

Urban development and built identities. The case of Aphrodisias in Caria in the late republican period

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Urban development and collective built identities

Most papers of this conference concentrate on the impact of Romanization in the western regions of the Roman Empire. In my paper I address urban development in the eastern empire, specifically at Aphrodisias in Asia Minor, to explore whether any significant traits in urban development within this region were prevalent in the Roman period.¹

This paper will focus on urban development in Aphrodisias in order to consider three key questions. What can the study of urban development tell us about the collective built identity of Aphrodisian society? How did public space in Aphrodisias change in the late Roman republican period and what does this tell us about the collective built identity of Aphrodisian society? Did the development of public space in Aphrodisias reflect changes in the expression of this aspect of urban identity through built environments and the configuration of public space?

When speaking of a collective built identity one cannot of course assume that all the inhabitants of the city shared identical societal values.² However, there did exist a highly developed architectural language, through which values that were considered appropriate could be expressed.³ It is these aspects of collective built

¹ Recent publications on urban development in Asia Minor include: S. Mitchell (1987), 'Imperial building in the eastern Roman provinces', in S. Macready and F.H. Thompson (eds.), *Roman Architecture in the Greek World* (London), 18-25 and S. Mitchell (1993), *Anatolia. Land, Men and Gods in Asia Minor*. 2 vols. (Oxford), as well as the articles in D. Parrish (ed.) (2001), *Urbanism in Western Asia Minor. New studies on Aphrodisias, Ephesos, Hierapolis, Pergamon, Perge and Xanthos*. *JRA* suppl. 46 (Portsmouth, Rhode Island).

² For discussions of various aspects of social identity see for instance P. Connerton (1989), *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge) and J. Fentress and C. Wickham (1992), *Social Memory* (Oxford). Furthermore see R. Handler (1994) 'Is "identity" a useful cross-cultural concept?', in J. Gillis (ed.), *Commemorations. The politics of national identity* (Princeton), 27-40 for an introduction to the concept of identity and problems concerning the application of such a broad concept.

³ See P. Zanker (1998), *Pompeii. Public and Private Life* (Princeton) and P. Zanker (2000), 'The city as symbol: Rome and the creation of an urban image', in E.W.B. Fentress (ed.), *Romanization and the* <http://www.digressus.org> 'Romanization'? Digressus Supplement 1 (2003) 86-98

identity that I explore in light of the question: did Roman rule and presence have an influence on the development of these values and their expression through the urban fabric? First, I shall describe the urban development of Aphrodisias looking at the configuration of public space and how it reflects the influence of the social reality and collective identity of the community. Second, I shall discuss whether we can draw inferences about collective identities based on the nature of urban development.

As the questions central to this paper are concerned with aspects of urban identity as expressed through public space, both the concept of identity and its definition, as well as the meaning and importance of public space, must be explicitly discussed in brief here. Christopher Alexander states in his book *Town and Country Parks* that ‘without common land no social system can survive’.⁴ This concept can be applied to the layout of ancient classical cities. Public space constituted spaces of the utmost importance in the cultural, social, religious and political life of the city. It shaped and structured the ways in which people related to one another physically in the daily transactions of life. Public space has a purpose that is part of a constant dialogue with the users of the space. ‘Every configuration of built space, and its relationship to the streets and the city beyond, always expresses a model or ideal of social relationships – a vision of the better life’, said K. Worpole in his recent book *Here Comes the Sun*, concerning the development and meaning of public space in twentieth-century Europe.⁵ This model, or ideal, of social relationships, which could also be called the ‘intended function’ of the space, in turn reflects the collective identity of the community.

Identity is a term which is very popular and which is commonly used in a number of disciplines concerned with the study of human behaviour, conduct and societal structures in general. I use the term ‘collective built identity’ to encompass the facets of identity which are represented through the built environment in an urban context.

In the ancient city a certain group, the group with the financial means and influence, was given the opportunity to shape the public space, and thus to make an enduring impression on the urban landscape. This opportunity was used with much care, attention being given to the shaping of single monuments themselves and to the way in which they related to other monuments, thereby creating the urban setting. It is through analysis of public and private benefactions in public spaces that the nature of

city: creation, transformation and failures. *JRA* suppl. 38 (Portsmouth, Rhode Island), 25-41, for approaches to the built environment as the expression of collective ideologies and ideals.

