Filozofski vestnik | Volume XL | Number 2 | 2019 | 7–58

Tomaž Mastnak*

Europa: The Politics of Mythology[1]

Once the myth of Europa is seen as the European foundational myth, the questions of the origin and meaning of the myth of Europa and of the word Europa itself become questions of the origins and meaning of Europe. Those questions can thus become of central importance for our construction of what is popularly called European civilization. The way one answers the questions has implications for the fabrication of Ancient Greece and for our view of the role played by that Greece in the history of Europe. Answers to those questions involve the big issues of cultural heritage and racial descent, of historical, cultural, and racial identity. The myth of Europa functions as a prism through which we see world history. But at the same time, the way one sees or wants to see world history and Europe's place in it, and the value one may wish to attach to European civilization (whatever that might mean), motivate and determine interpretations of the myth of Europa and of the name Europa.

The issue at stake can be put very simply: Is Europe an autonomous civilization or was it historically influenced by Egypt and the Semitic civilizations of the Near East? If the Ancient Greece is – or is to be – regarded as the "cradle of European civilization," as the "fountain-head of European culture," or as the spring of the "European spirit," the nature of that Greece determines the nature of who "we," the "Europeans," are. Our understanding of the Ancient Greeks is our self-understanding. The very language – cradle, fountainhead, spring, origin, and the like – suggests that one is at the very least inclined toward seeing European civilization as autonomous[2] and Ancient Greece as independent of its non-Greek neighbours. But inclination, in this context, is often too weak a word. "Our" autonomy is an imperative and a normative judgment that requires one

[1] This article is a result of the research project J6–8264 "Europe as a Philosophical Idea and Political Subject", which is funded by the Slovenian Research Agency.

[2] Dawson, for example, speaks of, and attributes much value to, "the autonomy of Western civilisation." Christopher Dawson, *The Making of Europe: An Introduction to the History of European Unity*, Sheed & Ward, New York 1952, p. 4.

* Princeton Institute of International and Regional Studies

to keep Ancient Greece clean of Semitic or Egyptian influences, and "our" European (or Western) civilization separate from the Semitic – and, later, Islamic – worlds.[3]

Literary Wars over the Rights of Europe: Anti-Semitism and Colonialism

If the ancient Greeks are to be regarded as the ones who discovered Europe and gave it its name,[4] that name has to be Greek.[5] Likewise, the myth of Europa should not be connected to ancient Near Eastern myths, cults, and religions, nor seen as preserving the memory of the Egyptian or Phoenician colonization of Greece. For a number of reasons, the myth of Europa has been given a privileged – or, at least, a prominent – place in literary wars over European birthrights. It is usually understood that those wars broke out toward the end of the nineteenth century. Such an understanding was promoted about a century ago by the protagonists of that conflict.

---

3 See, for example, Michel Astour, *Hellenosemitica: An Ethnic and Cultural Study in West Semitic Impact on Mycenaean Greece*, E. J. Brill, Leiden 1965, "Preface"; Ruth B. Edwards, *Kadmos the Phoenician: A Study in Greek Legends and the Mycenaean Age*, Adolf M. Hakkert, Amsterdam 1979, Chap. 1; Martin Bernal, *The Fabrication of Ancient Greece, 1785–1985*, Vol. 1 of *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, N. J., 1987; Patricia Springborg, *Western Republicanism and the Oriental Prince*, Polity Press, Cambridge 1992, Pt. 1. For a most stimulating discussion of the period when the place of Islamic empire in what is – with a fateful reductionism – called European history becomes an issue, see Garth Fowden, *Empire to Commonwealth: Consequences of Monotheism in Late Antiquity*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, N. J. 1993.

4 Gonzague de Reynold, *La Formation de l'Europe*, Vol. 1 of *idem*, *Qu'est-ce que l'Europe?*, Librairie de l'Université, Fribourg en Suisse 1944, p. 113; Martin Ninck, *Die Entdeckung von Europa durch die Griechen*, Benno Schwabe, Basel 1945; Le Goff, Editor's Preface to the book series "The Making of Europe" (English publisher Blackwell).

5 An exception to this rule is Bruno W. W. Dombrowski, *Der Name Europa auf seinem griechischen und altsyrischen Hintergrund: Ein Beitrag zur ostmediterraranen Kultur- und Religionsgeschichte in frühgriechischer Zeit*, Verlag Adolf M. Hakkert, Amsterdam 1984, who first argues that the name Europa is "genuinely Greek," but then demonstrates that the myth of Europa only partly belongs to the Greek *Sagenkreis*. For his argument that Europa was the name under which Anat was domesticated in the Aegean, see *op. cit.*, Chap. 4; *cf.* Sarah P. Morris, *Daidalos and the Origins of Greek Art*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J. 1992, pp. 98, 99 (if we accept as a possibility that Anat, "along with her consort Baal, in his form as a bull, are migrating to Crete as Europa and Zeus"), *cf.* p. 176.

One of those at the centre of the *querelle* was Victor Bérard. He was renowned as the editor and translator of the *Odyssey* and as the author of a minute analysis and controversial interpretation of Homer's work. He entered the stage in 1894 with the publication of his thesis on the cults of Arcadia. He began by observing that there existed, on the one hand, a profound difference that separated the Arcadian myths and cults from "other more properly Hellenic religions" and, on the other hand, a great affinity between Arcadian myths and both Oriental myths and gods, heroes, legends, rites, and the symbols of the neighbouring Boeotia. Such a state of affairs implied the question he set himself the task of answering in that work. Spelled out, the question read: "[F]rom where could come the similitudes between the Arcadian myths and cults, on the one hand, and, on the other, the myths of the Orient and cults of the country of Cadmus?"[6] Bérard searched for answers with what were then innovative methods of comparative mythology and historical semantics. He found them in the Phoenician presence in, and Semitic influences on, Arcadia and Boeotia, that is, in inland Greece. To substantiate his argument, he collected and employed "all that was then known of Phoenician mythology."[7]

Bérard knew what he was doing was controversial, but that did not deter him. On the contrary, he prefaced his analysis proper with a few powerfully written pages in which he directly confronted those "poorly reasoned and almost unconscious sentiments" that inhibited his contemporaries from even considering a Semitic influence on early Greece.[8] Chief among those sentiments were "our *European chauvinism*" and "our *Greek fanaticism*." The first term, borrowed

6 Victor Bérard, *De l'origine des cultes arcadiens: Essai de méthode en mythologie grecque*, Thorin & Fils, Paris 1894), pp. 5–6.

7 René Dussaud, "Victor Bérard," *Syria* 12 (1931), p. 393.

8 Bérard, *De l'origine des cultes arcadiens*, p. 7. Bernal saw those pages of Bérard as a statement that "beautifully summarizes the main theme of *Black Athena*," and cited them at length. See Bernal, *The Fabrication of Ancient Greece*, pp. 378–80. Bernal's own declared political purpose was to "lessen European cultural arrogance." *Op. cit*., p. 73. For a critical view of Bernal's politics, see Guy MacLean Rogers, "Multiculturalism and the Foundations of Western Civilization," in: *Black Athena Revisited*, ed. M. R. Lefkowitz and G. MacLean Rogers, The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill 1996. (Disconcertingly, in his introductory paragraph Rogers cites B. Lewis as a "distinguished historian.") *Cf*. also Patricia Maynor Bikai, "Black Athena and the Phoenicians," *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology* 3 (1990), No. 1, p. 73.

from a contemporary geographer,[9] pointed at the belief in the superiority of "*our* Europe" over all other parts of the world. That supremacism, dividing Europe from Asia and Africa with an abyss, made it impossible to imagine "Asiatic influences in a European country." Within that general frame of mind, there was something especially inconceivable and inadmissible. The popular Aryan theories actually allowed an Asian invasion into Europe, for they maintained that "our first ancestors" came from the Asian heartland.

> But for our Aryan fathers we have the indulgence of good sons; truly speaking, even if they came from Asia, they are not Asiatics: for all eternity, they were Indo-Europeans. What is, by contrast, repugnant to all our prejudices is an invasion into our Aryan Europe from Semitic Asia. It really appears as if the Phoenician coast were further away from us than the Iranian plateau.

Whereas Phoenician conquests in Africa – and even in Spain and Sicily, to which true Europeans look down as "*terres africaines*" – pose no problem to European historians, Phoenician traces in Marseilles, in Praeneste, in continental Greece and the Greek islands, and in Crete, do. They are downplayed as temporary landings or simple trading posts, and if one goes so far as to speak of Phoenician fortresses or possessions, they can only be coastal establishments.[10]

European chauvinism becomes a "true religious fanaticism" when the stranger is met not in Gaul, Etruria, Lucania, or Thrace, but in Greece. "We can only conceive Greece as the country of heroes and gods. Under porticos of white marble, in front of temples with noble lines, among the multitude of immortal statues we imagine a multitude of men as divine as their gods themselves, beautiful as their statues, great as their heroes, freed from all the base necessities under which we groan, and involved in an eternal conception of poetry and beauty." That Greece of which we dream, that "civilized Greece," we place at the origins of history. "It seems as if that country had one day suddenly emerged from the divine sea, with its towns, its temples, its helmeted hoplites, its draped orators, its Ionians with beautiful tunics, and, on top of its mountains, assemblies of its gods."[11]

9 Marcel Dubois, "Role des articulations littorales: étude de géographie comparée," *Annales de géographie* 1 (1892), No. 2, p. 133.

10 Bérard, *De l'origine des cultes arcadiens*, pp. 7–8.

11 *Ibid*., pp. 8–9.

Caricatured or not, that noble dream had a deep impact on our view of history – an impact that was more detrimental to historical research than the "cult of the Bible."[12] Just as in our geography we separate Europe from Asia, Bérard wrote, so "in our history we separate what we call Greek history from what we call ancient history." Regardless of what Herodotus said about everything Greek coming from Phoenicia and Egypt and regardless of the indisputable evidence of Oriental influence provided by archaeology, it was sacrilegious to regard the Greeks as having "borrowed from the Semitic Orient right up to their alphabet," to maintain the hypothesis that Greek institutions, customs, religions and rituals, ideas and literature, the whole of the earliest Greek civilization were inherited from the Orient.[13]

In the 1920s, Victor Bérard wrote that, until then, for more than two centuries and a half "learned Europe" had given credence to the research that accepted – moreover, did actually no more than comment on – the belief of the ancients themselves in the Egyptian or Phoenician origins of Hellenic heroes and gods.[14] He described the offensive in scholarly circles against what he considered the time-honoured view of ancient Greek history as an "anti-Semitic reaction."[15] He was on the receiving side. But it was those on the offensive who spoke of defence and rights. Bérard cited Salomon Reinach, who called for the "recovery of the rights of Europe against the pretensions of Asia."[16] The intellectual movement that saw its mission in "defending" Europe against Asia, and was often quick to

---

12 Early modern scholars – Guichard, Bochart, Thomassin, and many others – were, evidently, "aveuglés par leur confiance dans tous les mots de la Bible" and they launched adventurous hypotheses, false in detail and untenable as a whole, but "il est plus discutable que leurs vues de l'ensemble et leur philosophie de l'histoire aient été moins justes que les nôtres." They believed in the "miracle juif" alone and were not subjected to the "superstition de la Grèce." Bérard, *De l'origine des cultes arcadiens*, pp. 13–14. C. Autran, *"Phéniciens": Essai de contribution à l'histoire antique de la Méditerranée*, Paul Geuthner, Paris 1920, pp. viii-ix, on the other side of the barricades, complained about the excessive influence of the Revelation and of the Biblical past "sur tout ce qui touche à l'ancien Orient [...] Les livres saints, cela va sans dire, mettent l'Égypte, la Palestine, la Mésopotamie, au premier plan."

13 Bérard, *De l'origine des cultes arcadiens*, pp. 9–10.

14 Victor Bérard, *Les Phéniciens et l'Odyssée*, Armand Colin, Paris 1927, Vol. 2: pp. 219.

15 Bérard, *Les Phéniciens et l'Odyssée*, Vol. 2: p. 219.

16 Bérard, *Les Phéniciens et l'Odyssée*, Vol. 1: p. 16; Vol. 2: p. 15. See Salomon Reinach, *Le mirage oriental*, G. Masson, Paris 1893, p. 3. Bérard dedicated the second volume of his *Les Phénicines et l'Odyssée* to Salomon Reinach, "archéologue des origins."

reduce the presumed Asian threat to Semitic influences on Europe's historical formation, was not a purely academic affair. One did not really have to suspect a connection between the rights-minded academics concerned for Europe and some contemporary political movements on the right. Such a connection was at hand.

Wolfgang Helbig, whom Bérard also cited, pointed at that connection very elegantly. "The Ancients attributed to the Phoenicians a big influence on the early Greeks," he wrote, "and this tradition has of old been accepted by the majority of modern scholars." Helbig admitted, referring to his *Das homerische Epos aus den Denkmälern erläutert* (1884), that he was one of those who had believed that the Phoenicians played an important role in the development of the civilization known from the Mycenaean monuments. Then he added: "In recent years, as a person in Molière says, 'we have changed all this.' The unfortunate Phoenicians have become the object of a profound antipathy of a number of scholars, of an antipathy that one would almost be tempted to put in connection with the anti-Semitic movement."[17]

That connection burst into the open in the Germany of the 1930s. The path to that explosion was paved by "the so-called neo-humanists and, above all, by those representatives of the 'third humanism' who have contaminated Classical studies with racism and claimed the originality and purity of the Greek civilization as Indo-European and Nordic." They either negated any contribution of Oriental (and Mediterranean) civilizations to Greek civilization or considered such contributions insignificant.[18] Assimilating Ancient Greece to Germany, the neo-humanism thereof was compatible with Nazi power and, at its worst, eager to serve it. The assertion of the feeling of racial closeness between the German people and the Greeks was the basis for teaching the virtues that the "Nation-

17 Wolfgang Helbig, "Ein ägyptisches Grabgemälde und die mykenische Frage," in: *Sitzungsberichte der philosophisch-philologischen und der historischen Classe der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu München*, 1896, Heft 4, cited in: Bérard, *Les Phéniciens et l'Odyssée*, Vol. 1: p. 17.

18 Filippo Càssola, *Scritti di storia antica: Istituzione e politica*, Jovene Editore, Naples 1993, p. 389. The text was first printed as an introduction to Santo Mazzarino, *Fra Oriente e Occidente: Ricerche di storia greca archaica*, Rizzoli, Milan 1989. On "neo-humanism," see Stefan Rebenich, "Alte Geschichte in Demokratie und Diktatur: Der Fall Helmut Berve," *Chiron* 31 (2001).

al-Socialist state needed."[19] Those humanists required that research in ancient history be limited to those peoples that "appear to be racially related to us and can be valued as founders of the Indo-Germanic culture of Europe."[20] Meeting that requirement meant cutting the "racially and spiritually alien peoples of the East" – that is, the Ancient Orient – out of ancient history.[21] In such a framework, no lesser authority than Helmut Berve could celebrate the Romans for cleansing their *Lebensraum* of the Semites. In a lecture that this leading historian of Classical antiquity of the Third Reich delivered thirteen times during the war, he praised Romans for the destruction of Carthage, a Phoenician colony, thereby becoming the saviours of the Western world: "Because Rome gained victory and eradicated *Semitentum* in the domain of the western Mediterranean, it saved the West and created the possibility for European culture."[22]

Bérard did not live to see historians of Classical antiquity and philologists serving Hitler. But his account of the struggles in which he was a prominent protagonist was accepted by some scholars who, in the second half of the twentieth century, kept grappling with the same or similar basic issues as he had. Michel Astour, for example, wrote that the reaction against admitting a strong "West

---

19 "Echte humanistische Bildung erzieht [...] wenn sie recht betrieben wird, zu den Tugenden, die der nationalsozialistische Staat braucht." Helmut Berve, "Antike und nationalsozialistischer Staat," *Vergangenheit und Gegenwart* 24 (1934), cited in Rebenich, "Alte Geschichte in Demokratie und Diktatur," p. 472. On the "Nähegefühl rassischer Verwandschaft," wrote Jaeger in *Paideia*, cited and contextualized in Beat Näf, "Werner Jaeggers *Paideia*: Entstehung, kulturpolitische Absichten und Rezeption," in *Werner Jaeger Reconsidered: Proceedings of the Second Oldfather Conference, held on the campus of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, April 26–28, 1990*, ed. W. M. Calder III, Scholars Press, Atlanta, Georgia 1992, p. 138. On Berve, *cf*. Luciano Canfora, *Le vie del classicismo*, Laterza, Bari 1989, p. 169 *ff*.

