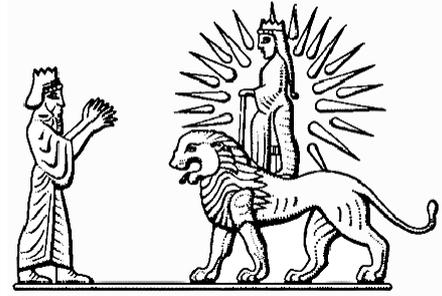


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***“Influence, Adaptation, and Interaction: Near Eastern and Early Greek Political Thought”***

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## Influence, Adaptation, and Interaction: Near Eastern and Early Greek Political Thought\*

### Introduction

I begin with two anecdotes that illustrate continuing serious deficits on both sides of the divide between Greco-Roman and Near Eastern studies (which, throughout this paper, I understand broadly, including Egypt)<sup>1</sup> – a divide which collaborative initiatives like the present one are trying to bridge. In 1990 I was a member of the Historisches Kolleg in Munich, working on the emergence of political thought in archaic and classical Greece. My duties included the organization of a conference. I wanted to use this opportunity to illuminate relations in political thought between the ancient Near East and archaic Greece. Accordingly I asked specialists in Egyptian, Near Eastern, and Greek history to describe forms of political thinking in “their” civilizations, to identify specific influences from Egypt and the Near East on early Greek political thought and, if possible, to suggest in what forms and by what routes such ideas might have been transmitted. Although the conference volume contains much that is valuable and of considerable interest,<sup>2</sup> in my own view the result of the

conference itself was disappointing – mostly for two reasons. One was that the representatives of the many disciplines assembled were not used to communicating with each other: we did not “speak the same language” and were not interested in the same problems; hence much time and effort needed to be spent on establishing common ground. The other reason was that especially the Assyriologists were reluctant to generalize and thus facilitate comparison; they seemed overwhelmed by what they perceived as their primary task of publishing and understanding the extant texts and had a hard time stepping back and attempting what we needed most: a synthesis, however preliminary it might have been.<sup>3</sup>

To balance the picture, here is the second anecdote. Work on a multi-authored “History of ancient political thought” in the series of *Cambridge Histories* is progressing toward publication in 2000. I was invited to contribute a chapter on early Greek poets and lawgivers. At a meeting of most contributors in Oxford in the fall of 1995, I argued vigorously for the need to include

\* I thank Jan Assmann, Pierre Briant and Andrea Gnirs for helpful comments on an early draft of parts of this paper, and Heath Martin for valuable technical assistance.

<sup>1</sup> This is, of course, the perspective of the Hellenist who needs to consider both Egyptian and Mesopotamian (and many other Near Eastern) influences. I am aware that Egypt and Mesopotamia are very different and that, especially from the perspective of the Assyriologist, Egypt should not be subsumed in generalizations about

the Near East.

<sup>2</sup> K. Raaflaub and E. Müller-Luckner (eds.), *Anfänge politischen Denkens in der Antike: Die nahöstlichen Kulturen und die Griechen* (Munich, 1993).

<sup>3</sup> Claus Wilcke’s revised paper (“Politik im Spiegel der Literatur, Literatur als Mittel der Politik im älteren Babylonien,” in Raaflaub and Müller-Luckner, *Anfänge* [as in n. 2], 29-75) represents a conscious effort to move in that direction.

chapters at least on ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Israel. Not only because of the “Bernal effect,” I said, but because of the long recognized relations, intellectual and otherwise, between these civilizations and archaic Greece, such chapters seemed absolutely indispensable if this volume was to be truly representative of the current state of research. In vain: it supposedly was too late, the book was already too big, and who would write such chapters anyway? As a concession, I was awarded two thousand additional words and urged to include a section on Near Eastern influences in my own chapter. Moreover, the title of the volume was changed to *Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought* – as if this really eliminated the problem.

