purpose money (5th-1st c. BC).

Figure 1. Gortyna, AR stater, ca 450 BC. Künker, Auction 136, 10 March 2008, Die Sammlung Dr. Burkhard Traeger, no. 61.

Figure 2. Phaistos, AR stater, ca 450 BC. Ars Classica XII, 1642, ex. Coll. Weber 4543. Carbone 2022, 67, Serie 1.3.

Figure 3. Gortyna, AR stater, ca 350/322 BC. Künker, Auction 136, 10 March 2008, Die Sammlung Dr. Burkhard Traeger, no. 67.

Figure 4. Sybritos, AR stater, ca 360/50-340/30 BC. LHS Numismatics AG, Auction 281, 23 April 2007, no. 281.

Figure 5. Elyros, AR drachm, ca 300/270 BC. Künker, Auction 136, 10 March 2008, Die Sammlung Dr. Burkhard Traeger, no. 59.

Figure 6. Hyrtakina, AR drachm, ca 300/270 BC. Künker, Auction 136, 10 March 2008, Die Sammlung Dr. Burkhard Traeger, no. 136.

Figure 7. Knossos, AR stater, ca 300-270 BC. Roma Numismatics Limited, Auction 19, 26 March 2020, no. 356.

Figure 8. Tylissos, AR stater, ca 320-270 BC. Roma Numismatics Limited, Auction 19, 26 March 2020, no. 360.

Figure 9. Chersonessos, AE denomination, 3rd-2nd c. BC. Classical Numismatic Group, Inc, Mail Bid Sale 76, 12 September 2007, no. 611.

Figure 10. Lyttos, AE drachm, 2nd-1st c. BC. Classical Numismatic Group, Inc, Electronic Auction 173, 26 September 2007, no. 249.

Figure 11. Gortyna, AE denomination, ca 220 BC. Künker, Auction 136, 10 March 2008, Die Sammlung Dr. Burkhard Traeger, no. 100.

Figure 12. Knossos, AE denomination, ca 220 BC. Classical Numismatic Group, Inc, Triton V, 15 January 2002, no. 397.

Figure 13. Rithymna, AE denomination, 3rd c. BC. Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Monnaies, médailles et antiques, 1985.505 (© Gallica, BNF).

Figure 14. Arsinoe, AE denomination, 3rd c. BC. Künker, Auction 136, 10 March 2008, Die Sammlung Dr. Burkhard Traeger, no. 18.

Figure 15. Axos, AR stater, 4th c. BC. Roma Numismatics Limited, Auction 12, 29 September 2016, no. 231.

Figure 16. Apollonia, AR stater, 4th c. BC. Künker, Auction 136, 10 March 2008, Die Sammlung Dr. Burkhard Traeger, no. 20.

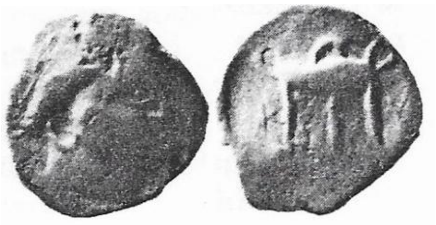

Figure 17. Kytaion, AR stater, 4th c. BC. Vienna 37.484. Stefanakis 1998, 98, fig. 11.2.

Figure 18. Polyrrhenia, AR stater, ca 330/20-280/70 BC. Künker, Auction 143, 6 October 2008, no. 190.

Figure 19. Moda, AR stater, ca 330/20-280/70 BC. Firenze. Στεφανάκης 2013, 64, no. 142a.

Figure 20. Gortyna, AE denomination, ca 220-210 BC. Jean Elsen & ses Flis S.A., Auction 127, 8 August 2015, no. 138.

Figure 21. Ainaeis (Ainaones), AE denomination, ca 220-210 BC. Athens NM. Kastelli, Gortyna (*IGCH* 300).

Figure 22. Polyrrhenia, AE denomination, ca 220-180 BC. Berlin Münzkabinett. Στεφανάκης 2013, 23, no. 56.

Figure 23. Polyrrhenia, AE denomination, ca 220-180 BC. Kölner Münzkabinett Tyll Kroha Nachfolger UG, e-Auction 5, 17 February 2019, no. 43.

Figure 24. Keraïtai, AR drachm, ca 220-180 BC. Vienna. Στεφανάκης 2013, 68, no. 146a.