20 Helmut Berve, *Geschichte der Hellenen und Römer* (Leipzig, 1936), p. 1, cited in Rebenich, "Alte Geschichte in Demokratie und Diktatur," p. 477.

21 See Rebenich, "Alte Geschichte in Demokratie und Diktatur," p. 478. *Cf*. William M. Calder III, "Werner Jaeger and Richard Harder: an Erklärung," in *idem*, *Studies in the Modern History of Classical Scholarship*, Jovene, Naples 1984; Näf, "Werner Jaeggers *Paideia*"; Donald O. White, "Werner Jaeger's 'Third Humanism' and the Crisis of Conservative Cultural Politics in Weimar Germany," in *Werner Jaeger Reconsidered: Proceedings of the Second Oldfather Conference, held on the campus of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, April 26–28, 1990*.

22 Helmut Berve, "Rom und Karthago," cited from archival material in Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Rebenich, "Alte Geschichte in Demokratie und Diktatur," p. 484. *Cf*. Canfora, *Le vie del classicismo*, p. 211.

Semitic element" in parts of Ancient Greece "arose in Germany in the 1890s, led by Beloch. This school, which rapidly found followers in France and Britain, soon prevailed in Greek scholarship. It categorically asserted that all reports of Phoenicians in Greece were absolutely baseless, pure fiction or mistakes."[23] Contributors to the Pauly-Wissowa's *Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* went so far, Astour continued, as to declare not only Cadmus, but even Adonis non-Semitic, and purely Greek names and figures.[24] Beloch's doctrine became and remained "absolutely dominant" well into the 1930s.[25] "Almost the only Hellenist to oppose this trend was Victor Bérard, the distinguished editor and commentator of the Odyssey [...] His books were completely ignored; practically no historian of Greece dared to mention them in his works."[26]

A quarter of a century later, Martin Bernal wrote of the hostility with which Classicists met Astour's *Hellenosemitica*. Remarks on Astour came toward the close of Bernal's volume, whose subtitle alone – *The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization* – "guaranteed it a swift and largely negative response from academic circles in Europe and North America."[27] More than anything else, the volume is a debatable history of the mainly early-modern and modern historiographies and theories of the role and place of ancient Egypt and the Near East in what is today commonly seen as the birth of European civilization.[28] Bernal called the "conventional view among Greeks in the Classical and Hellenistic ages" – i.e. that "Greek culture had arisen as the result of colonization, around 1500 BC, by Egyptians and Phoenicians who had civilized the native inhabitants" – the "Ancient Model." He described how the rise and triumph of "Hellenomania"

---

[23] Michel Astour, "Greek Names in the Semitic World and Semitic Names in the Greek World," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 23 (1964), No. 3, p. 195.

[24] Astour, "Greek Names in the Semitic World," p. 195.

[25] Astour, *Hellenosemitica*, p. xiv.

[26] Astour, "Greek Names in the Semitic World," p. 195; *cf*. Astour, *Hellenosemitica*, pp. xii-xiv.

[27] Joseph Alexander MacGillivray, *Minotaur: Sir Arthur Evans and the Archaeology of the Minoan Myth*, Hill and Wang, New York 2000, p. 310.

[28] For a critique of Bernal's history of historiography, see Bikai, "Black Athena and the Phoenicians"; James D. Muhly, "Black Athena versus Traditional Scholarship," *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology* 3 (1990), No. 1, especially p. 86 *ff*.; Richard Jenkyns, "Bernal and the Nineteenth Century," in *Black Athena Revisited*, ed. M. R. Lefkowitz and G. MacLean Rogers, The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill 1996; Robert E. Norton, "The Tyranny of Germany over Greece?" in *Black Athena Revisited*, *op. cit*.; Robert Palter, "Eighteenth-century Historiography in *Black Athena*," in *Black Athena Revisited*, *op. cit*.; *cf*. also Paul Oskar Kristeller, "Comment on *Black Athena*," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 56 (1995), No. 1.

brought about the decline and fall of that "Ancient Model." It was replaced by the "Aryan Model", which in its "broad form," developed during the first half of the nineteenth century, "denied the truth of the Egyptian settlements and questioned those of the Phoenicians." The "extreme" "Aryan Model," which flourished "during the twin peaks of anti-Semitism in the 1890s and again in the 1920s and 30s," went a step further and "denied even the Phoenician cultural influence."[29]

These accounts, or at least the aspects I have thus far mentioned, highlighted what Astour called external considerations. "The polemic against admitting any Semitic influence upon Greece was conducted with so much passion," he wrote, "that its motivation seemed to be derived from external considerations."[30] Besides anti-Semitism, there was another crucially important "external consideration" that I need to mention before turning to other aspects of the issue at hand: colonialism. The end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries was "the epoch when the colonialism of the European powers was triumphant." In light of that European triumph, it was "unbelievable that the nations so important today should have played no role in the past." The victors of the present had to be given a correspondingly honourable place in the past.[31]

These are the words of our contemporary. But already in the mid-nineteenth century, at the latest, learned men of Europe who would not let themselves be confined to ivory towers set out to prove that all durable conquests had "radiated" from the Occident to the Orient. Using historical analogies with the present, those public intellectuals were engaged in undoing the unintended consequences of the "Aryan theories." Those considerably popular theories traced the origins of "Europe" to the Indo-European invasions from Central Asia. While such theorizing may have been instrumental in liberating Europeans from their Semitic roots and influences, it made them Asiatics by birth. It tied Europe to

29 Bernal, *The Fabrication of Ancient Greece*, pp. 1–2.

30 Astour, "Greek Names in the Semitic World," p. 195.

31 Guy Bunnens, *L'expansion phénicienne en Méditerranée: essai d'interprétation fondé sur une analyse des traditions littéraires*, Institut historique belge de Rome, Bruxelles, Rome 1979, cited in Bernal, *The Fabrication of Ancient Greece*, p. 376. Bunnens speak of authors such as Reinach and Autran as having been "not always ruled by scientific objectivity alone."

Asia as Europe's origin. But Europe was not to be seen as an Asian dependency, as Salomon Reinach put it,[32] or as an appendix of Asia.[33]

When these issues were debated in the Parisian Société d'anthropologie in the 1860s, one of the *savants* simply observed that, in history, the peoples of Europe had made immense conquests and founded numerous colonies in other parts of the world, whereas other peoples had conquered very little from the Europeans. Moreover, the latter had been momentary irruptions rather than permanent settlements.[34] In the second half of the nineteenth century, there were no Europeans subject to a stranger, except for those who lived under the Ottoman Empire. On the other hand, European conquests and colonies had always been very solid. Europe may be small and Europeans not very numerous, but America, Asia, and Australia (Africa was not even mentioned) were under their rule.[35] The

---

[32] Salomon Reinach, *L'origine des Aryens: historire d'une controverse*, E. Leroux, Paris 1892, pp. 32–37. According to Reinach, *op. cit.*, p. 33, the first to protest against the theory of the "Asiatic origins of Europeans" was "un illustre géologue belge," J. J. d'Omalius d'Halloy, in 1848.

[33] The image came to be quite popular in the twentieth century but goes back at least to Adelung, who, in 1809, described Europe as "eigentlich nur die westliche Fortsetzung von Asien." Johann Christoph Adelung, *Mithridates oder allgemeine Sprachkunde mit dem Vater Unser als Sprachprobe in bey nahe fünfhundert Sprachen und Mundarten*, Vossische Buchhandlung, Berlin 1806–17, Vol. 2: p. 3. For later expressions of the idea, see Denys Hay, *Europe: The Emergence of an Idea*. 2nd ed., Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh 1968, p. xvii (Europe as "the western extension of the Asiatic land mass"); Winston S. Churchill, *Europe Unite: Speeches 1947 and 1948*, ed. R. S. Churchill, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston 1950, p. 77 (who dismissively attributed to "professional geographers" the view that Europe was "the peninsula of the Asiatic land mass"); J. G. A. Pocock, "*Vous autres Européens* – or Inventing Europe," *Filozofski Vestnik/Acta philosophica*, 14 (2/1993), p. 146.

[34] This view is echoed in Autran, "*Phéniciens*," p. vii. Autran wrote that it occasionally happened that "vieilles races indigènes du Nil ou de l'Euphrate" – either under "souverains entreprenants" or when forced by the circumstances – would become "active." "Mais ces manifestations demeurent momentanées; ces sont de simple 'campanes'; elles restent toujours d'ordre purement militaire et fiscal. Jamais elles n'aboutissent à une exploitation proprement dite des pays asssujettis."

[35] Reinach, *L'origine des Aryens*, pp. 38–39, citing *Bulletin de la Société d'anthropologie*, 1864. Some fifteen years later, the Director of the Museum in Mainz, Lindenschmit, argued in his *Handbuch der deutschen Alterthumskunde* that most of the invasions known from history had moved from the west toward the east, and that the Indo-Europeans had preserved, into his own time, the same expansionist power, whereas the mixing of races in their colonies in Persia and India had led to the loss of a taste for far away migration and conquest. Reinach, *L'origine des Aryens*, p. 70.

peak of European domination over the world thus appears to have accelerated European colonialization of the past. Its complement was a retrospective decolonization of the territories the modern Europeans called Europe, especially of Ancient Greece. A number of historians denied the existence of Egyptian and/or Phoenician colonies in the Aegean or in continental Greece. For Berve, as we have seen, the Roman destruction of the Phoenician colony at Carthage was a European war of liberation.

With the liberation of European colonies after World War II, ancient history, too, was in need of decolonization and began to be decolonized. "We are all living in a period of decolonization. This is true as well of ancient history," as thoughtful and moderate a historian as Arnaldo Momigliano declared in the 1960s.[36] Since the decolonization – qua de-Semitization – of Ancient Greece culminated in Nazi historiography, the decolonization in our own times, as much as it concerned (among many other things) ancient history, involved de-Nazification. It involved, Momigliano explained, finding a meaning of Greekness that would be of use to the world that had suffered Nazism (as well as experimented with communism).[37] But redesigning ancient history required more than breaking the intimate connection between the study of Greek history and Nazism. For one hundred and fifty years, Momigliano pointed out, Classical studies had been dominated by the German science of Classical antiquity [*Altertumswissenschaft*]. The problem lay in the illusion of the affinity between the Greeks and Germans that had generated an interpretation of Greek history through the prism of German nationalism.[38] If what the Nazi historians made of Ancient Greece was an excess, it was – within that historiographical interpretation – a logical one. Greek history called for a revision of its basic premises. The first and essential among those premises that Momigliano mentioned was "the separation between the Greek world and Oriental world as two opposed worlds."[39]

[36] Arnaldo Momigliano, "Prospettiva 1967 della storia greca," in *idem*, *Quarto contributo alla storia degli studi classici e del mondo antico*, Storia e letteratura, Rome 1969, p. 43. The article was first presented to the Congresso degli Storici Italiani in Perugia, 1967.

[37] Momigliano,, "Prospettiva 1967 della storia greca," p. 43.

[38] *Ibid.*, pp. 43, 45.

[39] *Ibid.*, p. 46.

Literary Wars: Europa's Semitism

This brief survey of the "external considerations" that shaped Classical studies for much of the past two centuries has brought us back to considering the internal logical structure of the "anti-Semitic reaction" in the study of Classical antiquity. The "external considerations" played a role in determining the framework within which the myth of Europa was discussed. Turning to "internal considerations," I hope I will be able to indicate how the logic of the anti-Semitic argument impacted interpretations of the myth of Europa and how specific interpretations of the myth of Europa contributed to the articulation of that argument.

Turning to "internal considerations" will necessarily modify the account of the intellectual struggles given, especially, by Victor Bérard and Michel Astour. But let me start with Robert Brown, an "independent scholar"[40] who, however, was not impartial. Writing a couple of years before the close of the nineteenth century, he considered Bérard one of his "allies."[41] Brown was an outspoken representative of the "Aryo-Semitic school of Hellenic mythologies" and thought highly of the "great scholars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, distinguished by their immense erudition and untiring industry," who had fully acknowledged the "Semitic influence in regions Hellenic" – as far as "their lights permitted." But he distanced himself from their followers closer to his own times. Those great European scholars, Brown stated, had been succeeded in the last century, or century and a half, by an "inferior race, marked by an ever narrowing view, a portentous bigotry, and a philology which [...] expired at length in a mere nightmare of absurdities."[42] Scholars of that distinction were joined by "a curious race of 'Cranks,' by no means yet extinct," and together they produced "follies" that captured the public imagination and filled with their writings bookshelves "in almost every library."[43] It was those "follies" that provoked

> a great reaction, in which Germany took the lead. The old-fashioned notions were contemptuously abolished almost *en bloc*. The motto of this new school was 'Greece for the Greeks.' Numerous ancient errors perished forever, but, unfortu-

40 Bernal, *The Fabrication of Ancient Greece*, p. 370.

41 Robert Brown Jr., *Semitic Influence in Hellenic Mythology*, Williams and Norgate, London 1898, p. 92.

42 *Ibid*., p. 81.

43 *Ibid*., p. 82.

> nately, with them a certain proportion of truth was also thrown overboard. Semitic influence in Greece was scouted as an absurdity; and perhaps the high-water mark in this reaction was reached when 'Kadmos' was declared to be a pure Hellenic name.

The "German Classical school," Brown had no difficulty admitting, was "immeasurably superior to the folly which they overthrew." Otfried Mülller was an example of "superb Classical scholarship." But "the Classical phalanx of Otfried Müller," just like the "Aryan" school (whose emergence Brown linked to the "British power in India," and whose chief representative in England was Max Müller), "carried away by the splendour of their achievements, have pushed their claims too far, and have not conceded sufficient place to that great historical influence, which, as the years roll, it becomes ever clearer and clearer that the Semitic East exercised upon archaic Hellas."[44]

Unlike Bérard and Astour, Brown saw the beginning, rather than the close, of the nineteenth century as the time when the contest over Semitic influences on early Greece emerged. Brown's view is more accurate. It also corresponds to the more recent account given by the Italian historian Santo Mazzarino. In his *Fra Oriente e Occidente* (1947), Mazzarino argued that the historical "science" of Greek Antiquity was born out of the reaction to the "Orientalizing Romanticism," that is, to the Romantic views of ancient history in general and of Greek mythology in particular.[45] For the formation of that "science," grappling with the issues regarding the relationship between the Orient and the Occident was

44 *Ibid*., pp. 82–83. I am not sure that, in the cited passage, Brown comes across as an eccentric who gives a "sense of embattlement," as suggested by Bernal, *The Fabrication of Ancient Greece*, p. 370. As working in favour of his own position, Brown pointed at the "astonishing advance in our knowledge of the ancient and archaic non-Classical world, which we denote by such terms as Egyptology and Assyriology." In addition to archaeology, Brown mentioned the anthropology that "has taken field, represented by many an acute and industrious student and compiler. All honour to them, and success to their efforts!" Brown, *Semitic Influence in Hellenic Mythology*, p. 84.

45 That view was shared by Charles Autran, a historian with a different outlook, who in the early 1920s characterized "la transformation véritablement décisive" that had taken place within Classical studies in the past half a century, as a movement away from the "romantisme un peu facile" of earlier Classical scholars. Autran, *"Phéniciens*," p. 135.

of central importance.[46] Momigliano responded to Mazzarino's book with sharp criticism. His main objection was that Mazzarino's own study revolved around the "Romantic problem of the relationship between Orient and Occident" which Momigliano, when he wrote his review, considered a "fantasmatic problem." For Momigliano, that was *un problema-fantasma* because he believed that the issue existed no more, that it had dissolved. Debating the relationship between Orient and Occident, Momigliano argued, may have made sense at the time when the Indo-European linguistic unity was discovered and some were led to believe that it was possible to construe an Aryan civilization from which the Semites were excluded. But once we had learned to know all those civilizations from Asia Minor in which the Indo-European and non-Indo-European elements were inseparable from each other, both the myth of an Indo-European civilization and the problem of Orient-Occident were finished.[47]

What Momigliano then wrote was not all too subtle, and twenty years later he came to judge Mazzarino's work in question much more favourably: as a contribution to overcoming the isolation of Greece from the Orient established under the domination of German Classical studies, by then deeply discredited.[48] What is important for me here, however, is not so much the disagreement between Momigliano and Mazzarino as a convergence of their views. Momigliano described Friedrich Creuzer's *Die historische Kunst der Griechen* (1803) as marking the "beginning of a new era of historical studies in Europe."[49] Mazzarino placed at the beginning of the formation of "scientific" historiography Otfried Müller's critique of Creuzer's interpretation of myths. Whereas the history of Greek art

[46] "La 'scienza' storica dell'antichità greca è sorta – almeno come scienza – in epoca romantica; è sorta dalla problematica del rapporto fra Oriente e Occidente." Mazzarino, *Fra Oriente e Occidente*, p. 7, and Chap. 1.