⁴ C. Alexander (1999), *Town and country parks* (London), 101.

⁵ K. Worpole (2000), *Here Comes the Sun: architecture and public space in twentieth-century European culture* (London), 17.

the collective identity of ancient societies can be approached. These benefactions, the choices of style, shape, scale, and configuration, were all expressions of the collective represented identity of the community. The collective built identity in Aphrodisias contained a variety of identities: both personal identities as in the case of Gaius Julius Zoilus and other private benefactors; and communal aspects of the collective identity as seen in the civic decisions that lay behind the layout of the North and South Agoras.

The history and archaeology of Aphrodisias

Aphrodisias was in Caria, Asia Minor, in the region that is now modern Anatolia in Turkey.⁶ The site has undergone extensive excavations for decades since archaeological projects were begun there in the sixties.⁷ Aphrodisias is situated in an upland valley surrounded by hills in south-western Anatolia. The western and southern parts of Anatolia were more heavily urbanized than the rest of the region and it is in these areas that many of the well-known sites which provide much information about hellenistic and Roman urban development are situated.⁸

The excavations have produced vast amounts of material evidence, including architectural remains, a plentiful body of sculpture in the round and sculptural decoration, such as the reliefs from the so-called Sebasteion, and a significant amount of pottery. The epigraphic evidence, especially the set of decrees and official documents carved on the stage building of the theatre, adds to our knowledge about the civic life of the town.⁹

⁶ For plans of Aphrodisias and further illustrations see C. Ratté (2001), 'The urban development of Aphrodisias in late antiquity', in Parrish (2001), 116-47.

⁷ See K.T. Erim (1986), *Aphrodisias: City of Venus Aphrodite* (London) for a summary of the early excavation projects at Aphrodisias. In recent years Professor R.R.R. Smith, Oxford University, later joined by Associate Professor C. Ratté, New York University, has directed the projects undertaken at the site. Site reports are published in *AJA*. The most recently published reports include: R.R.R. Smith and C. Ratté (1998), 'Archaeological research at Aphrodisias in Caria, 1996', *AJA* 102: 225-50 and R.R.R. Smith and C. Ratté (2000), 'Archaeological research at Aphrodisias in Caria, 1997 and 1998', *AJA* 104: 221-53.

⁸ See D. Magie (1950), *Roman rule in Asia Minor* (Oxford) and S. Mitchell (1993), vol. 1 for an introduction to the history of Asia Minor in the Roman period.

⁹ For the inscriptions from the so-called Archive Wall see J. Reynolds (1982), *Aphrodisias and Rome* (London). R.R.R. Smith (1987), 'The imperial reliefs from the Sebasteion at Aphrodisias', *JRS* 77: 88-138 and R.R.R. Smith (1998), 'Cultural choice and political identity in honorific portrait statues in the Greek east in the second century AD', *JRS* 88: 56-93 are concerned with the sculpture and sculptural decoration from Aphrodisias. Ratté (2001) treats the urban development of the site and gives a brief summary of the development in the earlier Roman periods. Further references to publications on the

Knowledge about pre-Roman Aphrodisias is limited, both in terms of the archaeological and the epigraphic evidence. However, evidence suggests that the site was occupied from at least the sixth century BC, most likely as a small settlement possibly connected to the sanctuary of Aphrodite, which may have existed at this point.¹⁰ There is archaeological evidence for structures beneath the present temple dating to the sixth century BC indicating that the sanctuary may have existed earlier than the first monumentalization in the shape of a marble temple, which took place in the late first century BC.¹¹

An important factor during the early part of Roman rule in Asia Minor was the apparent lack of Roman military presence for long time periods. The major part of the administration was left to the client kings loyal to Rome, who operated within the structure of the administrative systems of the various regions. No revolts attracted the attention of Roman forces.