So, despite the admirable efforts of Walter Burkert, Sarah Morris, Martin West and others, the gap between Near Eastern and Hellenic scholars persists. Mutual familiarity is still rare. I deliberately emphasize

“mutual”: the names I have mentioned are all of classical scholars and, if I am not badly mistaken, Jan Assmann is a rare exception on the other side. Those who try to bridge the gap, whatever their specific interests and pursuits, are still largely left to their own devices. One of the reasons why my book on early Greek political thought is still not completed is precisely my belief that such a book must deal seriously with the question of relations with the ancient Near East, and so far I have not been able to muster the time and energy needed for this difficult task. What I shall present in this space is a version of the section I added to my chapter in the Cambridge volume;<sup>4</sup> I shall conclude with a few thoughts on future research on Near Eastern influences on Greek civilization. My aim is to stimulate discussion; for this purpose it is useful to draw a picture with sharp contours, enhancing rather than softening the contrasts.

### How to Assess Near Eastern Influences on Early Greek Political Thought?

In recent years the question of Near Eastern (Mesopotamian, Hittite, Phœnician) and Egyptian influences on archaic Greek culture has been discussed with renewed intensity, resulting in much improved understanding – despite occasional exaggerated claims and conclusions, based in part on questionable evidence and dubious methodologies.<sup>5</sup> In the context of research on

early Greek political thought, this question has great importance. After all, Homer and especially Hesiod integrated into their poems many ideas that originated in Near Eastern myths, theogonies, cosmogonies and wisdom literature. The beginnings of Greek science (especially mathematics and astronomy) and philosophy were stimulated decisively by Mesopotamian antecedents.

<sup>4</sup> I thank Cambridge University Press for the permission to use this section here in advance of the publication of C. Rowe and M. Schofield (eds.), *Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought* (Cambridge, 2000).

<sup>5</sup> Especially on the part of Martin Bernal: *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*, 2 vols. (London and New Brunswick NJ, 1987/1991); id., “Phoenician Politics and Egyptian Justice in Ancient Greece,” in Raaflaub and Müller-Luckner, *Anfänge* (as in n. 2), 241–61. For discussion, see, e.g., M. Levine and J. Peradotto (eds.), *The Challenge of Black Athena, Are-*

*thusa* Special Issue (1989), and recently M. Lefkowitz, *Not Out of Africa: How Afrocentrism Became an Excuse to Teach Myth as History* (New York, 1996); M. Lefkowitz and G. M. Rogers (eds.), *Black Athena Revisited* (Chapel Hill, 1996); S. Burstein, “The Debate about Black Athena,” *Scholia* 5 (1996), 3–16; A. Ross and A. Lea (eds.), *Were the Achievements of Ancient Greece Borrowed from Africa?* (Washington DC, 1997); S. Marchand and A. Grafton, “Martin Bernal and His Critics,” *Arion* 5.2 (1997), 1–35.

In a much broader context, eastern influences helped shape the development of Greek religion, crafts, art and architecture, technology (both civil and military), coinage, and writing. Although more debated, such influences are visible also in social, legal, and political phenomena, such as tyranny, the enactment of written law, and the symposium. Martin West has summarized this admirably in the first chapter of his new book.<sup>6</sup>

Two facts seem undeniable. One is a remarkable openness among archaic Greeks toward the Near Eastern and Egyptian civilizations which they admired for their age and accomplishments and from which they were eager to learn. The Greeks were

aware, of course, of many differences but their tendency to define their own identity through a negative comparison with the “barbarians” is a later phenomenon that was fully developed only by the mid-fifth century as a consequence of their political conflicts with the Persian Empire and the emergence of Athenian imperialism.<sup>7</sup> The other fact is the coincidence, in the “Geometric” and especially “Orientalizing” Periods (eighth/seventh century) of the evolution of Greek polis society and a phase of comprehensive cultural interchange – with deep and lasting impact on many facets of Greek society – between the Greeks and the peoples on the eastern and southern coasts of the Mediterranean. What we still need to