[47] Arnaldo Momigliano, "Santo Mazzarino, *Fra Oriente e Occidente. Ricerche di storia greca arcaica*. La Nuova Italia, Firenze 1947," in Mazzarino, *Fra Oriente e Occidente*, pp. 398–99. For Mazzarino's response, not published at the time, see Santo Mazzarino, "Per un 'discorso sul metodo,'" especially pp. 407–9.

[48] See Momigliano, "Prospettiva 1967 della storia greca," p. 48. Momigliano's revised view is in agreement with Càssola's characterization of Mazzarino's book as containing "the last echoes of the polemics" against neo-humanist/Nazi contamination of Classical studies with racism. Càssola, *Scritti di storia antica*, p. 389.

[49] Arnaldo Momigliano, "Friedrich Creuzer and Greek Historiography (1946)," in *idem*, *Studies on Modern Scholarship*, ed. G. W. Bowersock and T. J. Cornell, trans. T. J. Cornell, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1994, p. 1.

was under the influence of Winckelmannian Classicism, Greek religion was studied under "Romantic and Orientalizing auspicies." Müller's *Prolegomena* (1825) and Lobeck's *Aglaophamus* (1829) dealt a severe blow to such Orientalizing fantasizing, *fantasticherie orientalizzanti*.[50]

Momigliano characterized Creuzer's mythology as an "attempt to give a scientific basis to the Neoplatonic interpretation of Greek mythology."[51] This was a considerably more charitable judgment than that which portrayed Creuzer as "a man of yeasty imagination who used philology to support his idea that ancient myth represented the disguised embodiment of a great symbolic system," thus satisfying the "romantic desire to find transcendental wisdom in the East."[52] His *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker* (1810–12) was praised by a contemporary philosopher as having been written in a "true philosophical spirit"; Schelling greeted it with enthusiasm, Creuzer himself posed as Hegel's colleague – but philologists were not impressed. Creuzer made the guess that that was so "precisely because" philosophers were impressed.[53]

Creuzer's guessing aside, after the publication of the second edition of his *Symbolik und Mythologie* (1819–21), "the debate on the meaning of myth reached unprecedented heights."[54] One of the protagonists of that debate was Karl Otfried Müller, who first published two reviews of Creuzer's new publication and then his *Prolegomena*.[55] This latter work made a strong impression – and continues to impress[56] – and in the Preface to the third edition of his *Symbolik und Mythologe*,

---

50 Mazzarino, *Fra Oriente e Occidente*, pp. 8–9.

51 Momigliano, "Friedrich Creuzer," p. 1.

52 Robert Ackerman, *The Myth and Ritual School: J. G. Frazer and the Cambridge Ritualists*, Garland, New York 1991, p. 23.

53 Friedrich Creuzer, *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker, besonders der Griechen*, 3rd ed., Carl Wilhelm Leske, Leipzig and Darmstadt 1837–43, Vol. 1: pp. xiv-xv; *cf.* Momigliano, "Friedrich Creuzer," p. 1 (referring to Schelling, *Einleitung in die Philosophie der Mythologie*).

54 Josine H. Blok, "'Romantische Poesie, Naturphilosophie, Construktion der Geschichte': K. O. Müller's Understanding of History and Myth," in *Zwischen Rationalismus und Romantik: Karl Otfried Müller und die antike Kultur*, ed. W. M. Calder III and R. Schlesier, Weidmann, Hildesheim 1998, p. 77.

55 For a detailed account of this publishing history, see Blok, "'Romantische Poesie, Naturphilosophie, Construktion der Geschichte,'" pp. 76–94.

56 *Cf.* Ackerman, *The Myth and Ritual School*, p. 24. Unlike other contemporary philologists' publications, Müllers *Prolegomena* "still holds the interest of the reader."

dated 1835, Creuzer was prompted to declare that he refused to recognize Müller as the lawgiver in mythology.[57] Modern historians are far from unanimous when it comes to determining whether Müller was a Romantic or rationalist.[58] Creuzer himself rejected Müller's turning the interpretation of myths into an intellectual operation, *Verstandesoperation*. Against such rationalism, which he compared to an obstetrical procedure that kills both the mother and the baby, Creuzer believed that the meaning of myths is accessible to a "quick glimpse of the spirit." Such a gift can be given to a person, or not, but it cannot be learnt. As such, the interpretation of myths was for the chosen ones. "This is why mythology is not the call of every philologist."[59]

There were other disagreements between Creuzer and some of his contemporaries. There were some, Creuzer wrote, "who do not want to hear anything about the derivation of Hellenic and Italic religions from Oriental religions." That objection, Creuzer admitted, was aimed at him as well as at "many of the greatest *Alterthumsforscher*, some of whom were still alive." He was willing to make some modifications of his views, but, he declared, he was not going to change his basic premise until he saw clear proof that Herodotus's account of the origins of the Greek religion was not worthy of credence. At the time of his writing, he regarded such proof as still missing. Creuzer also told his reader that it was "mainly younger German philologists" who had insisted on the separation between the Greek and Oriental religions, while he had received friendly attention from "the most famous Orientalists at home and abroad, and archaeologists" who worked on Greece and Oriental countries.[60]

---

57 "Müller [hat] schon vor zehn Jahren den Beruf in sich gefühlt, in der Mythologie als Gesetzgeber aufzutreten." Creuzer, *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker*, Vol. 1: p. xi.

58 Alfred Baeumler, "Bachofen, der Mythologe der Romantik," introduction to J. J. Bachofen, *Der Mythus von Orient und Occident: Eine Metaphysik der alten Welt*, ed. M. Schroeter , Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, Munich 1926, pp. CXLV, CXLVI n. *, called him a "Romantiker von Geblüt" and the historian and archaeologist of Romanticism. For Arnaldo Momigliano, "A Return to Eighteen-Century 'Etrusceria': K. O. Müller," in Momigliano, *Studies on Modern Scholarship*, p. 302, the term "Romantic" was out of the question. Burkert placed Müller on the side of the rational "Wissenschaft," as opposed to Romanticism. Cited in Blok, "'Romantische Poesie, Naturphilosophie, Construktion der Geschichte,'" p. 56, who – like other contributors to the volume in which the article was published – sees Müller as "between rationalism and Romanticism."

59 Creuzer, *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker*, Vol. 1: pp. xi–xii.

60 *Ibid*., p. xiv.

But Müller does not actually seem to have been hostile toward the Orient. In his Göttingen course on mythology, he lectured not only on Hellenes and Italians, but also on Indians, Egyptians, Near Eastern peoples, and Persians. He was apparently sincerely interested in Egyptian culture and art.[61] He rejected "Jewish, Phoenician, Egyptian, Indian, and God knows which else" influence on Greek religion, and was congratulated for it,[62] on methodological grounds. He was convinced that only the study of historical specificity could yield sound results, and conceived the history of Greece as the histories of Greek tribes and cities. "Archaic Greece was to him a complex of local and regional cultures, in which the character of the individual tribes was difficult to distinguish from the shape of the countryside in which each of them had settled."[63] This approach applied to the study of myths as well. In his first major publication, Müller rejected dealing with "ancient tale and ancient faith" that held that "at the root *all* is *one* and all the revelation of the divine is one and the same."[64] Some contemporaries considered Creuzer and his followers at fault for blending all the mythological into a One ("Inaneindermischen alles Mythologisches in Eins)."[65] Müller insisted on reconstructing the varieties of religious experience as shaped by the diverse geographical settings of different tribes. That is not far from our contemporary view of pagan antiquity as "a vast, unthinkably intricate, complex of local cults."[66] Müller's tribal dimension, however, has an uncanny tinge. Because he believed that a "sort of profound combination of tribal and local experiences had left its impression on the Greek myths," some historians have been inclined to notice "more than a touch of 'Blut und Boden' mysticism in the very gentle Müller."[67]

---

61 Blok, "'Romantische Poesie, Naturphilosophie, Construktion der Geschichte,'" pp. 81, 83 n. 93.

62 The citation is from a letter of Müller's friend M. H. E. Meier, from 1821, cited in Blok, "'Romantische Poesie, Naturphilosophie, Construktion der Geschichte,'" p. 82.

63 Arnaldo Momigliano, "K. O. Müller's *Prolegomena zu einer wissenschaftlichen Mythologie* and the Meaning of Myth," in *idem*, *Settimo contributo alla storia degli studi classici e del mondo antico*, Storia e letteratura, Rome 1984, p. 272.

64 "[...] daß in der Wurzel *Alles Eins* sei und alle Offenbarung des Göttlichen Eine und dieselbe." Karl Otfried Müller, *Orchomenos und die Minyer*, Vol. 1 of *idem*, *Geschichten hellenischer Stämme und Städte*, ed. F. W. Schneidewin, Josef Marx, Breslau 1844, p. 3. The first edition appeared in 1820.

65 K. H. W. Völcker to Müller, 1825, cited in Blok, "'Romantische Poesie, Naturphilosophie, Construktion der Geschichte,'" p. 94.

66 J. L. Lightfoot, *Lucian, On the Syrian Goddess: Edited with Introduction, Translation and Commentary*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2003, p. 2.

67 Momigliano, "K. O. Müller's *Prolegomena*," p. 272.

Müller's blood-and-soil particularism was at odds with the idea that there existed a single primordial religious experience. Led by the methodological principle that all myths were local,[68] Müller was as chary of Panhellenic constructions of Greek myths as of *Morgenländerei*, for which he reproached Herodotus.[69] Accessing the Greek myths – coeval with studying Greek origins[70] – meant recovering archaic local traditions, and thus going back beyond Homer and Hesiod. Their poetry – as individual creation, levelling and unifying the multiplicity of local cults and tales – lay in the way of scientific interpretation of myths, just like pragmatic books of ancient historians who strove to transform myths into history.[71] The former constructed a unified Greece; the latter represented it as in debt to the Orient.

Müller did not deny the usefulness of studying mythologies other than Greek, but his own subject in *Prolegomena* was Greek myths.[72] The way he tackled the subject contradicted Creuzer's basic assumptions.[73] Müller polemically main-

[68] The big mistake to be found in books on myths was the view of "*Aelteste Mythologie ohne Lokal*," against which Müller asserted that there was "eigentlich [...] keinen Mythus ohne Lokal." Karl Otfried Müller, *Prolegomena zu einer wissenschaftlichen Mythologie*, Vandhoeck und Ruprecht, Göttingen 1825, p. 229.

[69] Müller, *Orchomenos und die Minyer*, p. 1. On Müller's reservations regarding mythological Panhellenism, see Momigliano, "K. O. Müller's *Prolegomena*," pp. 276–77. As a matter of principle, Müller's method must be equally unsympathetic to Panhellenic and to Orientalizing tendencies in the interpretation of Greek myths. But the method itself may have been modelled on the brothers Grimm's picture of the German "Völkerwanderung." See Momigliano, "K. O. Müller's *Prolegomena*," pp. 274, 283; *cf*. Arnaldo Momigliano, "Un 'ritorno' alla etruscheria settecentesca: K. O. Müller," in *idem*, *Ottavo contributo alla storia degli studi classici e del mondo antico*, Storia e letteratura, Rome 1987, p. 47 *ff*. If that was the case, Müller's method may be much less neutral than it appears to be.

[70] Momigliano, "K. O. Müller's *Prolegomena*," p. 282, pointed out that Müller shared this view with Gottfried Hermann.

[71] Müller, *Prolegomena zu einer wissenschaftlichen Mythologie*, p. 97.

[72] *Ibid*., pp. iv, 282. I am not sure whether Momigliano, "K. O. Müller's *Prolegomena*," p. 280, was right to qualify Müller's invitation to study the mythologies of other nations as "comically exaggerated." Müller himself wrote on Oriental mythology. *Cf*., e.g. the review of *Sanchuniathonis historiarum Phoeniciae libros*, "Sandon und Sarnadapal," in Karl Otfried Müller, *Kleine deutsche Schriften über Religion, Kunst, Sprache und Literatur, Leben und Geschichte des Alterthums*, ed. E. Müller, Josef Max und Komp., Breslau 1947–48, Vol. 1: p. 445 *ff*; Vol. 2: p. 100 *ff*. See also *idem*, "Ueber den angeblch ägyptischen Ursprung der griechischen Kunst," *op. cit*., Vol. 2: p. 523 *ff*.

[73] For Müller's own summary of contradictions, see Müller, *Prolegomena zu einer wissenschaftlichen Mythologie*, p. 334 n. 2. *Cf*. Momigliano, "K. O. Müller's *Prolegomena*," p. 282;

tained that the creation of myth was not a purposeful action. The creation of myths was, rather, characterized by necessity and *Unbewußtheit*.[74] In Müller's view, it was untenable to suppose that incorporated in the myth was an originally non-mythical doctrine, existing prior to the myth. Equally unacceptable was the corollary to that supposition: that there existed a caste of priests in possession of higher knowledge who "dressed" that sublime knowledge as myth to make it accessible to the lay people who, in the remote past, were not fully reasonable. Those priests, whether crafty or sublime,[75] were then pictured as the agents of transmission of religious doctrine from the East to the West, ultimately from the Near East or Egypt to Greece.

For Müller, there is no *a priori* understanding of myths. Precisely: There is no *a priori* concept of the essence and content of a myth, since such a concept is given to us only through experience. And since in our own days, Müller argued, we cannot find the myth in the process of formation, such a concept is not given to us to understand directly and of itself, but only historically. Since the myth itself is the only source of the concept of myth, yet it appears in a form that differs from its content, the only bridge that leads from one to the other and thus makes possible our historical understanding of the myth, is understanding the language that the myth speaks. Finding that way to knowledge of the content is a problem. The procedure through which we can possibly solve the problem is called the interpretation of myth. We can only hope to acquire the knowledge we are searching for by analysing a "thousand individual cases."[76]

Ackerman, *The Myth and Ritual School*, pp. 24-25; Blok, "'Romantische Poesie, Naturphilosophie, Construktion der Geschichte,'" p. 77 *ff*.

74 Müller, *Prolegomena zu einer wissenschaftlichen Mythologie*, pp. 112, 334 n. 2.

75 Müller's writing of a "Caste oder Sekte von Schlauköpfen oder sublimen Menschen" (Müller, *Prolegomena zu einer wissenschaftlichen Mythologie*, p. 111) reminds me of Reinach's wording in his critique of Creuzer. For Reinach, Creuzer, attributing such an important role to the priesthood, shared in "the error of the eighteenth century," which was "precisely the exaggeration of primitive sacerdotalism, the failure to perceive that religion is anterior to any priesthood, and the classification of priests as clever charlatans – beneficent charlatans, according to some – who invented religion and mythologies as instruments of domination." Salomon Reinach, *Orpheus: A History of Religions*, revised and partly rewritten by the author, transl. F. Simmonds, Horace Liveright, New York 1930, p. 9.