The first attestation of Roman military involvement in the politics of Asia Minor was during the reign of Antiochus III, which culminated with Roman participation in the battle of Magnesia in 190 BC. In 189 BC Manlius Vulso, who was consul, took command of the Roman forces and set out on a campaign raiding parts of Asia Minor. His advance was not entirely agreed on in Rome, but the strategy behind his campaign does reveal something of a collective Roman attempt to gain full political control over the region by limiting the extent of the area that was under Antiochus' control.¹²

In the period between Manlius' campaign in 189 BC and 131 BC, there was no major Roman military activity in Asia Minor. Soon after the annexation of the Attalid kingdom, after Attalus III had bequeathed his kingdom to Rome in 133 BC, Rome was forced to involve its military forces, as there was competition for gaining power over the region. After having dealt with this revolt in 131 BC, Roman military presence again remained virtually non-existent until the time of Sulla's campaign

various categories of material evidence can be found in the site reports published in *AJA*. See footnote 7 for site reports.

¹⁰ L. Robert (1973), *Études Anatoliennes: Recherches sur les Inscriptions Grecques de l'Asie Mineure* (Amsterdam), 338 and *idem* (1965), 'D'Aphrodisias à la Lycaonie. Compte rendu du volume VIII des Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua', *Hellenica* 13: 213ff.; D. Theodorescu (1987), 'Le temple d'Aphrodite', in J. de la Genière and K.T. Erim (eds.), *Aphrodisias de Carie, Colloque de l'Université de Lille III* (Paris), 87-99.

¹¹ See J. de la Genière (1987), 'Aphrodisias préromaine', in Genière and Erim (1987), 53-57; Theodorescu (1987), 87-94 and D. Theodorescu (1990), 'La restitution de l'Aphrodision: certitudes et perplexités', in C. Roueché and K.T. Erim (eds.), *Aphrodisias Papers I. Recent work on architecture and sculpture. JRA suppl. 1* (Ann Arbor), 49-65 for evidence of the early sanctuary.

¹² Mitchell (1993), 23.

against Mithridates VI in 87 BC.¹³ It is commonly argued that Caria was annexed into the province of Asia in 129 BC; however, the evidence for this date is not certain and it cannot therefore be determined whether or not the annexation had a direct impact on Roman military presence.¹⁴

Aphrodisias obtained the status of a *polis* sometime in the second or early first century BC as a result of a *sympoliteia* or *synoikism* with the nearby town of Plarasa.¹⁵ The city began to strike its own coins in the late second or early first century BC, more or less coinciding with the *sympoliteia*.¹⁶ During the reign of Augustus the name of Plarasa was dropped from the city's title, leaving the name of Aphrodisias alone.¹⁷ At the same time, Aphrodisias entered a period of urban growth. Large monumental building projects, both public and private, were undertaken.

Aphrodisias sided with Rome in the campaign against Mithridates. This loyalty had a positive impact on the status of the city in the later republican and early imperial periods, when the city received the status of a 'free city'.

During the time of the Roman civil wars the province of Asia was the scene of various actions of the triumvirs, but Aphrodisias was by no means central to these events. Epigraphic evidence suggests that Aphrodisias was attacked and looted by Q. Labienus in 40 BC and that the town was active in recovering looted property and pursuing the troops involved.¹⁸ Labienus invaded Asia Minor from the East in 41/40 BC receiving help from the Parthians. Many cities in the region resisted and fought back, among them Aphrodisias. In 39 BC, after the war, Aphrodisias was rewarded with many great privileges, which are recorded in documents on the Archive Wall.¹⁹ These attempts to regain possessions, and the level of organization of the civic administration which was necessary for undertaking such attempts, tell us about the sophistication of the civic administration of the city at this point in time.

Literary and epigraphic evidence show us that both Sulla and Caesar dedicated votives to the sanctuary of Aphrodite at Aphrodisias, suggesting that the sanctuary

¹³ Mitchell (1993), 29.

¹⁴ Reynolds (1982), 2.

¹⁵ See Reynolds (1982) and J. Reynolds (1985), 'The Politeia of Plarasa and Aphrodisias', *REA* 87: 213-18.