<sup>6</sup> M. West, *The East Face of Helicon: West Asiatic Elements in Greek Poetry and Myth* (Oxford, 1997); Hesiod: P. Walcot, *Hesiod and the Near East* (Cardiff, 1966); M. West, *Hesiod, Theogony: Ed. with Prolegomena and Commentary* (Oxford, 1966), 1-31; id., *Hesiod, Works and Days: Ed. with Prolegomena and Commentary* (Oxford, 1978), 3-30; M. Erler, “Das Recht (DIKE) als Segensbringerin für die Polis,” *Studi Italiani di filologia classica* 3d ser. 5 (1987), 5-36; C. Penglase, *Greek Myths and Mesopotamia: Parallels and Influence in the Homeric Hymns and Hesiod* (London, 1994). Homer: W. Burkert, “Homerstudien und Orient,” in J. Latacz (ed.), *Zweihundert Jahre Homer-Forschung: Rückblick und Ausblick* (Stuttgart, 1991), 155-81; see also J. Duchemin, *Mythes grecs et sources orientales* (Paris, 1995); R. Rollinger, “Altorientalische Motive in der frühgriechischen Literatur am Beispiel der homerischen Epen,” in C. Ulf (ed.), *Wege zur Genese griechischer Identität: Die Bedeutung der früharchaischen Zeit* (Berlin, 1996), 156-210. Science, philosophy: O. Neugebauer, *Exact Sciences in Antiquity* (Providence, 1957); D. R. Dicks, *Early Greek Astronomy to Aristotle* (London, 1970); G. E. R. Lloyd, “The Debt of Greek Philosophy and Science to the Near East,” in id., *Methods and Problems in Greek Science* (Cambridge, 1991), 278-98; A. Pichot, *La naissance de la science* (Paris 1991); L. Zhmud, *Wissenschaft, Philosophie und Religion im frühen Pythagoreismus* (Berlin, 1996), 179-93, 261-70. On the other issues mentioned, see the bibliography cited in Raaflaub and Müller-Luckner, *Anfänge* (as in n. 2), xviii n. 40; in addition: S. P. Morris, *Daidalos and the Origins of Greek Art* (Princeton, 1992); H. Matthäus, “Zur Rezeption orientalischer Kunst-, Kultur- und Lebensformen in Griechenland,” in Raaflaub and Müller-Luckner, *Anfänge* (as in n. 2), 165-86. Generally: T. J. Dunbabin, *The Greeks and their Eastern Neighbors: Studies in the Relations between Greece and the Countries of the Near*

*East in the Eighth and Seventh Centuries B.C.* (London, 1957); W. Helck, *Die Beziehungen Ägyptens und Vorderasiens zur Ägäis bis ins 7. Jahrhundert v. Chr.* (Darmstadt, 1979); P. W. Haider, *Griechenland-Nordafrika: Ihre Beziehungen zwischen 1500 und 600 v. Chr.* (Darmstadt, 1988); id., “Griechen im Vorderen Orient und in Ägypten bis ca. 590 v. Chr.,” in Ulf, *Wege*, 59-115; W. Burkert, *The Orientalizing Revolution: Near Eastern Influence on Greek Culture in the Early Archaic Age* (Cambridge MA, 1992); G. Kopcke and I. Tokumaru (eds.), *Greece between East and West: 10th to 8th Centuries B.C.* (Mainz, 1992); S. Burstein, “Greek Contact with Egypt and the Levant: ca. 1600-500 B.C.,” *Ancient World* 27 (1996), 20-28; West, *East Face of Helicon* (cited above).

<sup>7</sup> H. Schwabl, “Das Bild der fremden Welt bei den frühen Griechen,” in O. Reverdin (ed.), *Grecs et Barbares. Entretiens sur l’antiquité classique* 8 (Vandoeuvres-Geneva, 1962), 1-23; H. Diller, “Die Hellenen-Barbaren-Antithese im Zeitalter der Perserkriege,” *ibid.* 37-68; G. Walser, *Hellas und Iran* (Darmstadt, 1984), chap. 1; E. Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition through Tragedy* (Oxford, 1989); P. Georges, *Barbarian Asia and the Greek Experience* (Baltimore, 1994); see also O. Reverdin and B. Grange (eds.), *Hérodote et les peuples non grecs. Entretiens sur l’antiquité classique* 35 (Vandoeuvres-Geneva, 1990); A. Dihle, *Die Griechen und die Fremden* (Munich, 1994); R. Bichler, “Wahrnehmung und Vorstellung fremder Kultur: Griechen und Orient in archaischer und frühklassischer Zeit,” in M. Schuster (ed.), *Die Begegnung mit dem Fremden: Wertungen und Wirkungen in Hochkulturen vom Altertum bis zur Gegenwart* (Stuttgart, 1996), 51-74; I. Weiler, “Soziogenese und soziale Mobilität im archaischen Griechenland: Gedanken zur Begegnung mit den Völkern des Alten Orients,” in Ulf, *Wege* (as in n. 6), 211-39.

explore and understand much better – and on both sides – is less the fact or even range of such cultural interchange and influence than the preconditions that made them possible and the limits and exact modalities of transmission and effect. One of the decisive questions is how such foreign impulses were integrated into Greek – or, for that matter, Etruscan and Roman – culture. Another challenge consists of distinguishing carefully between various spheres or types of influence: I shall return to these issues.