76 Müller, *Prolegomena zu einer wissenschaftlichen Mythologie*, pp. 63–64.

I can now turn to one of those cases – the one concerning Cadmus and Europa, which is of particular interest for my argument. True to his methodical localism, Müller made it clear that he found it completely astounding that, of all the cities of Hellas, Thebes should have been chosen for settlement by the Phoenicians, a trading people. Among the Greek cities, its location made Thebes one of the least conducive to trade.[77] Thebes was connected with the myth of Cadmus, and from Cadmus was derived everything Phoenician in Greece.[78] But our oldest sources knew nothing of a Phoenician colony in the Boeotian Thebes. They only knew of the "Phoenician Europa." More precisely, Homer, Hesiod, Asius, and Bacchylides called Europa "very simply" Phoenix's daughter. The historicizing Herodotus was the first to identify Phoenix as the king of Tyre. For those earlier authors, Cadmus was not yet an Agenorid, or Europa's brother. But the story of the abduction of Europa, Müller maintained, went back to Homeric times. For him, the abduction of the daughter of Arybas from Sidon by Phoenician sailors, as told by Homer in the *Odyssey*, was the archetype (*Urbild*) of "all similar Cretan abduction stories."[79]

Müller dismissed early Phoenician settlements because Homer knew nothing of either Tyre or of the Cadmeian colonies in Boeotia, nor did he mention the gold mines of Thasos or the mines and marble quarries in Thrace, all connected with Phoenicians. But even if one could accept that Phoenicians did open those mines, that would be of no value for the genealogy of Thasos as Cadmus's brother and would not bring in Phoenicians of Thasos in connection with the search for Europa.[80] Phoenix was a name of "wholly Hellenic origin." One can see in the *Iliad* that Phoenix was a truly Hellenic hero ("ein recht eigentlich Hellenischer Held"), and the mythical story of Aethiops warns us against many misunderstandings to which descriptive names (Appellativnamen) can give rise.[81]

Like Phoenix, Cadmus was a Hellenic hero. Boeotians, Müller explained, were not delving into the inner meaning of Cadmeian legends. Rather, they related to them in an outward manner, in a human, heroic way ("höchst äußerlich, men-

77 Müller, *Orchomenos und die Minyer*, p. 111.
78 *Ibid*., p. 109.
79 *Ibid*., pp. 107–8; for Arybas's daughter, see *Odyssey* XV, 424 ff.
80 *Ibid*., pp. 108–9.
81 *Ibid*., pp. 112–13.

schlich, heroisch").[82] In Boeotia, Cadmus was thus transformed from a god into a "human founder of the state," while the "dark name Phoenix" was taken to be a designation of a people. Cadmus, however, was a "*deity of Tyrrhenian Pelasgians*," a people that were the earliest inhabitants of Thebes and were originally identical with Cadmeians.[83] (Cadmus, after all, was a son of the autochthonous Ogygus, as Suda recorded.)[84] At the time of the Dorian invasion, centuries before Homer, somewhere at the border marking the beginning of historical time, Tyrrhenian Pelasgians left Boeotia for Samothrace. They brought with them to that island their cultic practices and the myths of Cadmus or Cadmilus and Harmonia. In a ceremony of their mystery cult, Harmonia disappeared and was searched for.[85] The motive has obvious parallels with the search for the abducted Europa.[86] More importantly, Cadmus continued to be venerated as a god.[87]

As Müller explained, Boeotians received Cadmeian legends from the Tyrrhenian Pelasgians, the autochthonous population of Thebes, whom they chased out of their land. He placed Cadmus firmly within an "authentic ancient Greek cult," which should have dispelled whatever belief there had existed in Cadmus as a

---

82 On the "äussere Begriff des Mythus," see Müller, *Prolegomena zu einer wissenschaftlichen Mythologie*, p. 59 ff.

83 Müller, *Orchomenos und die Minyer*, pp. 113.

84 *Ibid*., p. 113 n. 3; *cf*. p. 211. In Boeotian tradition, Ogygus was a very early king of the area; some sources have Theban Ogyges as the father of both Cadmus and Phoenix. See Pierre Grimal, *The Dictionary of Classical Mythology*, transl. A. R. Maxwell-Hyslop, Blackwell, Oxford 1986, *s.v.* Ogygus.

85 *Cf*. Müller, *Orchomenos und die Minyer*, p. 454 = Ephoros frag. 12 = Schol. Eur. Phoen. 7: "even now they search for her [Harmonia] in the festivals"; *cf*. Susan Guettel Cole, *Theoi Megaloi: The Cult of the Great Gods at Samothrace*, E. J. Brill, Leiden 1984, p. 48. *Cf*. further F. C. Movers, *Die Phönizer*, 2 vols. in 3 pts., Eduard Weber, Bonn, and Ferd. Dümmler, Berlin 1841–50, Vol. 1: pp. 516; Vol. 2.2: pp. 87–88=FGrHist 70 F 120. For a sober (relatively) recent account of the origins of the Samothracian sanctuary and mysteries, see Cole, *Theoi Megaloi*, pp. 5, 10: the early history "is obscure"; the identity of the Samothracian gods and the secrets of their rites is still closed to us. *Cf*. also Maria Rocchi, *Kadmos e Harmonia: Un matrimonio problematico*, "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, Rome 1989, p. 36.

86 *Cf*. Otto Gruppe, *Griechische Mythologie und Religionsgeschichte*, C. H. Beck, Munich 1906, Vol. 1: p. 970. See also Movers, *Die Phönizer*, Vol. 2.2: p. 83, who writes of the myths of the disappearing goddess and, in particular, draws parallels between the disappearance of Europa and the disappearance of Astarte/Isis.

87 Müller, *Prolegomena zu einer wissenschaftlichen Mythologie*, pp. 146–55; *cf*. *idem*, *Orchomenos und die Minyer*, pp. 453–54.

founder of a colony and a Phoenician.[88] Once that was clarified, Müller apportioned the blame for messing things up in the first place. With one foot in the Age of Enlightenment, and not yet as critically distanced from Creuzer as he was to become within five years, in the *Prolegomena* he pointed his finger at some priests of later times who, in pursuit of their own interests, fabricated stories, and at meaning-twisting cicerones.[89] But those fabrications and misinterpretations were easy to clear. A much more serious problem was what became of the legend of Cadmus at the hands of Greek logographers, historians, and grammarians. What logographers did rested on weak and insignificant foundations and was characterized by vagueness. They wove everything together into one coarse tapestry of peoples, where Phoenix, Aegyptus, Danaus, and Cadmus – that is, Phoenicians, Egyptians, Danai, and Cadmeians – were brothers or brothers-in-law and sons of Agenor, whom they held to be essentially identical with the Agenor in Hellanicus. Hellenistic historiographers and grammarians, for their part, felt free to commit "many malicious falsifications" in their recording of Oriental names and words.[90]

However, part of the confusing complexity that a modern European experiences when faced with Greek myths can be attributed not to mischievous ancient literati but to the creativity of the Greek mind. A good case in point is Müller's exegesis of the Agenorid genealogy. This is a genealogy that "links *Hellenen with Asatics and Lybians*." In the beginning of that family tree, as Müller draws it from a number of sources, stands Io. At the other end we meet Europa, Cadmus, Phoenix, and Cilix, as children of Agenor and Telephassa, and the descendants of Aegyptus and Danaus, sons of Belus, Agenor's brother. Belus and Agenor were Libya's sons, and she was the daughter of Epaphus, Io's son with Zeus. The story of Io is a local story from Argos and is "in its basic elements [*Grunbestandtheilen*] ancient Greek."[91] Cadmus, as Müller's reader would know by now, was also a god from Ancient Greece, and it was probably only because he was connected with Europa – whom Homer knew as Phoenix's daughter – that he was made a Phoenician colonist. But Phoenix, too, was actually ancient Greek. The problem that brought these ancient Greek traditions into contact with Asi-

88 Müller, *Orchomenos und die Minyer*, p. 113.

89 *Ibid.*, p. 114.

90 *Ibid.*, *Orchomenos und die Minyer*, pp. 114–15.

91 Müller, *Prolegomena zu einer wissenschaftlichen Mythologie*, p. 182.

atics and Lybians – or, rather, brought the Greeks into contact with Asiatics and Africans through these traditions – lay with the middle links of the genealogy. But all that is in the middle is nothing but an outcome of inferences and analogies that "people" had made. And people drew those parallels, connections, and conclusions no doubt because they thought they were "clarifying."[92] In any case, they interpreted the legends in light of their own life experience. For example, Epaphus, of whom there existed no old Greek legend, was made up by Greek soldiers in Egypt. That is how they pronounced Apis in Greek. In the omnipresent horned goddess Isis they recognized their own horned Io: "Das ist ja *unsre Io*, sagte also der Grieche sogleich." And they made Apis-pronounced-Epaphus Io's son.[93] "Everything happened on its own, through pure visual perception and application of known ideas," that is, it was not consciously invented.[94]

Müller's assumptions about how the mind of the Greek people worked seem quite curious to me. But by making that mind work his way he was able to re-Hellenize old Greek myths. He untied the mythical knots with which the Greek people had tied themselves to the Asiatics and Lybians.

Müller died unexpectedly in 1840, quite young. He had gone to Greece, worked hard among the ruins of the sanctuary at Delphi, and did not survive the heat and fatigue. He had a special predilection for his Greek sun god. Creuzer sent to print the last part of the fourth volume of the third edition of his *Symbolik und Mythologie* in 1843. He regretted Müller's untimely death. In the Preface to this fascicle, however, he briefly spoke of something more uplifting: "I have the satisfaction," he wrote, "to have finished this book at a time when the scholars have at length begun to return to the recognition of the Orient as the final source of most of the Greek and Italic religions and arts."[95] But what Creuzer observed was not really a turning of the tide. Rather, it was the persistence – throughout the nineteenth century and in spite of the growing scepticism – of the view that

92 *Ibid.*, pp. 186–87.

93 Whatever else their disagreements, Müller agreed with Creuzer on this point: Io "als Kuh am Nil mit Zeus den Epaphus (den Apis) zeugt." Creuzer, *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker*, Vol. 4: p. 233.

94 "So weit machte sich Alles von selbst, durch blosse Anschauung und die Anwendung gewohnter Ideen, ganz ohne das Bewusstsein der Erfindung." Müller, *Prolegomena zu einer wissenschaftlichen Mythologie*, p. 184.

95 Creuzer, *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker*, Vol. 4: pp. 477–78.

accepted the historicity of Phoenician settlement in Greece, and the Phoenician origin of the mythical Cadmus and Europa.[96]

Let me cite two examples, both German scholars and contemporaries of Müller and Creuzer. One, the Göttingen professor Karl Hoeck, wrote a three-volume study of the pre-Roman history, mythology, and religion of Crete.[97] The other, Franz Karl Movers, was the author of a no less impressive history of the Phoenicians.

The main aim of Hoeck's book was "to draw historical results out of myths" (and to thereby place the myth within its proper limits).[98] Since he at the same time regarded the relations of Egypt, Phoenicia, and Phrygia to Crete as of primary importance, he dealt with the myth of Europa already in the introduction to his study. And since the abduction of Europa figures in the Phoenician section of the introduction, it is clear at first sight that, for Hoeck, the myth and the heroine were considered of Phoenician origin. But the value of Hoeck's contribution to the study of the myth of Europa lies in detail. His evaluation of the rich literary and iconographical evidence foreshadowed much later critical studies (which, ironically, often disputed the Phoenician origin of Europa). Some of those later authors either did not know Hoek's work or did not acknowledge him. I also cannot do him justice here, but only present a basic outline of his argument.

The older stratum of the myth of Europa – Zeus's abduction of the heroine, which should be separated from the later additions, the search for Europa by Cadmus and other brothers[99] – represented a veiled history of Phoenician expansion into Crete.[100] Agenor appeared as Europa's father only with the logographers, that is, in the later history of the myth, whereas in the older version Europa was Phoenix's daughter. Since Phoenix was a king of Phoenicia – for, in

96 *Cf*. Edwards, *Kadmos the Phoenician*, p. 58.

97 Hoeck's work later sank into oblivion but has now been rediscovered and partly republished by the Greek scholar Antonios Zoes.

98 Karl Hoeck, *Kreta: Ein Versuch zur Aufhellung der Mythologie und Geschichte, der Religion und Vewrfassung dieser Insel, von der ältesten Zeiten bis auf die Römer-Hewrrschaft*, Carl Eduard Rosenbusch, Göttingen 1823–29, Vol. 1: p. VI.

99 "Wenn irgend ein Mythus es nöthig macht, das Ursprüngliche von den spätern Zuthaten zu sondern, und die Auctoritäten wohl zu unterscheiden, so ist diess bey dem gegenwärtigen der Fall." Hoeck, *Kreta*, Vol. 1: p. 85.

100 Hoeck, *Kreta*, Vol. 1: p. 83.

myth, the name of the land is usually transferred to its first king – and, as such, represented Phoenicia, the conclusion was at hand that "Europa comes from Phoenicia."[101] The understanding of the myth of Europa as a lunar myth also pointed to a historical movement by which the Phoenician colonists brought "Phoenician lunar worship to Crete." The newcomers peacefully joined the population of the island and the new worship was united with the existing cult of Zeus: "this is why that god was associated in love with Europa."[102] Finally, the name Hellotis, under which Europa was said to have been known in Crete,[103] was, in Hoeck's opinion, originally Phoenician.[104] The later stratum of the myth of Europa, in turn, preserved the memories of Phoenician colonial activities in the Near East, Aegean Islands, and Thrace. That was clear at first sight.[105]

Movers was probably referring to Müller when he wrote of "some recent mythologists" who held the view that the myth of Europa had been transplanted to Phoenicia by an "arbitrary combination of logographers."[106] Movers himself had little doubt about the Phoenician origins of that myth. The myth of Europa was to be found where the cult of the Sidonian goddess, Astarte, was located.[107] The general opinion of the ancient world, that Europa had Phoenician origins, was more deeply rooted than the "assertion of more recent mythologists that Europa became a 'Phoenician' only because of a wrong explanation of Φοινιξ, her father."[108]

For Movers, Phoenicians and Greeks were in touch with and influenced each other for many centuries. From the twelfth century BC onward, Greek colonists had contacts with Phoenicians in the eastern Mediterranean. From the eighth century onward, Greeks and Phoenicians rubbed shoulders on most of the Mediterranean coasts. In Phoenicia itself, the Greek way of life "exerted an irresist-

101 *Ibid.*, Vol. 1: pp. 89–90.

102 *Ibid.*, Vol. 1: pp. 101–2.

103 See Steph. Byz. *s.v.* Γορτυν. [Stephanus of Byzantium, *Ethnicorvm quae svpersvnt*, ed. A. Meinecke, G. Reimer, Berlin 1849.]

104 Hoeck, *Kreta*, Vol. 1: p. 104.

105 *Ibid.*, Vol. 1: p. 106.

106 Movers 1841–50, 2.2: 83.

107 *Ibid.*, 81–82; see *op. cit.*, 83, for the connection of the religious festival of the disappearance of Europa=Astarte, celebrated in Phoenicia, with the myth of the disappearance of Astarte=Isis.

108 Movers, *Die Phönizer*, Vol. 2.2: p. 83.

ible influence on the barbarians" even before Alexander the Great's conquests. Movers summarized the impact that that history had on Greek religion as follows: In earlier times, Eastern religious ideas were carried from Phoenicia to Greece. There, they were transformed, and as such later returned to their homeland, linking up again with the points from where they had first departed. This resulted in a singular interwovenness of the Oriental and the Hellenic, as exemplified by the myths of Io and Europa, Cadmus and Harmonia.[109]

Preller, three years Movers's younger, was wavering. He reported two interpretations of the legend of Cadmus that were influential in his times. One went back to Herodotus and considered Cadmus an immigrant from the East. Among Preller's contemporaries, Movers was an outspoken supporter of that interpretation. The other interpretation was backed by the authority of K. O. Müller. According to him, both Cadmus's name and his *gestae* "can well be explained *aus dem Griechischen*." Preller was not unsympathetic to Müller's deconstruction, but he did not definitively reject the "Phoenician" version, and kept two Cadmuses, one Greek and one Phoenician, and even the Semitic explanation of Cadmus's name.[110] When Carl Robert some thirty years later revised Preller's book on Greek mythology he took a firm position on the "Phoenician question." The picture of the travelling of myths between Phoenicia and Greece became the inverse of what Movers had suggested.

The way Robert framed the discussion of Cadmus and Europa is most telling. His opening question was: How was the autochthonous Cadmus transformed into an immigrant? The hero was originally an *Autochthon*, but was, in the dominant version of the story, made "an immigrant from the far away East," a Phoenician.[111] For the German mythologist, that was "*merkwürdig*." But no less remarkable (or curious) seems to me his solution to the problem. First came Greek colonization of Ionia. In that enterprise, the Thebans of old had a greater share than other Greeks. In Ionia, they remained true to the memory of their ancestor Cadmus. In that reverence, the Milesians excelled. They traced back to their mythical progenitor their considerable intellectual achievements as well. They

[109] *Ibid*., Vol. 1: pp. 82–83.

[110] L. Preller, *Griechische Mythologie*, 2nd ed., Weidemann, Berlin 1860–61, Vol. 2: pp. 22–23. The myth of Europa, too, has strong Phoenician connections. *Op. cit*., 116.