¹⁶ D.J. MacDonald (1991), 'Some problems in Aphrodisian numismatics', in R.R.R. Smith and K.T. Erim (eds.), *Aphrodisias Papers 2. The theatre, a sculptor's workshop, philosophers, and coin-types*. *JRA* suppl. 2 (Ann Arbor), 169.

¹⁷ D.J. MacDonald (1976), *Greek and Roman coins from Aphrodisias* (Oxford), p.23 on nos.Aph.199-200 and 200-11.

¹⁸ Reynolds (1982), doc.11, 99-100.

¹⁹ Reynolds (1982), 38 and docs.6-8.

was of some significance during the late republican period.²⁰ It is known that during the career of Gaius Julius Zoilus the sanctuary held asylum rights.²¹ However, it is not established whether or not it held asylum rights prior to this date. If the sanctuary of Aphrodite at Aphrodisias did hold asylum rights earlier than the time of Zoilus, this could be part of the reason for the initial burst of urban development, which took place in the late republican period. However, the lack of evidence confirming the introduction of the asylum rights does not allow of such a conclusion.

There are various difficulties in discussing the hellenistic collective built identity of the town in any detail as the evidence for urban development in the period prior to the first century BC is slight and does not give a firm indication of any preferences of the Aphrodisian community in this period. The town seems to have been no more than a small settlement, which only experienced substantial growth in the late republican period, perhaps partly as a result of the influence of Gaius Julius Zoilus and of the significance of the sanctuary of Aphrodite.

However, it can be inferred from the historical circumstances described above that the Aphrodisian community supported Roman rule, a fact that played a crucial role in the process of urban development that the town experienced in the late republican period. To speak about a collective built identity, visible in the archaeological record, before the late republican period, is not possible. Nonetheless, it is possible to conclude, from the epigraphic material, that the Aphrodisian community's civic administration was concerned with regional politics and played an active role in the development of the town, although this development was not manifested on any grand scale before the mid first century BC. A collective identity in Aphrodisian society did exist prior to this period, but the expression of it through the built environment did not become apparent before the end of the late republican period.

Urban development in Aphrodisias

The urban transformation that Aphrodisias underwent from the late republican period through to the second century AD is remarkably well documented through the material evidence and consequently in the numerous publications written by the team members at the site. Thus the site provides an opportunity to study the development of a community from a hellenistic, politically autonomous town into a town of the

²⁰ Appian, *BC* 1.11.97 and Reynolds (1982), 3 for Sulla's dedication of a double axe to Aphrodite at Aphrodisias, and Reynolds (1982), doc.12, 101-02 for Caesar's dedication.

²¹ Reynolds (1982), doc.35, 159-61.

Roman Empire, which conformed to changing ideas about societal structure and imperial ideologies.

Recent geophysical surveys have shown that the whole town of Aphrodisias was laid out on a grid. The North Agora, which was the original agora, is both aligned with and laid out on the grid, suggesting that the grid plan is not later than the stoa on the north side, the earliest aligned building in the North Agora. This stoa in the North Agora was dedicated by Gaius Julius Zoilus, a prominent citizen of the town in the late republican and early imperial periods. It is an indication that the city plan could be a creation of the late first century BC. However, it seems most likely that the grid plan would have predated the monumental development of the town, as is the case at both Priene and Magnesia. If, as is generally assumed, Aphrodisias conformed to the pattern established at most other grid-planned cities, the primary purpose of the layout of the grid would have been the division of residential property, and its laying-out would have been contemporary with the founding of the city.

The North Agora, the main and earliest public square of the town, conforms both in its location and layout to the model of an Ionian agora, as described by Pausanias.²² In contrast, several major building types which are found more frequently in the western empire than in the eastern, such as the stage building of the theatre and the later-second-century AD basilica, formed important parts of the urban design in Aphrodisias. These buildings indicate that architectural influences from other parts of the Empire found their way to Aphrodisias in spite of the fact that the town was situated quite remotely and was not an urban centre of any great importance within the region.