At first sight the search for such influences in the sphere of early political thought seems promising. In Egypt a large and complex state emerged early. The organization and maintenance of this state and the legitimation of the power and rule of its king required forms of thinking that by the very nature of their purpose must have been “political.” City-state systems and territorial empires soon developed in Mesopotamia, Anatolia, and the Levant, succeeding each other in a constant process of rising and falling dynasties and powers and interacting with each other through diplomacy, alliances and wars. Both within these states and in their forms of interaction we should expect to find reflections of political thinking.<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, as explained earlier, this field of inquiry is still insufficiently developed.<sup>9</sup> In my brief and general remarks I shall focus on one major idea that pervades all societies concerned: that of

justice.<sup>10</sup>

In all these societies, “the giving of justice was an essential function of the ruler, whether king or tribal leader. Social injustice was an offence against the gods.” According to Egyptian thought, by nature human society was incapable of maintaining a viable and lasting social order; left to itself, it tended to be chaotic, unequal, and unjust, divided into poor and rich, weak and strong, oppressed and oppressors. Such inequality was understood as an expression of disorder, injustice, and untruth (*isfet*), as opposed to order, justice, and truth (*ma’at*). *Ma’at* was not equality but an order in which oppression was avoided, the strong protected the weak, and the weak, in a system of mutual obligation, supported the strong through obedience and loyalty. Jan Assmann calls this the principle of “vertical solidarity.” Accordingly, the Egyptian ideology of kingship emphasized the pharaoh’s protective function and his responsibility for justice and order. The supreme god had established the king “to dispense justice among his people, to placate the gods, to realize *ma’at*, and to destroy *isfet*.” Hence, too, the state, rooted in divine order, was seen as indispensable for protecting humans from each other and providing a strong framework for justice and order. It was the individual’s obligation to fit himself by word and deed into this system of good order.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> See, e.g., M. T. Larsen (ed.), *Power and Propaganda: A Symposium on Ancient Empires* (Copenhagen, 1979), and several chapters in Raaflaub and Müller-Luckner, *Anfänge* (as in n. 2).

<sup>9</sup> H. Frankfort et al., *The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man: An Essay on Speculative Thought in the Ancient Near East* (Chicago, 1946) is an exception. See also E. Voegelin, *Order and History*, vol. 1: *Israel and Revelation* (Baton Rouge, 1956); P. Weber-Schäfer, *Einführung in die antike politische Theorie*, vol. 1: *Die Frühzeit* (Darmstadt, 1976); J.-P. Vernant, *The Origins of Greek Thought* (Ithaca NY, 1982).

<sup>10</sup> See recently, B. Halpern and D. W. Hobson (eds.), *Law, Politics and Society in the Ancient Mediterranean*

*World* (Sheffield, 1993); K. D. Irani and M. Silver (eds.), *Social Justice in the Ancient World* (Westport CT, 1995); J. Assmann, B. Janowski, and M. Welker (eds.), *Gerechtigkeit: Richten und Retten in der abendländischen Tradition und ihren altorientalischen Ursprüngen* (Munich, 1998).

<sup>11</sup> H. W. F. Saggs, *Civilizations before Greece and Rome* (New Haven CT, 1989), chap. 8 (cit. 156); J. Assmann, *Ma’at. Gerechtigkeit und Unsterblichkeit im Alten Ägypten* (Munich, 1990); id., “Politisierung durch Polarisierung. Zur impliziten Axiomatik altägyptischer Politik,” in Raaflaub and Müller-Luckner, *Anfänge* (as in n. 2), 13-28 (22 on “vertical solidarity”); J. A. Wilson, “Egypt,” in Frankfort et al., *Intellectual Adventure* (as in