[111] L. Preller and Carl Robert, *Griechische Mythologie*, 4th ed., reprint, Wiedmann, Berlin 1894–1926, Vol. 2.1: pp. 102, 104.

called their first historian Cadmus, and the original Cadmus was credited with the invention of the alphabet. "But since the Milesains had taken [the alphabet] over from the Phoenicians, Cadmus himself had to become a Phoenician." Moreover, "they did not distinguish this Phoenician Cadmus from the Boeotian, but let him emigrate to Greece, and the myth gave as motivation for this that he had to search for his stolen sister."[112] The role she was given to play in the plot transformed Europa herself. "The Boeotian earth-goddess Europa is now used to bring Cadmus from Phoenicia to Greece, while she is also made to originate from Phoenicia."[113]

Ernst Curtius proposed yet another solution to the Phoenician problem. His ideas on this issue were first published a decade earlier than Preller's book I discussed above, but for the sake of the clarity of my argument, I mention them here. Curtius wrote that the legend of Cadmus was the clearest expression of the memory of all that for which western Greece was indebted to the East. Wherever Cadmus – following the footsteps of the wandering Europa – landed in the West, he appeared as "the genius of a higher way of life [*Lebensordnung*]."[114] He represented to western Greeks the culture that originated in the East.[115] He marked the ending of the innocence and immobility of the patriarchal conditions in Greece.[116] Such a view implied that heroic legends spoke of history[117] and that the true beginnings of Greek civilization were to be found on the eastern shores of the archipelago. From there came Cadmus, Cecrops, Danaus, and Pelops. Those immigrants from the East were the founders of Greek history.[118]

But if the legends of heroes like Cadmus carried the memory of colonization that brought the culture from the East to Greece,[119] that did not mean that the Greeks were in debt to Semitic Phoenicians. The apparent contradiction is resolved if we

112 Preller/Robert, *Griechische Mythologie*, Vol. 2.1, pp. 104–5.

113 *Ibid*., p. 106.

114 Ernst Curtius, *Griechische Geschichte*, Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, Berlin 1857–67, Vol. 1: p. 51.

115 Curtius, *Griechische Geschichte*, Vol. 1: p. 74.

116 "Mit solchen Epochen, wie sie des Kadmos Ankunft darstellt, hört die Unschuld und Ruhe patriarchalischer Zustände auf." Curtius, *Griechische Geschichte*, Vol. 1: p. 75.

117 *Ibid*., p. 49.

118 "Urheber aller griechischen Volksgeschichte." *Ibid*., p. 128.

119 "[D]as Bewusstsein von einer aus Osten durch Colonisation übertragene Cultur." *Ibid*., p. 40.

> assume that those colonists were Hellenes themselves, that they came from the East, yet from a Greek East, where they had, with that receptivity of mind that is a character trait of the Ionian stock, taken up and transformed in Hellenic ways the culture of Oriental peoples in order to transmit it to their racial brothers.[120]

Cadmus is thus not only one of the "founders of all that which is authentically Greek," but a Greek himself.[121] Indeed, only as such could he figure as an originator of Greek culture. Greeks were indebted to Greeks alone, those from the west to those from the east, and their culture was autonomous. What had created confusion was the fact that those Ionian Greeks used to live not only in their homeland but also settled under the Phoenicians in Phoenician colonies, in Lycia and Caria, and in the Delta of Nile. The settlers from the "other side," those heroes who founded cities, "could thus also be called Phoenicians and Egyptians."[122] The actual Phoenicians, however, "the real Canaanites [...] as a nation were held by Hellenes in contempt."[123]

Let me resume a chronological order. Robert's revision of Preller's *Griechische Mythologie* first appeared in the 1890s, when a number of other works relevant to my topic were published as well. In France, Salomon Reinach wrote, among many other things, an influential dismissal of what he called the *mirage oriental*. Victor Bérard singled out Reinach as a *maître* of the "anti-Semitic view of history."[124] But Reinach was not an anti-Semite. On the contrary, his attitude to-

[120] "[D]ie Annahme, dass jene Colonistenm auch Hellenen waren, dass sie aus dem Morgenlande kamen, aber aus einem griechischen Morgenlande, wo sie mit jener Empfänglichkeit des Geistes, die der Characterzug des ionischen Geschlechts ist, die Cultur der orientalischen Völker bei sich aufgenommen und hellenisch umgebildet hatten, um sie so ihren Stammbrüdern zu überliefern." *Ibid.,* pp. 40–41; on that learning process or, rather, Greek appropriation of Phoenician culture, *cf. op. cit.*, pp. 35–36.

[121] Curtius, *Griechische Geschichte*, Vol. 1: p. 40.

[122] *Ibid.*, p. 41. But the Greek settlers from the East, too, could meet hostility from the local population. Thebes was such a case. There, "ostgriechische Bildung am kräftigsten Wurzel gefasst und sich durch volkreiche Niederlassung den Eingeborenen gegenüber am schärfsten augeprägt hat. Darum trägt Kadmos mehr als die gleichartigen Heroen einen framdländischen Character; sein Geschlecht wird von den Nachbarn mit Missgunst und Feindschaft verfolgt." *Op. cit.*, pp. 75–76.

[123] Curtius, *Griechische Geschichte*, Vol. 1: p. 41. French translation, cited in Autran, *"Phéniciens*," p. 6, spoke here of "l'antipathie naturelle des Grecs pour les Sémites."

[124] Bérard, *Les Phéniciens et l'Odyssée*, Vol. 2: p. 15.

ward anti-Semitism seems to have been consistently negative.[125] What about his "view of history"? Bérard, as we have seen, cited Reinach's call for the "recovery of the rights of Europe against the pretensions of Asia."[126] Was that an ant-Semitic programme? It certainly had potential for anti-Semitism. But Reinach himself does not appear to have been leaning in that direction. He did not attribute the "pretensions of Asia" to the Asians. Those pretensions were, for him, a European intellectual malaise. The "recovery of the rights of Europe" was a campaign of the "critical spirit" against that intellectual malaise: an internal European intellectual affair. The *mirage oriental* was an illusion rooted within archaeology, an illusion that held that the first European civilization was formed under Oriental influences. That illusion, Reinach was convinced, could not be defended any longer against the development of historical science, especially in the last decades of the nineteenth century.[127]

Reinach flatly rejected Aryanism. In particular, he denied that there existed a common mythology of the Aryans before their division. All that had been left of the "Indianist School" was "the memory and regret of a sterile debauch of erudition."[128] Closely following archaeological field work in Europe, Reinach then "*absolutely* negated" any influence of the Semitic or Egyptian Orient on central, northern, or western Europe either during the Neolithic or at the beginning of the Metal Ages. "But we have never intended to contest that in the posterior

[125] Let me cite some examples from Reinach's later work: He deplored the death of Muslims and Jews at the hands of the crusaders, Reinach, *Orpheus*, pp. 177, 219. He condemned the persecution of the Jews by Medieval Latin Christians in England, France, Portugal, Germany, Italy, and Austria and, especially, the expulsion of the Jews and Muslims from Spain (*op. cit.*, pp. 220 *f.*, 377). In the Dreyfus affair, he stood on the side of justice (*op. cit.*, p. 400 *ff.*). He certainly did not support the discrimination of Jews and pogroms against them in Eastern Europe and the rise of anti-Semitism in Germany in the 1920s (*op. cit.*, pp. 453–54). He was equally horrified by the banditry of the European conquest of America (*op. cit.*, p. 378) and by the Armenian genocide (*op. cit.*, p. 451 *ff.*). Here, he especially deplored that the United States did not act to prevent the genocide, which was in its power, but "flatly refused to render that service to humanity" (*op. cit.*, p. 453).

[126] Reinach, *Le mirage oriental*, p. 3.

[127] *Ibid.*, pp. 1–3.

[128] *Ibid.*, pp. 7–8. Not surprisingly, Reinach, here, cited "un livre admirable" by Otto Gruppe, who criticized Adalbert Kuhn and Max Müller's mythology at length. See Otto Gruppe, *Die griechischen Culte und Mythen in ihren Beziehung zu den orientalischen Religionen. Erster Band: Einleitung*, Teubner, Leipzig 1887, pp. 79–151. Gruppe, however, admitted Semitic influences on the archaic Greece.

period, which is that of the Phoenician maritime trade – from about the 13th century BC – Western civilization had become, to a degree, a tributary to that of the Orientals."[129] The influence of Egypt and Assyria on eastern Europe was a different question. Here, there was no room for absolute statements: "the truth ought to be searched for in nuances." Generally speaking, "no well-informed archaeologist can put in doubt the influence of Egypt, Chaldea, Phoenicia on the ancient civilizations of Greece and Italy." Yet one had to determine the nature of that influence, and the date.

Reinach asserted that the region in question was one where, from a remote past, European, Asiatic, and Egyptian influences met and blended their elements.[130] In that area, which Reinach called the primeval Aegean – and which could be regarded as a common civilization, whose horizon were the western limits of Europe[131] – there was a constant back-and-forth, receiving and giving, flux and reflux, of cultural influences.[132] Reinach mocked those who imagined the forward movement of a civilization like the march of an army that, departing with its arms and baggage from the point where it is encamped, advances to another point either by a single route or by converging routes.[133] Rejecting that militaristic model typical of the Aryanists, and embracing that of an unceasing exchange

[129] Reinach, *Le mirage oriental*, p. 34. In his later work, admitting Eastern and Egyptian influences, Reinach wrote, for example, that an Egyptian form of worship spread, under Greek domination and the Roman Empire, from "Asia Minor to Gaul and Britain." *Ibid*., p. 30. "By the intermediary of the Bible and Greek science, we are the heirs of the Babylonian religion." (*Op. cit*., p. 41.) There were parallels between Phoenician and Greek divinities, and the worship of the Syrian goddess spread into Greece and Italy. (*Op. cit*., pp. 42–46.) Greece, very rich herself in gods and heroes, "showed herself hospitable to the gods of the stranger. Egypt, Assyria, Syria, Phoenicia and Persia presented divinities to her." (*Op. cit*., p. 95.) *Cf*. also Reinach's favourable references to Fontenelle: He does not polemicize with Fontenelle's view that the Greeks borrowed from the Phoenicians and Egyptians, and misunderstood what they borrowed due to their ignorance of foreign languages. The fables are "a history of the errors of the human mind," Reinach cited Fontenelle, who continued: "It is not science to fill one's head with all the extravagancies of the Phoenicians and the Greeks, but [...] to know what led the Phoenicians and the Greeks into these extravagancies." (*Op. cit*., p. 14.)

[130] Reinach, *Le mirage oriental*, p. 40.

[131] *Ibid*., pp. 51, 54.

[132] *Ibid*., pp. 54, 64, 73.

[133] "La marche d'une civilisation ressemble bien plutôt à celle de la mer envahissant une plage au moment de flux: elle se produit par ondes successives, avec un va-et-vient continuel qui donne naissance à d'innombrable courants." *Ibid*., p. 55. I find it hard to accommodate

among civilizations, and drawing on the recent discoveries of archaeologists in Europe, Reinach was able to argue that prehistoric Europe exerted an influence on the Near Eastern civilizations. Moreover, he seems to have been inclined to accept the conclusion that the primitive Aegean civilization was of European ethnic origin (but not Aryan). Consequently, the "Oriental layer" in Greece and in the Aegean Archipelago was "comprised between two European horizons, one corresponding to the primeval Aegean (Trojan) civilization, the other to that of historic Greece."[134] Between the latter two layers there was another European stratum – the Mycenaean[135] – and below it another Oriental layer, sandwiched between "the weakening of the Mycenaean civilization and the Greek renaissance that followed the Dorian Middle Ages." Such layering of history led Reinach to propose that Oriental influences occurred only at times of crisis or degeneration of the "European current."[136] The "invasion of Oriental cults in Greece and Italy, crowned by the victory of Christianity," was thus a symptom, not the cause, of the decline of the Ancient world.[137] And the idea that the Semitic civilization was the mother of all civilizations was linked to Christianity: it was "as old as the Christian science in the West."[138]

Reinach's attack on the *mirage oriental* thus had a time-specific secularist edge. But in his countering the belief that the first civilization of Greece was entirely Oriental,[139] Reinach saw himself as following the pioneering efforts of K. O. Müller, a declared enemy of the Orientalist (hypo)thesis, whom he saw as "always ahead of his time."[140] Reinach also saw himself as joining those of his contemporaries for whom Schliemann's excavations had made it possible to cease arguing about the nature of archaic Greece *in abstracto*.[141]

---

this image to Bernal's characterization of Reinach as one who favoured military analogies. Bernal, *The Fabrication of Ancient Greece*, p. 371.

134 Reinach, *Le mirage oriental*, p. 69.

135 On the European origin of the Mycenaean civilization, see Reinach, *Le mirage oriental*, pp. 40, 47–48, 53, 63, 64 *ff*.

136 *Ibid*., pp. 69–70.

137 *Ibid*., p. 70.

138 *Ibid*., p. 2.

139 *Ibid*., p. 40.

140 *Ibid*., pp. 5, 40, 42.

141 *Ibid*., p. 42. Autran, "*Phéniciens*," p. 136, mentioned the reaction – based on archaeological and epigraphical documentation – "contre le verbalisme inévitable d'une formation trop exclusivement littéraire."

The next year, in 1894, Beloch's very influential article on Phoenicians in the Aegean appeared. Astour, as I have mentioned, singled out Julius Beloch as the originator of the reaction against admitting Semitic influences on Ancient Greece.[142] But Beloch, an outsider to the German academic system who lived and taught in Italy, was not best placed to play the role Astour attributed to him. In fact, Beloch's views – expressed with a characteristic clarity – were not universally shared either in his fatherland or in his adopted country.[143] Astour admitted Beloch's "unusual sharpness" but considered his arguments "very weak,"[144] and his presentation of Beloch's argument was not the fairest imaginable.

Beloch denied that there had existed extensive Phoenician trade with Greece in the "earlier Mycenaean period," before the eighth and seventh centuries, when it was at its height. He denied Phoenician colonization of Greece and an early chronology of Phoenician trading activity in the Mediterranean, and argued that regular Phoenician trade in the Aegean Sea was posterior to the establishment of Greek settlements on the islands and on the coast of Asia Minor.[145] He was a materialist; he wanted archaeological evidence of an early Phoenician presence in Greece, and there was none.[146] He represented Herodotus as one who had built his history on Homeric epic and maintained that it was mistaken to regard

142 See n. 22 in this text.

143 See Arnaldo Momigliano, "Julius Beloch," in *idem*, *Studies on Modern Scholarship*.

144 Astour, *Hellenosemitica*, p. xiii.

145 Karl Julius Beloch, "Die Phoeniker am aegaeischen Meer," *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie*, N.S. 49 (1894), pp. 115, 132.

146 A hundred years later, the available archaeological evidence seems to suggest that the Phoenician colonization, properly speaking, can be dated from the eighth to sixth centuries BC; what went before (from the twelfth to the eighth centuries) is, as a compromise solution, called the pre-colonial stage. Maria Eugenia Aubet, *The Phoenicians and the West: Politics, Colonies and Trade*, transl. M. Turton, 2nd ed., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2001, p. 199. *Cf*. Edward Lipiński, *Dieux et déesses de l'univers phénicien et punique*, Studia Phoenicia XV, Uitgeverij Peeters and Department Oosterse Studies, Leuven 1995, pp. 27–28: exploration and merchant navigation from the tenth to the eighth centuries, the establishment of trading posts and then colonies from the eighth to the sixth centuries. This position was strongly supported by Muhly. See especially James D. Muhly, "Homer and the Phoenicians: The relations between Greece and the Near East in the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age," *Berytus* 19 (1970), p. 46. Miriam S. Balmuth, "Phoenician Chronology in Sardinia: Prospecting, Trade and Settlement before 900 BC," in *Numismatique et histoire économique phéniciennes et puniques: Actes du Colloque tenu à Louvain-la-Neuve, 13-16 Mai 1987*, ed. T. Hackens and Gh. Moucharte, Studia phoenicia IX, Université Catholique de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve 1992, p. 226, has argued for a "sporadic Phoenician

the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* as works of a poet who had set himself the task of describing the time of the Trojan war.[147] For Beloch, it was no longer possible to read Homer as a historian.

The cornerstone of Herodotus's narrative was his interpretation of the myths of Io and Europa, Medea and Helen. Correctly understood, those myths explained the beginnings of what for Herodotus was the history of his times. Astour wrote that "Greek myths placed at the beginning of the Heroic Age in Greece such characters as the Phoenician Cadmos in Thebes, the Phoenician Europa in Crete, the Egyptian Danaos in Argos," that "Herodotos reported on ancient Phoenician colonies in Boeotia and on the Aegean islands," that Thucydides wrote about Phoenician settlements in those islands – and that up to the second half of the nineteenth century most believed that there was a "historical reality behind these reports."[148] Beloch did not. Neither did he believe that historical reality was accessible through such reports. Yet he did not refrain from citing Greek religion or epics when that furthered his cause. The Homeric Olympus did not include a single Semitic god.[149] In his own time, Beloch observed, Aphrodite had generally been cleansed of the "stain of Semitism [Makel des Semitismus]" that defiled her for so long. The Greek epic said nothing of Phoenician colonies in the Aegean Sea and Homer in particular had no knowledge of them.[150] All such reports were of a later date – later inferences based on myths and place names – and stood condemned by the silence of the earliest sources.[151]

Beloch, however, preferred to say more rather than letting silence speak. He made an effort to deconstruct the myth of Cadmus and Europa. Beloch "clung to a naturalistic interpretation of the Greek divinities and found solar cults everywhere."[152] Thus it must not have been too hard to declare Phoenix "a form of

presence on Sardinian soil" by the tenth century, and their "continuous presence" by the ninth century.