The sanctuary of Aphrodite, which was the principal sanctuary, and the North Agora, along with the theatre prominently located on the hillside and the stadium on the periphery of the town, together constitute the major elements of the early urban design. This town plan has certain features in common with late classical city plans, such as those of Priene and Magnesia-on-the-Maeander.²³ Further studies concerning the street network of Aphrodisias need to be undertaken to understand fully the development of the town's infrastructure. However, it can be concluded that the centre of the town was marked off by streets on all four sides. The street running south towards the theatre was the central thoroughfare. This street was colonnaded and lined with monuments that drew attention to civic and sacred complexes branching off the street, including the Tetracylon (the gateway to the sanctuary of

²² Ratté (2001), 119.

²³ See J.B. Ward-Perkins (1981), *Roman Imperial Architecture* (New Haven) for city plans.

Aphrodite), the Propylon of the Sebasteion, the South Agora Gate, and finally the theatre.

Euergetism was already a well-known feature of the hellenistic period; however, it was developed and shaped to fit the political realities of Roman rule throughout the late republican and imperial periods. Euergetism became a tool through which an individual or a group could manifest political, religious or social associations and alliances. The role of the community in the process of private benefactions was considerable. Each private benefaction – its size, scale and location – had to be approved by the city council, which emphasizes collective expression through the built environment.²⁴

The political situation in the late republican and especially early imperial period gave rise to a new form of competitive euergetism.²⁵ At Aphrodisias this is illustrated by several monuments, such as the ones dedicated by Zoilus, the Sebasteion dedicated to Aphrodite and to members of the imperial family and which was paid for by private individuals, and the Portico of Tiberius built during the early imperial period and also sponsored by a private person.²⁶

With increased focus on the individual, understood both as the individual as ruler and the individual as citizen, the way in which architecture was used to express this individuality changed. Among other things, it became important to display one's benefactions through dedicatory inscriptions on buildings, as is seen in the cases discussed in this paper. These inscriptions can be seen as an explicit way of expressing the importance of the benefaction to the collective identity and in turn of the benefactor's central importance to the shaping of this identity.

The importance of an individual in the development of the collective built identity is seen in the example of Gaius Julius Zoilus.²⁷ The epigraphic material

²⁴ In some cases building projects, their scale, size and costs, had to be approved by the emperor, although this usually applied only when imperial funds were involved.

²⁵ P. Veyne (1976), *Le pain et le cirque* (Paris), for an introduction to euergetism in the Roman period.

²⁶ See R.R.R. Smith (1988), 'Simulacra Gentium: the ethne from the Sebasteion at Aphrodisias', *JRS* 78: 50-77 and R.R.R. Smith (1990), 'Myth and allegory in the Sebasteion', in Roueché and Erim (1990), 89-100 for discussion and interpretation of the Sebasteion complex including an outline of the building history and the known facts about the benefactors. N. Chaisemartin (1987), 'Recherches sur la frise de l'agora de Tibère', in Genière and Erim (1987), 135-54 and N. Chaisemartin and A. Lemaire (1996), 'Le portique de Tibère: recherches sur son architecture et sa fonction', in C. Roueché and R.R.R. Smith (eds.), *Aphrodisias Papers 3. The setting and quarries, mythological and other sculptural decoration, architectural development, Portico of Tiberius, and Tetrapylon*. *JRA* suppl. 20 (Ann Arbor), 149-72 for discussion of the Portico of Tiberius.

²⁷ See R.R.R. Smith (1993), *The monument of C. Julius Zoilus* (Mainz am Rhein) for publication of Zoilus' funerary monument as well as a presentation and discussion of the facts known about Zoilus' life and career.

relating to Zoilus' person, his building projects and the offices he held, both civic and religious, constitutes an important body of evidence through which a local individual's career and benefactions to his hometown can be studied. Zoilus was a central figure in the development of the urban centre in the late republican and early imperial periods.