Figure 25. Kydonia, AR drachm, first half of the 2nd c. BC. Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Monnaies, médailles et antiques, Fond s général 193 (© Gallica, BNF).

Figure 26. Allaria, AR drachm, first half of the 2nd c. BC. Künker, Auction 136, 10 March 2008, Die Sammlung Dr. Burkhard Traeger, no. 1.

Figure 27. Kydonia, AR obol, first half of the 2nd c. BC. Dr. Busso Peus Nachfolger, Auction 398, 28 April 2009, no. 208.

Figure 28. Tanos, AR obol, first half of the 2nd c. BC. Athens NM. Chania 1922 (*IGCH* 254).

Figure 29. Kydonia, AE denomination, first half of the 2nd c. BC. Künker, Auction 133, 11 October 2007, no. 7420.

Figure 30. Polichne, AE denomination, first half of the 2nd c. BC. Athens NM, Π 458. Στεφανάκης 1996, 145, no. 1.

Figure 31. Phaistos, AR drachm, ca 330/20-280/70 BC. Goethe-Universität 903 (see Carbone 2022, 102, Serie 52.1).

Figure 32. Praisos, AR drachm, ca 330/20-280/70 BC. Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Monnaies, médailles et antiques, Fond s général 548 (© Gallica, BNF).

Figure 33. Praisos, AR stater, 330/20-280/70 BC. Künker, Auction 136, 10 March 2008, Die Sammlung Dr. Burkhard Traeger, no. 344.

Figure 34. Praisos, AR triobol, ca 330/20-280/70 BC. Stack's, August 2009, Coin Galleries Sale, 18 August 2009, no. 4123.

Figure 35. Eleutherna, AR stater, ca 300-280 BC. Freeman & Sear, Mail Bid Sale 13, 25 August 2006, no. 15.

Figure 36. Rithymna, AR stater, ca 300-280 BC. Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Monnaies, médailles et antiques, Fonds général 575 (© Gallica, BNF).

Figure 37. Chersonessos, AR stater, ca 330/20-280/70 BC. Künker, Auction 136, 10 March 2008, Die Sammlung Dr. Burkhard Traeger, no. 38.

Figure 38. Eleurtherna, AE denomination, end of 3rd-beginning of 2nd c. BC. Künker, Auction 136, 10 March 2008, Die Sammlung Dr. Burkhard Traeger, no. 56.

Figure 39. Aptera, AR triobol, end of 3rd-beginning of 2nd c. BC. Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Monnaies, médailles et antiques, Fonds général 7 (© Gallica, BNF).

Figure 40. Lyttos, AR stater, 4th c. BC. Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Monnaies, médailles et antiques, Fonds général 431 (© Gallica, BNF).

Figure 41. Praisos, AR stater, 4th c. BC. Classical Numismatic Group, Inc., Mail Bid Sale 76, 12 September 2007, no. 630.

Figure 42. Hierapytna, AR stater, ca 340/30-300 BC. Berlin, Imhoof-Blumer, 1900. Stefanaki 2021, 218, no. 1.

Figure 43. Lyttos, AE denomination, end of 3rd-beginning of 2nd c. BC. Künker, Auction 136, 10 March 2008, Die Sammlung Dr. Burkhard Traeger, no. 280.

Figure 44. Malla, AE denomination, end of 3rd-beginning of 2nd c. BC. New York, ANS, 1944.100.40740. Stefanaki 2009, 282, no. 27, pl. II.

Figure 45. Hyrtakina, AE denomination, 3rd c. BC. Künker, Auction 136, 10 March 2008, Die Sammlung Dr. Burkhard Traeger, no. 137.

Figure 46. Hierapytna, AE denomination, ca 230/20-first quarter of the 2nd c. BC. Künker, Auction 136, 10 March 2008, Die Sammlung Dr. Burkhard Traeger, no. 120. Stefanaki 2021, 224, no. 72.

Figure 47. Priansos, AR drachm, ca 330/20-280/70 BC. Classical Numismatic Group, Inc., Mail Bid Sale 69, 8 June 2005, no. 337.

Figure 48. Hierapytna, AE denomination, second half of the 2nd c. BC. Künker, Auction 136, 10 March 2008, Die Sammlung Dr. Burkhard Traeger, no. 125. Stefanaki 2021, 229, no. 163.

Figure 49. Hierapytna, AE denomination, second half of the 2nd c. BC. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, New College. Stefanaki 2021, 228, no. 146.