147 Beloch, "Die Phoeniker am aegaeischen Meer," p. 111.

148 Astour, *Hellenosemitica*, p. xiii.

149 The opposite was claimed, in the same year, by Bérard: "Presque tout l'Olympe grec est peut-être d'origine sémitique." Bérard, *De l'origine des cultes arcadiens*, p. 364.

150 Beloch "Die Phoeniker am aegaeischen Meer," pp. 126–27.

151 *Ibid*., pp. 127, 131.

152 Momigliano, *Studies on Modern Scholarship*, p. 108. *Cf*. Karl Julius Beloch, *Griechische Geschichte*, 2nd ed., Karl J. Trübner, Strassburg, and Walter de Gruyter, Berlin and Leipzig 1912–27, Vol. 1: p. 146 *ff*.

sun-god" – corresponding to the meaning of the name: the "blood-red" – and also an "authentic Hellenic god," venerated in Crete for a really long time. He was eventually degraded into a hero and as such appeared in the *Iliad*: as Achilles's educator and Europa's father. His native country was Φοινικη, "the blood-red morning sky." When he was taken from the sky and placed on the earth his name was transferred to the lands in the East, first to Caria[153] and then to the Syrian coast. As a result, already in Homeric epic, the Sidonians were named Phoenicians (while they, in their own language, called themselves Sidonians).[154] Once the greatest part of the Greeks had ceased to be aware of Phoenix's divine nature, the equation of the old god with the eponym of Phoenicians followed by itself. The equation was made easier because the Greeks had "precisely then acquainted themselves more closely with the ancient culture of the Orient" and were striving to link their own *Gesittung* with the ancient East.[155] Phoenician origin was then attributed (*angedichtet*) to all of Phoinix's kin, and "when later historical reflection was awoken, they came to be seen as mythical representatives of the Phoenician settlements."[156]

Beloch passed over Minos, "der gutgriechische Gott," and turned to Cadmus, Phoenix's brother.[157] Most of what had been said about the Phoenician origins of Greek cities referred to Cadmus. The founding of Thebes was the most famous case in point. If the case for the Semitic origins of Cadmus were rejected, the Greekness of Greece would be saved. Beloch appears to have thought that he could make his point by simply ridiculing those of the Moderns who had "not been at a loss for a Semitic etymology" of Cadmus, an etymology that would make Cadmus the "Man from the East." But for the Phoenicians, Beloch stated the obvious: Cadmus was not an *Ostmann* [easterner]. Rather, since he set off for

153 Reference to Corinna frag. 27 = Athen. IV, 174 *f*.

154 This point is substantiated with a reference to Eduard Meyer, *Die Zeit der ägyptischen Grossmacht*, Pt. 1 of Vol. 2 of *Geschichte des Altertums*, Cotta, Stuttgart 1928, pp. 229, 324. More recently, the point was made in Muhly, "Homer and the Phoenicians," p. 27: "The Phoenicians, in their own inscriptions, never refer to themselves as 'Phoenicians', nor does anyone else in the Near East so designate them. If any designation is used it is that of 'Sidonians' [...] Only the Greek sources refer to Phoenicia and Phoenicians."

155 Referring to Müller's *Orchomenos*. Müller, *Orchomenos und die Minyer*, p. 111 (not 112, as in Beloch), remarked that "gerade die Homerische Zeit der Anfang ist des Herüberkommens Phönikischer Künste und Religionsideen nach Griechenland."

156 Beloch, "Die Phoeniker am aegaeischen Meer," pp. 127–28.

157 *Ibid*., p. 128.

the west, he was a *Westmann* [westerner]. Or "should we believe that the Greeks gave him a Semitic name? Those ancient Thebans must have been learned men indeed, for they understood even the Canaanite!"[158] Beloch expressed his irony openly, for he believed that the time when such philological *Spilereien* were taken seriously had passed.[159]

In England, Arnold Wycombe Gomme had little tolerance for academic dallying. He counted himself in the majority of modern scholars who had "lightly put aside [...] as unimportant" what he called the "Phoenician theory." By that he meant the "theory that Cadmeans were Phoenicians." From the fifth century BC onward, Gomme wrote, maintaining that Phoenicians had colonized parts of Greece was "a firmly established and, as far as we know, universally accepted tradition."[160] For Gomme, that tradition was no longer binding. He argued his case very well, in two stages. He first published a polemic against Victor Bérard, whom he characterized as wanting to bring "the Kadmeians into his system of a Phoenician thalassocracy."[161] Gomme criticized Bérard's use of ancient sources. The literary evidence cited by Bérard, Gomme asserted, did not prove that one can see Boeotia as the land through which important international trade routes passed. The brunt of Gomme's argument, however, was geographical. Imputing that Bérard had not visited Boeotia and only knew the country from books,[162] while he himself had first-hand knowledge, Gomme concluded that the geography of Boeotia was unfavourable to trade. There was "nothing within the country itself to tempt either the inhabitants to the sea, or through-traders to the land."[163] The trade of the East that would reach Greece was shut off from Boeotia

158 Similarly Dombrowski, *Der Name Europa*, p. 16, with regard to the proposed Semitic origin of the name Europa: "Warum sollten die Griechen ein semitischen Wort benutzen, wenn sie dessen Inhalt durch ein eigenes leicht ausdrücken konnten?"

159 Beloch, "Die Phoeniker am aegaeischen Meer," pp. 128–29.

160 A. W. Gomme, "The Legend of Cadmus and the Logographi," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 33 (1913), p. 53.

161 A. W. Gomme, "The Topography of Boeotia and the Theories of M. Bérard," *The Annual of the British School at Athens* 18 (1911–12), p. 190.

162 Gomme, "The Topography of Boeotia," p. 193 n. 2. Bérard, for his part, was proud to point out in the introduction to his thesis that he walked the land he wrote about (Bérard, *De l'origine des cultes arcadiens*, pp. 3–5), and found Gomme insulting. Insulting enough to respond a whole fifteen years later. See Bérard, *Les Phéniciens et l'Odyssée*, Vol. 2: pp. 356–58 n. 1. He had not responded earlier "estimant qu'une discussion suppose, de part et d'autre, un minimum de bonne foi."

163 Gomme, "The Topography of Boeotia," p. 206.

by the island of Euboea.[164] Moreover, there was the curious circumstance that, while "tradition (at least from the fifth century onwards) placed Phoenicians in Thebes, it has nothing to say of their existence in any of the coastal towns." That, Gomme pressed his argument, was clearly strange. "For how did Phoenicians rule and trade in Thebes, unless they held also the ports and the extremities of the various isthmic routes?"[165] In short, geography lends no support to seeing Boeotia as a crossroads of trading routes and Thebes as a centre of international trade, and thus to what Gomme called the Phoenician theory.

In a complementary article, Gomme analysed the literary sources bearing on the question of the "Cadmeans as Phoenicians." That second article has recently been characterized as "perhaps the most important contribution to the subject made by any modern scholar." Written early in the last century, it "still remains the most thorough assessment of the early literary evidence that has been attempted."[166] Of direct importance for my subject is that Gomme's examination pays a great deal of attention to the myth of Europa. Right at the beginning of the article Gomme stated that "bound up" with that question of Cadmus's Phoenician origin "is that of the first connection of Cadmus with Europa."[167] In that sense, the myth of Europa is of central importance for the "Phoenician theory."

Gomme's analysis of the chronological development of the story of Cadmus in the first part of his article led to the conclusion that "it is not till the fifth century [BC] that we hear of the Phoenician theory, or of the connection between Cadmus and Europa."[168] As much as one can tell from the surviving sources, that connection was made by the logographers and Herodotus. Almost all the elements of the story of Cadmus and Europa that we know from mythographers were in place with Herodotus and Hellanicus.[169] But the logographers and Herodotus did not simply transmit earlier traditions, rendering epics into prose. They systematized them, and systematized them with their own agendas, in

164 *Ibid*., p. 207.
165 *Ibid*., p. 209.
166 Edwards, *Kadmos the Phoenician*, p. 55. For Edward's thorough critique of Gomme, see *op. cit*., pp. 65–75.
167 Gomme, "The Legend of Cadmus," p. 53.
168 *Ibid*., pp. 71–72.
169 *Ibid*., p. 65.

correspondence with their own inquiries and learned theories.[170] That is to say, they altered the tradition. The "Phoenician theory" was a fruit of that alteration.

Gomme's conclusion has a touch of ambiguity. According to the "Phoenician theory," the gods of the Greeks "had existed thousands of years in Egypt before their supposed birth in Greece," and the Theban royal house was Semitic. That invented theory brought Greece "into touch with the old civilisations of the East, to infer extensive early borrowings of customs from Egypt from the later borrowing of beliefs by Pythagoras and the earlier Pherecydes." Gomme denied the authority of tradition to that theory. Moreover, the theory was "probably in nearly all particulars incorrect." But it was "fundamentally true." It "implied that Greece was not a specially chosen nation marked off from all others."[171]

I miss the air of such liberality in Francis Vian, who "has maintained substantially the same opinions as Gomme with regard to the genuineness of the tradition of Kadmos's Phoenician origin, but who has put forward additional reasons for not accepting it."[172] Vian, a professor at Clermont, published an impressive study in the early 1960s in which he rejected the Semitization of Cadmus and Europa. Bernal has credited him with having elaborated "the most determinedly Aryan interpretation of the Kadmeian legend."[173]

In his study, Vian focuses on Cadmus, but dealing with the myth of Europa as well was unavoidable. From a certain point in time, Vian knew, the stories of Cadmus and Europa cannot be separated in our historical sources.[174] As Cadmus's kin, Europa is of key importance in interpreting both the myth and the leg-

170 For a detailed argument demonstrating that those logographers and Herodotus were unreliable authorities due to their methods and obscure reasons for their theories, see the second part of the article, *Ibid*., p. 223 *ff*.

171 *Ibid*., pp. 244–45.

172 Edwards, *Kadmos the Phoenician*, pp. 75–76. Edwards, *op. cit*., pp. 76–86, finds Vian's additional evidence less than convincing.

173 Bernal, *The Fabrication of Ancient Greece*, p. 408. It may be of some interest to note that James Muhly, whom Bernal has depicted as a leading opponent of Astour's *Hellenosemitica* and a proponent of the "Aryan model" (Bernal, *op. cit*., pp. 421–22), addressed a similar critique to Vian.

174 "On ne peut [...] séparer le problème de Cadmos de celui d'Europe." Francis Vian, *Les origines de Thèbes: Cadmos et les Spartes*, Klincksieck, Paris 1963, p. 56.

end of Cadmus,[175] whereas Cadmus himself is central to any attempt to establish or deny Phoenician settlements in Greece. If his Oriental origins are not proven, or at least asserted as likely, the Phoenicians in Greece are no more than a "mirage."[176] For Vian, Cadmus was made an Oriental, but his Semitization has never been fully accomplished.[177] If Europa is both a Phoenician and Cadmus's relative, she serves as evidence of Cadmus's Oriental background. But the kinship of Cadmus and Europa is attested to quite late, and Europa herself at first appears as geographically indeterminate. In the *Iliad*, she is the daughter of *a* Phoenix, which does not prove her Phoenician origin since one of Homer's Phoenixes is "purely Greek." Asius's Phoenix, too, can be seen as belonging within the Hellenic world. His wife, with whom he had two daughters, Europa and Astypalaea, was herself the daughter of the Aetolian King Oineus, and Astypalaea's son Ankaios became the king of Samos.[178] It is only in the pseudo-Hesiodic *Catalogues of Women* that Europa is Phoenix's daughter and Phoenix is an Easterner, the father of Phineus, whose mother Cassiepeia – also Europa's mother – is Arabus's daughter and a descendant of Belus.[179] The Semitization of Phineus is "necessarily a corollary to the Semitization of Cadmus and Europa."[180]

Half a century before Vian's *Origines*, the Semitization of Europa was rejected by René Dussaud.[181] I am mentioning him not because he introduced new argu-

---

175 For the distinction, *cf*. Vian, *Les origines de Thèbes*, p. 51.

176 Cf. Vian, *Les origines de Thèbes*, p. 52. Edwards, *Kadmos the Phoenician*, p. 76 n. 68, pointed out that the word used by Vian has a history going back to Reinach.

177 "Sa sémitisation est d'ailleurs toujours restée imparfaite." Vian, *Les origines de Thèbes*, p. 54.

178 *Ibid*., p. 56. See Asius frag. 7 Davies. See G. L. Huxley, *Greek Epic Poetry from Eumelos to Panyassis*, Faber and Faber, London 1969, p. 198, for reservations regarding Asius's making Oineus an autochthonous Samian. In Apollodorus *Library* II,i,5, Oineus was the son of Aegyptus. See also Movers, *Die Phönizer*, Vol. 2.2: p. 78, for whom Asius provides evidence that the myth of Europa was to be found in regions where, "im hohem Althertume," people of Lycian and Carian origin mingled with Phoenicians. "So ist denn auch der Europamythos da local, wo Karier in der Vorzeit wohnten," like in Samos. Astypalaea was the eponym of the Carian capital city at Samos.

179 Merkelbach-West frag. 140 [*Fragmenta hesiodea*., ed. R. Merkelbach and M. L. West, Clarendon, Oxford 1967].

180 Vian, *Les origines de Thèbes*, p. 57.

181 E.g., René Dussaud, *Les civilisations préhelléniques dans le bassin de la Mer Égée*, 2nd ed., Librairie Paul Geuthner, Paris 1914, p. 390. Dussaud later, with the evidence unearthed at Ras Shamra, accepted – moreover, was the first to note – a similarity between an Ugaritic myth and the story of Europa. See Edwards, *Kadmos the Phoenician*, p. 60. He also shifted

ments (he did not), but because he clearly outlined the logic of the anti-Semitic argument. Of critical importance for accepting or rejecting Semitic influences on early Greece is the legend of Cadmus. If one can maintain that Cadmus was of Semitic origin, one can also argue that, at an early stage of its history, Greece was under Semitic influence. Cadmus's Semitism, in turn, is most often deduced from his family ties with Europa, the mythical Phoenician princess. In Dussaud's view, Europa is the anchor that holds Cadmus tied to the Semitic world. A very radical way of cutting that tie would be to negate Europa's Semitism. That is what Dussaud actually did. Since "Europa is not a Semitic deity," he wrote, "the legend of Cadmus loses its principal point of support in the Semitic terrain."[182]

From at least the early nineteenth century onward, when Karl Otfried Müller spelled it out,[183] the legend of Cadmus was central to the discussion about the relationship between Greece and the Near East. American archaeologist James Muhly, for example, stated that very clearly when he wrote that "[a]ny discussion of the relations between Greece and Phoenicia must deal with the figure of Cadmus and the introduction of the art of writing."[184] On the basis of archaeological and epigraphical evidence, Muhly denied that "Cadmus the Phoenician belongs in the Mycenaean or Homeric worlds." That, however, did not entail, Muhly added in disagreement with his older contemporary Vian, denying "the presence of oriental elements in Greek civilization."[185]

The problem for Muhly lay in problematic usages of mythology in attempts to prove early Semitic influences on Greece. In his critical opinion, "such discussions usually deal only with later mythological speculations, speculations which are often forced into some modern Procrustean bed and are frequently

his position on the Cadmus legend and became inclined to see it as having a historical basis. The legend "s'explique le mieux comme celle d'un group venu du continent grec et s'infiltrant en Phénicie, y demeurant un temps, puis rentrant en Grèce et y apportant les techniques nouvelles, notament l'écriture." Dussaud, "Victor Bérard," p. 394. The migrants from the East, here, are Greeks, not Semites, and Dussaud insisted on this point in his subsequent writings. See Edwards, *Kadmos the Phoenician*, p. 60.