The evidence concerning his person and career includes a variety of inscriptions: a partial dedicatory inscription of the Stoa on the north side of the North Agora, an inscription that refers to his dedication of the first marble temple, and the boundary stones (*horoi*) marking off the sanctuary precinct. Furthermore, there are two identical inscriptions in the theatre mentioning Zoilus' dedication of the stage and proscenium, as well as the decoration, the inscriptions identifying the personifications on Zoilus' funerary monument, an inscription from an honorary statue set up in the theatre, and another statue base inscription.²⁸ Moreover, Zoilus is also mentioned in two documents from the Archive Wall, a letter of Octavian to Stephanus and a letter of Stephanus to Plarasa/Aphrodisias, as well as in a now lost inscription.²⁹

In his publication of Zoilus' funerary monument in 1993, R.R.R. Smith gives an account of the probable career of Zoilus.³⁰ It is assumed that Zoilus, after having been a slave of Julius Caesar, was freed either in Caesar's will or subsequently by Octavian.³¹ Through the status of freedman Zoilus received full Roman citizenship, which allowed him to take up various public offices that otherwise would not have been accessible to him. The background for Zoilus' enslavement and the amicable relationship that developed between him and Octavian remain puzzling, no matter how the epigraphic evidence is interpreted.³²

J. Reynolds, in his book *Aphrodisias and Rome*, considers the theory that Zoilus might have entered the imperial civil service, thereby assuming the status of a freedman, perhaps in order to gain full Roman citizenship, but Reynolds does not think this a credible interpretation.³³ Nonetheless, the epigraphic evidence certainly suggests that the career of Zoilus was an exceptional one and a re-evaluation of the

²⁸ Reynolds (1982), docs.33-39.

²⁹ Reynolds (1982), docs.10, 11 and 33.

³⁰ Smith (1993).

³¹ Smith (1993), 5-6.

³² Smith (1993) gives two plausible accounts of Zoilus' career, explaining ways in which Zoilus may have obtained his status and established his relationship with Octavian.

³³ Reynolds (1982), 157.

epigraphic evidence relating to Zoilus' career could open the way for new interpretations regarding this period of his life.³⁴

Zoilus was greatly active in adorning his hometown by undertaking large building projects. He dedicated the first marble temple to Aphrodite, the stage building of the theatre and the North Stoa in the North Agora. As a result of his benefactions, he received a number of public and religious offices. He was appointed priest for life of Aphrodite and of the goddess Eleutheria and he held the honorary post of *stephanophoros* ten times in succession.³⁵ Furthermore, the town erected at least two honorific statues of him.³⁶

The course of Zoilus' career remains an interesting study of an individual of the Roman provincial élite; moreover, the evidence for his imperial connections also constitutes an important case through which the relationship between the ruler and his subjects may be approached in a new light. The time of Zoilus' career was a period in which the transition and developments within the power structure of the empire made it possible for some people to aspire to positions in society which probably would not have been open to them at other points in time, either earlier or later.³⁷

The late republican centre of Aphrodisias was largely shaped by the building projects sponsored by Zoilus, which in turn, crucially, also coloured the collective built identity of the town. The relationship between this individual and the expression of the collective built identity through his dedications was rather complicated. The civic administration of the town approved the benefactions that were given by Zoilus, which confirms that these benefactions were appropriate expressions of the public identity of Aphrodisias. Zoilus' building projects had a profound impact on the expression of the collective built identity, demonstrating the role of the private individual in the process of societal identity formation.

There is no indication that the area later occupied by the South Agora formed part of the late first-century BC scheme of public building activity. The space between the theatre and the North Agora may have been left empty during this period and was in fact partly occupied by the northern slope of the Theatre Hill, which was only later carved away to create uniformity in the layout of the South Agora.

³⁴ Reynolds (1982), 157 mentions that there is later evidence (second century AD) which indicates the practice of freeborn men entering the imperial civil service and thereby assuming the status of freedmen.

³⁵ Reynolds (1982), docs.33 and 36.

³⁶ Reynolds (1982), docs.33 and 38.

³⁷ Smith (1993), 10.

Conclusion

How, then, did public space in Aphrodisias change in the late republican period and what does that tell us about the collective built identity of Aphrodisian society?