182 Dussaud, *Les civilisations préhelléniques*, p. 390.

183 See Müller, *Orchomenos und die Minyer*, p. 109. The work first appeared in 1820.

184 Muhly, "Homer and the Phoenicians," p. 38.

185 That precisely was "the mistake made by Francis Vian who, in his determination to make everything 'Indo-European', has attempted to westernize even such a patently oriental character as the monster Typhon." Muhly, "Homer and the Phoenicians," p. 41.

unworthy of serious consideration."[186] Muhly himself understood Cadmus as essentially a latter-day – that is, post-Mycenaean – invention: as an "artificial creation who simply personifies the eastern elements in Greek civilization." Like Gomme long before him, Muhly argued that Cadmus played "only a minor role in Greek mythology before the fifth century BC"[187] Homer mentioned Cadmus once in the *Odyssey* and Cadmeians several times in both the *Odyssey* and *Iliad*. But whereas "[m]ost ancient Greek authors who dealt with the problem regarded Cadmus as the one who introduced the Greeks to the art of writing" and called the letters of their alphabet "Phoenician letters," Homer had known "nothing of Cadmus and the art of writing" and made "no reference to any Phoenician or oriental connections of Cadmus."[188] As Homer "makes it perfectly clear," Cadmus's "connections with Thebes went back into the Bronze Age," since "prior to the great war known as the Seven Against Thebes, the inhabitants of that city were known as Cadmeians." But that association "has nothing to do" with either the introduction of the art of writing or the Europa cycle. The "Phoenician letters" and Europa were later additions "and have nothing to do with Mycenaean or Homeric contacts with Phoenicia."[189]

Unlike Dussaud, Muhly did not engage in disputing Europa's Semitism. He elegantly pushed the myth aside. For his part, Dussaud, who argued that Europa was not a "Semitic deity," had to substantiate his claim. He did so by finding faults – "errors" and "confusion" – with those who were of the opposite opinion. The charge of confusion was not new. It had already been made by K. O. Müller, and Dussaud acknowledged his debt to the German scholar. According to Müller, as adopted by Dussaud, the confusion stemmed from reading the *Iliad*, where the Greek hero Phoenix was cited as the father of Europa and, "on account of that," of Cadmus. Cadmus was thus held to be Phoenician.[190] The point seems to be that Cadmus had nothing to do with that Phoenix and thus with Europa. But since Europa was authoritatively – by Homer himself – called Phoenix's daughter, she could be cleansed of her assumed Semitism by prop-

[186] Muhly, "Homer and the Phoenicians," p. 38. Of the Procrustean modernizers, Muhly singled out Astour.

[187] *Ibid*., p. 41.

[188] *Ibid*., pp. 38–40.

[189] *Ibid*., p. 41.

[190] He was attributed "la qualité de phénicien." Dussaud, *Les civilisations préhelléniques*, p. 391. The reference is to Müller, *Orchomenos und die Minyer*, p. 112 ff.

erly explaining who was her father. Indeed, in Dussaud's view, the Semitizing error was rooted in the acceptance of too narrow an understanding of the term *phoinix*.[191] The term was of Greek origin, he argued, and must have been used for the population of the Aegean before it designated the maritime peoples of the Syrian coast.[192]

This assertion reminds one of Reinach's views summarized above in this article. It is, in fact, part of the broader and often intense debates about the meaning and origin of the word Phoenix. Since those debates bear, however marginally, on our understanding of the myth of Europa, I need to mention them, even if only very briefly.

The most common approach shared by the Aryanists, philo-Hellenes, Euro-puritans, and anti-Semites taking part in the debates is their seeking to prove that Phoenix was a Greek hero and a Greek name or, at the very least, not a Semitic name.[193] A complementary strategy is to loosen the definition of "Phoenicians" so as to include, at its most inclusive, the populations of all the Aegean, Crete, and Near-Eastern coastal regions.[194] Whereas the Hellenization of Phoenix (and his *offspring*) excludes Phoenicians from Greece; the vague and inclusive definition neutralizes them. Charles Autran, for example, whom Victor Bérard characterized as a vulgarizer of Reinach's "anti-Semitic view of history" and dismissed his work as a gimcrack building,[195] was able to admit a Phoenician presence in the Greek world without causing upset. For Bérard, the Phoenicians were "these

---

191 In a footnote, Dussaud also refuted "certains repprochements onomastiques inacceptable" regarding the name Europa. That refutation was no more than a reference to A. J. Reinach's review of a number of books on Crete in *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 60 (1909), pp. 226–247, specifically to pp. 246-47, and an indication that Gruppe's *Griechische Mythologie und Religionsgeschichte* ought to be criticized on account of "une conception en partie inexacte de la mythologie phénicienne." Dussaud, *Les civilisations préhelléniques*, p. 390 n. 2.

192 Dussaud, *Les civilisations préhelléniques*, pp. 390–91.

193 "[N]i sémitique ni grec": Autran, *"Phéniciens*," p. 42. *Cf. op. cit.*, p. 52 *ff.*; René Dussaud, "Victor Bérard. –*Le nom des Phéniciens*," *Syria* 8 (1927).

194 Raymond Weill, "Phéniciens, Égéens et Hellènes dans la Méditerranée primitive," *Syria* 2 (1921), p. 121, for example, described Cadmus the "Phoenician" as "créto-égéo-asianique." Autran, *"Phéniciens*," p. 14 n. 1, described the Aegean as "caro-lyco-cilicien-crétois." *Cf.* Edwards, *Kadmos the Phoenician*, p. 57.

195 Bérard, *Les Phéniciens et l'Odyssée*, Vol. 2: pp. 15, 30.

Semites of Tyre and Sidon and Byblos."[196] For Autran, they were not Semites.[197] To be precise: The Phoenicians who made an impact on the early Aegean civilization were not Semites, whereas the Phoenicians of the historical period, that is, the population of the Semitic Canaan on the Syrian coast (and the Semitic world in general) did not contribute in the slightest to the formation of early Greece. Even though the Greece of the archaic Mediterranean world – that is, the Greece embedded in the "broad and cosmopolitan culture of Asia prolonged into the sea" – was not "pure," its unavoidable impurity was clear of Semitism.[198] In short: "Nothing Semitic in Greece."[199]

In the first half of the twentieth century, another theory led to the same conclusion – the theory that "Phoenician" in Greek myths usually meant "Minoan Cretan." In this formulation, the theory was published in the first edition of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* in 1949.[200] Forty years earlier, H. R. Hall wrote: "No doubt the whole Kadmos series of legends, connected with Thebes in Boeotia, has nothing whatever to do with the Semites: the Kadmeian Φοινικες, the 'Red Men', were Aegeans, probably Cretan colonists [...]. We may dismiss from history these Phoenicians at Thebes, where their position has always seemed slightly absurd."[201]

Also working toward non-Semitic conclusions was a theory that narrowed the term Phoenician, arguing that Φοινικη originally meant Carian and was only later extended beyond Asia Minor to cover Phoenicia.[202] Still another theory suggested that "Phoenicia originally meant Illyria, that Kadmos was an Illyrian

196 Victor Bérard, *Did Homer Live?,* transl. B. Rhys, E. P. Dutton, New York 1931, p. 8.

197 Autran, *"Phéniciens"*; Charles Autran, *La Grèce et l'Orient ancien, à propos d'*Ephèse et Claros, recherches sur les sanctuiares et les cultes de l'Ionie du Nord*, par Ch. Picard*, P. Geuthner, Paris 1824. (Extract from *Babyloniaca, études de philologie assyro-babylonienne* 8 (1924), Nos. 3–4, p. 174, made clear that the very inclusive collective term *asianique* "exclut le sémitique.")

198 Autran, *La Grèce et l'Orient ancien*, p. 139.

199 This is how Weill, "Phéniciens, Égéens et Hellènes," p. 121, summarized Autran.

200 *S. v.* "Phoenicians." The author of the entry was A. R. Burn. See Edwards 1979, 57.

201 H. R. Hall, "The discoveries in Crete and their relation to the history of Egypt and Palestine," *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology* 31 (1909), cited in Edwards, *Kadmos the Phoenician*, p. 56.

202 For details and criticism, see Edwards, *Kadmos the Phoenician*, pp. 84 n. 78, 92 n. 84, 113 n. 119.

hero and that there was an early Illyrian immigration to Boeotia."[203] The theory does not seem to have won many followers, even though the mythical presence of Cadmus in Illyria cannot be disputed and has been sufficiently discussed by scholars.[204] No more popular is a more recent theory that linked Cadmus to the Pelasgian tribes that migrated from Illyria to Thebes.[205]

These and such theories affect the myth of Europa and debates about the geographical or, rather, ethnic origin of the heroine only indirectly. Of more direct import was Lesky's attempt in the 1920s to explain the name of Hellenes as rooted at Dodona.[206] The name of "the people who were called to become the makers of the West," he argued, could be derived from the fragmentary knowledge we have of the powerful cultic center at Dodona, where one of the deities venerated was Europa.[207]

The Myth of Europa and the Frontiers of Europe

The interpretations I have discussed thus far are all primarily concerned with the question of origins. In those interpretations, the geographical and ethnic origin of Europa is an element in determining the nature of ancient Greek and modern European civilization. But the myth of Europa has implications for our understanding of history – and for our understanding of ourselves through history – not only as a myth about bloodlines. Of equal importance is the myth of Europa as a myth about frontiers.

A French historian has remarked that Europa, Cadmus, Phoenix, and Cilix were to be seen as geography translated into myths: "géographie mise an mythes." The myths in question concerned Crete, continental Greece (Thebes), the terri-

[203] G. Bonfante, "The name of the Phoenicians," *Classical Philology* 36 (1941), No. 1, cited in Edwards, *Kadmos the Phoenician*, p. 57.

[204] Cf. Vian, *Les origines de Thèbes*, p. 132; Edwards, *Kadmos the Phoenician*, p. 113 n. 119. In John Wilkes, *The Illyrians*, Blackwell, Oxford 1992, Bonfante is not mentioned. For Cadmus in Illyria, see *op. cit*., pp. 98–99; Marjeta Šašel Kos, "Cadmus and Harmonia in Illyria," *Arheološki vestnik* 44 (1993).

[205] M. V. Sakellariou, *La migration grecque en Ionie*, Centre d'études d'Asie mineure, Athens 1958, pp. 369–75; *cf*. Edwards, *Kadmos the Phoenician*, p. 57.

[206] Albin Lesky, "Hellos-Hellotis," Pt. 2–3, *Wiener Studien* 46 (1928), pp. 115 *ff*., especially 126.

[207] Lesky, "Hellos-Hellotis," p. 129.

tory or territories of which Phoenix was the eponym, and Cilicia.[208] Many myths are about geography, and one can certainly learn a lot about geography, and even about "geo-political spaces," from myths.[209] But the myth of Europa is a myth about frontiers *par excellence*. And the frontiers in question are frontiers of a geographical space as well as of a cultural space. The myth of Europa, in its many versions and interpretations, outlines the frontiers of the Greek world and of Europe, and draws the limits of Hellenic culture or European civilization (or, rather, the limits of the Egyptian and Semitic civilizations).

Claude Calame, an undoubtedly politically conscious Classicist,[210] has proposed a structural analysis of the myth of Europa as the inversion of the myth of Io. Io, Europa's ancestor, was transformed into a cow as Zeus's "love affair" with her unfolded and was driven from the centre to the periphery, from Argos to Egypt. Europa's itinerary was Io's reversed. Now Zeus assumed the bovine form and carried Europa from the periphery toward the centre, from Phoenicia to Crete (or Boeotia). But the inversion was not complete. Europa did not regain the Peloponnese from which Io had been driven out. Europa stopped "at the frontier of the territory inhabited by the Greeks." Strictly speaking, the myth of Io was about centre and periphery, while the myth of Europa was about frontiers.[211]

When Europa disappeared, her father sent her brothers to search for her. They travelled to places in the "border zone" of Greece.[212] Cadmus went to the ends

[208] Dussaud, *Les civilisations préhelléniques*, p. 391, who added that there was no reason to take these combinations more seriously than the filiations of Sem, Cham, and Japhet.

[209] See, for example, J. Ramin, *Mythologie et géographie*, Les Belles lettres, Paris 1979; Reinhold Merkelbach, "Les papyrus d'Hésiode et la géographie mythologique de la Grèce," in *idem*, *Hestia und Erigone: Vorträge und Aufsätze*, ed. W. Blümel, B. Kramer, J. Kramer, and C. E. Römer, Teubner, Stuttgart and Leipzig 1996; Claude Calame, *Poétiques des mythes dans la Grèce antique*, Hachette, Paris 2000, p. 117 ff.

[210] His study of myth and history in Ancient Greece, he said, is, among other things, a reaction against "the epistemological colorlessness brought about by the infiltration of a neoliberal ideology into the humanities." Claude Calame, *Myth and History in Ancient Greece: The Symbolic Creation of a Colony*, transl. D. W. Berman, Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J. 2003, p. vii.

[211] Calame, *Poétiques des mythes*, pp. 120–23.

[212] Rocchi, *Kadmos e Harmonia*, p. 25, wrote of Samothrace (where, according to some versions of his search for Europa, Cadmus married Harmonia) as situated in the "zona di confine" between Asia and Europe.

of the world.[213] Having failed to find their sister, they settled at the frontiers of the domains occupied by the Greeks, in the limithrope territories of Greece.[214] They "visited" or "took up their abode" – established themselves[215] – in Cilicia, Phoenicia, Syria, Rhodos,[216] Thasus,[217] Samothrace, Thrace, Boeotia, and Illyria. Europa's sister was the eponym of the Carian capital city at Samos, and Europa's nephew was the king of the island of Cos.[218] Europa herself was brought to Crete, where she was inseminated and gave birth to Minos, Rhadamanthys, and Sarpedon. The fate of her sons is connected, beyond Crete, with Miletos, Caria, and Lycia,[219] as well as with the Aegean islands, of which Rhadamanthys is said to have been the lawgiver, and with Boeotia, to where he fled and where he married.[220] They moved, that is, in a sort of vacant space in between Syria and Crete, on the southern border of the territories populated by the Greeks, and brought that space into subjection to the Greeks.[221]

Of special importance in that rim mapped out by the myth of Europa was Crete. Landing in Crete placed Europa at the border of the Greek world. But it was for a very long time not always clear on which side of the border that was. Once the question of Greek borders began to coincide with that of the borders of Europe, the issue became even more complicated and more sensitive. For the ancient Greeks, the question may not have been as high-strung as for their modern successors, but it had been a question important enough to be given attention. Herodotus, for example, was unsure about where the borders of Europe were but sure enough that Crete did not lay within them. He said that it was absurd to

213 Rocchi, *Kadmos e Harmonia*, p. 39.

214 Calame, *Poétiques des mythes*, p. 123.

215 "Ils s'établissent (large usage du verbe *katoikízo*, combine avec *ktízo*)." *Ibid.*, p. 122.

216 *Cf*. Diod. V, lviii.

217 *Cf*. Pausanias V, xxv, 12: "The Thasians, who are Phoenicians by descent, and sailed from Tyre, and from Phoenicia generally, together with Thassus, the son of Agenor, in search of Europa."

218 Steph. Byzant. *s.v.*; Apollodorus II, vii, 1; *cf*. Jean-Claude Carrière and Bertand Massonie, *La Bibliothèque d'Apollodore: traduite, annotée et commentée*, Annales litteraires de l'Université de Besançon, Besançon 1991, p. 206; Vian, *Les origines de Thèbes*, p. 56. See Asius frag. 7 Davies; Huxley, *Greek Epic Poetry*, p. 198.

219 *Cf*. Friedrich Prinz, *Gründungsmythen und Sagenchronologie*, Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, Munich 1979, p. 97 *ff*.

220 ApollodorusII, iv, 11; III,i,2 (with further references in Frazer's notes in the Loeb Classical Library); *cf*. Calame, *Poétiques des mythes*, p. 123.

221 Calame, *Poétiques des mythes*, p. 123.

suppose that Europe received its name from Europa, for "Europa was an Asiatic and never visited the country which we now call Europe, but only sailed from Phoenicia to Crete and from Crete to Lycia."[222] For Strabo, the geographical position of Crete was open to interpretation. He cited Eudoxus of Cnidos, according to whom the island lay in the Aegean Sea.[223] Strabo himself described it as being washed by the Aegean and Cretan Seas from the north, but from the south by the Libyan Sea, which was the prolongation of the Egyptian Sea.[224] In view of the bipartite image of the world, Crete lay thus in between Asia and Europe. This is a view one also comes across in mythical landscapes. Plato, for example, who counted the Cretans "among the Greeks,"[225] represented Europa's sons as being in charge of Europe and Asia. Rhadamanthys, as one of the "judges in the meadows," judged the dead from Asia, and Aeacus "those from Europe," while both conceded seniority to Minos.[226]

As regards modern scholars, their ideas about the relation between Greece and Crete, and between these two and the East, have always been disparate. An extreme view among those who have maintained that post-Minoan Crete was not truly a part of the Greek world was held by Wilamowitz-Moellendorff. He pointed out that, as modern readers of Greek sources, we can learn nothing about Crete before Ephorus and Aristotle wrote about Cretan society. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff considered that significant for Greek history. Moreover, on the basis of Ephorus and Aristotle – and a few other isolated reports – one could not gain a picture of the early Crete. By the fifth century BC, the island had almost no contacts with the rest of the Greek world, and what eventually came to be known to the Greeks was a politically fragmented and culturally declined Crete which was held in bad repute.[227] Wilamowitz-Moellendorff wrote that Crete was rediscovered in the late Classic period by an anonymous traveller, and that that rediscovery explained the sudden interest of Plato, Ephorus, and Aristotle in

222 Herodotus *Histories* IV, 45.

223 Eudoxus frag. 356 Lasserre.

224 Strabo X, iv, 2. *Cf*. Homer *Odyssey* XIX, 172: "There is a land called Crete, in the midst of the wine-dark sea."

225 Plato *Minos* 318d.

226 Plato *Gorgias* 523e-524a; *cf*. Claude Calame, *Thésée et l'imaginaire athénien: Légende et culte en Grèce antique*, 2nd ed., Editions Payot Lausanne, Lausanne 1996, p. 215.

227 Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Der Glaube der Hellenen*, reprint of the 3rd ed., Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt 1973, Vol. 1: p. 131. *Cf*. the brief survey in H. Verbruggen, *Le Zeus crétois*, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 1981, pp. 174–75.

the island.[228] Crete's religious prestige in the Hellenistic period can partly be explained by its isolation, but that isolation had never been absolute.[229]

Hoeck was thus right to point out that Crete never played an active role in the big events of ancient Greek history,[230] but his contemporary Böttiger was not wrong to write of Crete's decisive cultural influence in the broader Greek world.[231] For Creuzer, its frontier position made Crete a bridge between Greece and the East. Crete, he wrote, was most fortunately placed for establishing links with the Orient, and Cretans knew how to take advantage of their good fortune. Among the first Phoenician settlements were those on Crete, and the island received Egyptian teaching. As a result, Crete became "one of the first spots of light to enlighten the darkness of Pelasgian Greece."[232] In the time that followed, the idea of it being a bridge has not always been appreciated. There was, for sure, no place for it in Wilamowitz-Moellendorff and his followers' view. Today's historians have largely outgrown traditional modern academic divisions and seem to be quite right – or, rather, realistic – to regard Crete as "a part of the dynamically shifting border between East and West"[233] and, even more critically, between Europe and Asia.

For centuries, however, Crete was of marginal importance for what has come to pass for European history. This should not surprise us, since for centuries Crete had been under Byzantine rule (except for an interval of about forty years, when it came under Arab occupation). When the Crusaders could not leave even their fellow Christians at peace and in the course of the Fourth Crusade sacked Constantinople, Crete fell into the hands of one of the marauding chieftains, who sold it to the Venetians. With the consolidation of the Ottoman Empire, Turkish

228 Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Aristoteles und Athen*, Weidmann, Berlin 1893, Vol. 2: pp. 25–26.

229 Verbruggen, *Le Zeus crétois*, pp. 174–75.

230 Hoeck, *Kreta*, Vol. 3: p. 40.

231 "[D]ie Mutter aller gesetzgebenden Herrscherkultur an der kleinasiatischen Küste und auf den griechischen Inseln." C. A. Böttiger, *Ideen zur Kunst-Mythologie. Erster Cursus: Stammbaum der Religionen des Alterthums. Einleitung zur vor-homerischen Mythologie der Griechen*, In der Arnoldischen Buchhandlung, Dresden and Lepizig 1826, p. 299.

232 Creuzer, *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker*, Vol. 4: p. 232.

233 "Crete is not solely a fixed geographical location, but a part of the dynamically shifting border between East and West." John C. McEnroe, "Cretan Questions: Politics and Archaeology, 1898–1913," in *Labyrinth Revisited: Rethinking "Minoan" Archaeology*, ed. Y. Hamilakis, Oxbow Books, Oxford 2002, p. 70.

attacks on Crete began. But the island was not conquered before Candia fell in 1669, more than two centuries after the fall of Constantinople to the Turks. Europeans abandoned Crete, just as they did post-Ancient Greece. They re-entered them on the map of Europe only when the Greeks rose against the Ottoman Empire in 1821, and the Cretans joined the rebellion. Crete consolidated its European status when the Christian Cretans, in 1896, made their final attempt to expel the Turks from the island. Then, the "Cretan question" became a European question. The European powers were sympathetic towards the rebels but worried about the possible fallout of a total collapse of the Ottoman Empire. To keep things under control, they sent peacekeeping forces to Crete and eventually installed an agreeable High Commissioner.[234]

With the peacekeepers there arrived European archaeologists. The lords of peace parcelled out the island among themselves for their respective scientists, and excavations began. The British appropriated for themselves the best spot, worked most efficiently, and under the leadership of Sir Arthur Evans discovered the "cradle of European civilization." Those were Evans's own words.[235] "For the first time," he wrote, "there has come into view a primitive European civilization." The "primitive," here, meant very early, going back "even beyond the days of the First Dynasty of Egypt."[236] And civilization it was: its "beneficent ruler" was a "patron of the arts, founder of palaces, establisher of civilized dominion." That dominion was "peaceful," but one could imagine that the "yoke of the more civilized ruler should at times have weighed heavily on subject peoples." When it came to ancient Crete, even the Athenians must have looked with a "childish wonder at the mighty creations of a civilization."[237] That civilization, insular but not isolated, was able to develop "on native lines" and to "accept suggestions from the Egyptian or the Asiatic side without itself being dominated by foreign conventionalisms."[238] The Cretans "took what they wanted, nothing

234 Brina Otto, *König Minos und sein Volk: Das leben in alten Kreta*, Artemis & Winkler, Dusseldorf 1997, pp. 31–32; McEnroe, "Cretan Questions," pp. 61, 64.

235 Arthur Evans, *The Palace of Minos: A comparative account of the successive stages of the early Cretan civilization as illustrated by the discoveries at Knossos*, Macmillan, London 1921–35, Vol. 1: 24.

236 Evans, *The Palace of Minos*, Vol. 1: p. 1.

237 *Ibid*., pp. 1–2.

238 *Ibid*., p. 25. For Curtius, *Griechische Geschichte*, Vol. 1: p. 61, Crete was an excellent example of the creativity of the Greek spirit: "Hier hat der griechische Geist zuerst offenbart, wie er stark genug sei, sich die mannigfaltigen Anregungen der schlauen, erfinderischen Se-

more, and were neither artistically nor politically enslaved."[239] And they gave. They were in position to give even to Greece: the Mycenaean culture was essentially Minoan. As such, the Crete that Evans unearthed, "was at once the starting-point and the earliest stage in the highway of European civilization."[240]

His contemporaries happily agreed. Lewis Farnell, for example, his colleague at Oxford, prefixed a letter to "my dear Sir Arthur" in a *Festschrift* for Evans's seventy-fifth birthday. Farnell wrote that letter to "pay homage to one who has done more than any in this University, we may say more than any in this nation, to reveal and illuminate the ancient European culture of the Mediterranean." Speaking more directly to Evans, he said that "you have been able to reveal to us a brilliant chapter of European history undreamed of before."[241]

A century after Evans began his excavations his achievements are a little less appreciated. Among archaeologists there are some who are unmistakably critical. They have challenged many aspects of Evans's work, including some of his basic assumptions. Evans claimed that "the spade of the excavator" had unearthed the "cradle of European civilization." That assumption has been repeated into our own days.[242] But critical archaeologists today argue that Evans and his successors "created" that early Cretan civilization. They point out that the Bronze Age Knossos excavated by Evans was "widely constru(ct)ed as Europe's first civilization."[243] They maintain that the Cretan past was "produced" "through

---

miten anzueignen, aber alles Empfangene selbstthätig umzugestalten und solche Formen des religiösen und staatlichen Lebens zu schaffen, die der klare Abdruck seiner eigenen Natur sind." *Cf*. Vere Gordon Childe, *The Dawn of European Civilization*, 6th ed., Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1957, p. 20: "Minoan civilization was not brought ready made from Asia nor from Africa, but was an original native creation wherein Sumerian and Egyptian techniques and ideas were blended to form a novel and essentially European whole."

239 Evans, *The Palace of Minos*, Vol. 1: p. 19.

240 *Ibid*., p. 24.

241 S. Casson, ed., *Essays in Aegean Archaeology: Presented to Sir Arthur Evans in honour of his 75th birthday*, Clarendon, Oxford 1927, p. iii.

242 Olivier Reverdin, *Crete and Its Treasures*, Viking Press, New York 1961. A recent exhibition in the Badische Landesmuseum featured Minos's Crete as "die erste europäische Hochkultur." *Im Labyrinth des Minos: Kreta – die erste europäische Hochkultur. Ausstellung des Badischen Landesmuseums, 27. 1. bis 29. 4. 2001*, Biering & Brinkmann, Munich 2000.

243 Louise Hitchcock and Paul Koudounaris, "Virtual Discourse: Arthur Evans and the Reconstruction of the Minoan Palace at Knossos," in *Labyrinth Revisited: Rethinking "Minoan" Archaeology*, ed. Y. Hamilakis, Oxbow Books, Oxford 2002, p. 42.

the lenses" of the "meta-narrative" of "Europeanism" as "fundamentally European in nature."[244] They reason that Evans put into the same frame the worlds of Cretan antiquity "and that of his own fin-de-siècle European modernity," thereby "fabricating an authentic past for Europe."[245] They make the point that he assigned to Crete a "central place in the archaeologies of the West" by explaining it as "the origins of *European* civilisation" and as "the earliest – prior even to the civilization of the mainland Greece – manifestation of Europeanness."[246]

All this, of course, is the nature of the archaeologist's work. One should not reproach Evans with fabricating the ancient civilization of Crete. What has come to be seen as problematic is the nature of his fabrication: Crete as the "cradle of European civilization." To me, this fabrication is problematic in the first place because I see "European civilization" as problematic. But Evans's fabrication is problematic for methodological reasons that have nothing directly to do with politics.[247] It is utterly anachronistic. "Europe" existed neither in the Minoan age nor in the centuries that followed. The entity we call Europe – and Evans knew as such – was some three thousand years distant from his imagined Cretan "priest-kings." "Civilization" was an even later conceptual invention. It is thus a justifiable criticism to say that "[d]espite the fact that such an entity did not yet exist, the Minoans of Bronze Age Knossos have been widely constru(ct)ed as Europe's first civilisation."[248] Archaeologists can, in fact, say whether, or to what extent, Evans falsified his data in order to construct the meaning of his

[244] Yannis Hamilakis, "What Future for the 'Minoan' Past? Re-thinking Minoan Archaeology," in *Labyrinth Revisited: Rethinking "Minoan" Archaeology*, pp. 6, 11, 16.

[245] Donald Preziosi, "Archaeology as Museology: Re-thinking the Minoan Past," in *Labyrinth Revisited: Rethinking "Minoan" Archaeology*, pp. 30, 32.

[246] John Bennet, "Millennial Ambiguities," in *Labyrinth Revisited: Rethinking "Minoan" Archaeology*, p. 215.

[247] Nanno Marinatos, *Minoan Religion: Ritual, Image, and Symbol*, University of South Carolina Press, Columbia, South Carolina 1993, p. 8, in a book dedicated to the memory of Evans, put it nicely that "the methodological tools he had at his disposal were exciting but not subtle." Marinatos added that "speculations and leaps of fantasy [...] sometimes characterized Evans's writings." *Op. cit.*, 9.

[248] Hitchcock and Koudounaris, "Virtual Discourse," p. 42. *Cf.* Paul Faure, *La Crète au temps de Minos: 1500 av. J. C.*, 3rd ed., Hachette, Paris 1997, p. 360: "S'il faut définir brièvement la culture minoenne telle qu'elle nous apparaît au milieu du seconde millénaire avant Jésus-Christ, disons qu'elle nous offre l'example du premier classicisme que l'Europe ait connu. Cela ne signifie nullement qu'il s'agisse d'une culture européenne, car à cette époque l'expression n'avait aucun sense."

discovery. But regardless of what experts say, problematic intellectual methods are most often politically effective and the successful establishment of Minoan Crete a century ago can tell us a great deal about European identity politics at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

European identity politics usually swings between mystique and myths. It is not surprising that the critical archaeologists I cited mentioned "Europeanist" myths.[249] They also pointed to the "'mythic' quality" of the Bronze Age Cretan past and characterized Crete as inextricably linked to myth."[250] This is not an exclusively recent aperçu. Already the Roman chorographer Pomponius Mela wrote that Crete was "notorious for its many legends," and named "the arrival of Europa" in the first place.[251] But while our modern critical historians and archaeologists have taken into account the mythical nature of ancient Crete, they do not seem to have taken notice of Evans's references to the myth of Europa.

Evans claimed he found the name for the civilization he discovered. "To this early civilization of Crete as a whole," he wrote, "I have proposed [...] to apply the name 'Minoan.'" He was proud of his proposal and pleased that it was quickly and generally accepted "by archaeologists in this [England] and other countries."[252] The term Minoan in fact "pre-dates Evans and his Knossian adventures by several decades"[253] – in fact, by almost a century.[254] But this is, here, more interesting than directly relevant. The point, here, is that this very name evokes the myth of Europa. The ruler of the first civilization was "the bearer of a divine title." Minos, Evans explained, "is of divine parentage and himself the progenitor of divine beings. Son of Zeus by Europa, herself, perhaps, an Earth-Goddess, wedded to Pasiphaê, 'the all-illuminating,' father of Ariadnê 'the most holy' –

249 Hamilakis, "What Future for the 'Minoan' Past?", p. 11.

250 Bennet, "Millennial Ambiguities," p. 217; MacGillivray, *Minotaur*, p. 312. See also Faure, *La Crète au temps de Minos*, who introduced his reader to ancient Cretan history through the myth of Europa.

251 P. Mela *Description of the World* II,112.

252 Evans, *The Palace of Minos*, Vol. 1: p. 1.

253 Hamilakis, "What Future for the 'Minoan' Past?", p. 17.

254 Hoeck speaks of the "Minoische Zeit" and "Minoische Periode" in Cretan history right at the beginning of his work. Hoeck, *Kreta*, Vol. 1: pp. VI, VIII. His second volume is dedicated to the "Minoische Kreta."

Minos, in the last two relationships at least, was coupled with alternative forms of the Mother-Goddess of pre-Hellenic Crete."[255]

This seems to be saying that in the beginning of European civilization there was a divine copulation. Aestheticized, that divine copulation has become a European cultural symbol. When in 1900 the first season of Evans's excavations at Knossos drew to a close and a sensational bull's head relief was discovered, an article in the London *Times* was inclined to see that artefact as a representation of the bull that had brought Europa to Crete.[256]

[255] Evans, *The Palace of Minos*, Vol. 1: p. 3. *Cf. op. cit.*, p. 9, on Minos as "the son of the daughter (Europa) of Phoenix" (*Iliad* XIV,321), as a "version which nearly approaches the truth if we may regard the term Φοινικες or 'red-men' as having been first suggested by the ruddy brown race of the Cretan frescoes." *Op. cit.*, p. 11 n. 1, rejects the contemporary attempt by Sir William Ridgeway to interpret the "fabled relationship of Phoenix" as containing the historical truth that "Minos I passed into Crete from Palestine at the close of the fifteenth century BC," and that he was one of "the tall fair-haired Achaean invaders" who ("we are asked to believe," Evans interpolates) had made their way to Syria from the North across the Dardanelles, like the Gauls, and through Asia Minor." Evans rendered Ridgeway's conclusion with a good deal of irony: "Swooping down from Canaan to Crete, this 'Achaean' leader with the un-Hellenic name deals a fatal blow to 'Minoan' civilization." Evans seems to have taken a contrary stance to "We are all Greeks" already in his student years. See MacGillivray, *Minotaur*, p. 37.

[256] *Times*, 10 August 1900, cited in Otto, *König Minos und sein Volk*, p. 84.