Aphrodisias provides a good example of a community which, through the organization of its civic administration, the importance of its sanctuary of Aphrodite, and by the means of individuals, grew and established its position within the regional framework of cities during the course of the late republican and early imperial periods. The city was an average-sized provincial town that at a certain point had close connections to Rome, probably as a result of Zoilus' status as a freedman of Octavian.³⁸

The late first-century BC developments that took place at Aphrodisias embodied the basic elements which were essential to the definition of an urban society in this period. Monumentalization of the city's renowned sanctuary, the creation of a large public space and the development of the theatre complex, which served a variety of civic functions, were all projects that were essential for a sense of community-feeling to emerge and through which the community could define itself and its collective built identity.

Earlier evidence indicates that an organized community existed prior to the earliest developments of the urban centre in the late first century BC. 'Without the rule of the Romans we do not choose even to live'.³⁹ This quote from a decree of Plarasa/Aphrodisias dates to 88 BC and is the earliest dated evidence for political action in Aphrodisias.⁴⁰ The wording of the decree gives an impression of how the society of Aphrodisias perceived itself within the framework of Roman rule and furthermore what image Aphrodisian society projected to the outside world. The decree expresses a determination to adapt and form part of a developing political and administrative system. This determination is also recognizable in the building projects undertaken in the late first century BC. These were all concentrated on the development of specific and essential features of urban civic life as mentioned above. It is not surprising that an articulated sense of community feeling can be detected before the initial projects concerned with the shaping of the urban centre were begun. This decree together with the early building projects provides a good example of the expression through urban development of an already existing collective community identity.

³⁸ Reynolds (1982), doc.36, p.162.

³⁹ Reynolds (1982), doc.2, p.12.

⁴⁰ Reynolds (1982), 13.

The importance of imperial connections to the development of a collective identity, regardless of the actual nature of those connections, cannot be underestimated in the study of the development of Aphrodisias. The Aphrodisian community kept on emphasizing its link to Rome and the emperor throughout the Roman period, bringing themselves to imperial attention by continuously sending embassies to Rome. However, a discussion of these later developments is beyond the scope of this paper. Nonetheless, it is crucial to note that this connection to the Roman rulers had an impact on the collective built identity of Aphrodisias. The link to the Roman rulers was already made a key point in the articulation of public space in Aphrodisias from the late republican period, as seen in the dedications made by Zoilus.

The early urban centre of Aphrodisias was to a large extent shaped by the building projects sponsored by Zoilus. These included, as mentioned above, the building of the first marble temple to Aphrodite, the development of the North Agora through the dedication of the North Stoa and the new stage building of the theatre. Although sponsored by a single person, these monuments were also expressions of the community's desire to define itself as an urban society. Decisions accepting or declining the private person's benefactions were made by the city council and ensured control of the shaping of the urban space.

At Aphrodisias the buildings and complexes dedicated by private persons were expressions of a civic identity which contributed to the collective built identity of the community by being displayed in public space. Monumental dedicatory inscriptions on *stoai* told the user of the space who had paid for the monument and to whom it was dedicated. Nothing was left to chance, everything was articulated either through form or in writing. Boundary stones were inscribed with the names and positions of their sponsor, and statues with inscribed bases depicted these men and women. The importance of individuals in the shaping of the urban image was crucial and in many ways decisive for the extent to which a city would develop. These individuals expressed their interpretation of the collective built identity as well as displaying their importance to the shaping of this identity through their benefactions.

The process of urban development in Aphrodisias is an example of continuous reinvention and reinterpretation of the meaning of public space and its role in the expression of collective built identity. The configuration of public space in the city gives an impression, as shown in the above sections, of the wide range of the expressions of these identities, from single or isolated experiences to more complex unified experiences. Through its architectural present, Aphrodisias was confronted with its historical past and through the construction of new monuments the history of the city was created, interpreted and reinvented and the collective built identity was shaped and reshaped through this process.

The collective built identity of Aphrodisian society was not solely concerned with the political meaning embodied in the built environment, the expression of religious attitudes through monuments, or the desire to flaunt a distinguished understanding of culture. The collective built identity of Aphrodisian society was much more complex, on both an individual and a communal level. It was constantly developing and interacting with the past and present, through the vigorous, ongoing interpretation and reinterpretation of what a city and its built environment was supposed to look like in order to express the collective identity of an urban community.