Similar concepts of divinely sanctioned justice are found in Mesopotamia and Iran.<sup>12</sup> In Mesopotamia, too, the human world order was supposed to reflect the order of the divine cosmos. It was the individual's duty to meet his obligations at his place in this order. The highest god was represented at the head of the state by the king who was ruler and supreme judge. As Thorkild Jacobsen puts it, "The national kingship was the guaranty of... the orderly, lawful pattern of life. Its function in the world was to give protection against enemies external and internal, to insure the reign of justice and righteousness in human affairs." Despite these principles, justice was long seen as a favor that could not be claimed but obtained only through the right connections on the divine and human levels. In the second millennium, however, the perspective gradually shifted and the idea of justice as a right began to prevail. In the prologue of his great publication of laws, Hammurabi claims to have been appointed

by the gods "to make justice appear in the land, to destroy the evil and wicked so that the strong might not oppress the weak." Whatever their exact nature and function, collections of laws like Hammurabi's stand at the beginning of a long development in the sphere of the enactment of written law which produced the early Greek and Roman law collections, eventually resulted in the massive late antique codifications of Theodosius and Justinian, and shaped western law, legal procedure and legal thought into our own century.<sup>13</sup> A similarly influential tradition originated in thoughts about social justice among the ancient Hebrews – thoughts, furthermore, that were presented to rulers and people alike by charismatic prophets who were unique both in claiming direct inspiration by the one and only God and in denouncing "particular cases of social evils, holding up any individual, however powerful, to public condemnation."<sup>14</sup>

A general concern for justice and good order sanctioned by the supreme gods; the

n. 9), 31-122; J. Baines, "Kingship, Definition of Culture, and Legitimation," in D. O'Connor and D. P. Silverman (eds.), *Ancient Egyptian Kingship* (Leiden, 1995), 3-47; S. N. Morschauer, "The Ideological Basis for Social Justice/Responsibility in Ancient Egypt," in Irani and Silver (as in n. 10), 101-14; D. Lorton, "Legal and Social Institutions of Pharaonic Egypt," in J. M. Sasson et al. (eds.), *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, vol. 1 (New York, 1995), 345-62. Further bibl. in O'Connor and Silverman, 301-38.

<sup>12</sup> On Old-Persian *arta*: P. Briant, "Social and Legal Institutions in Achaemenid Iran," in Sasson, *Civilizations* (as in n. 11), 517-28, at 523; id., *Histoire de l'Empire Perse de Cyrus à Alexandre* (Paris, 1996), 138-39 and chap. 6.

<sup>13</sup> Th. Jacobsen, "Mesopotamia," in Frankfort et al., *Intellectual Adventure* (as in n. 9), 125-219 (cit. 197); Wilcke, "Politik" (as in n. 3); R. Westbrook, "Social Justice in the Ancient Near East," in Irani and Silver, *Social Justice* (as in n. 10), 149-63; B. R. Foster, "Social Reform in Ancient Mesopotamia," in Irani and Silver, 165-78; S. Greengus, "Legal and Social Institutions of Ancient Mesopotamia," in Sasson, *Civilizations* (as in n. 11), 469-84, at 471-72; A. Berlin (ed.), *Religion and Politics in the Ancient Near East* (Potomac MD, 1996). On the laws of Hammurabi: R. Westbrook, "Cuneiform Law Codes and the Origins of Legislation," *Zeitschrift*

*für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie* 79 (1989), 201-22; J. Bottéro, *Mesopotamia: Writing, Reasoning, and the Gods* (Chicago, 1992), ch. 10; cit.: Greengus, "Legal and Social Institutions," 471. Similarly, in the inscription on his tomb in Naqš-i Rostam, the Persian King Darius declares: "By the will of Ahura-Mazda, I am such that I am favorable to the just and unfavorable to the unjust: I do not want the weak to submit to the will of the strong, nor do I want the strong to experience wrong on the part of the weak!" (Briant, *Histoire* [as in n. 12], 224 [my transl.]; cf. id., "Social and Legal Institutions" [as in n. 12], 522). Influence on western codes: R. Westbrook, "The Nature and Origin of the XII Tables," *Zeitschrift für Rechtsgeschichte, rom. Abt.* 105 (1988), 74-121; R. Sealey, *The Justice of the Greeks* (Ann Arbor, 1994), chap. 2.

<sup>14</sup> Saggs (as in n. 10), 15-16. See W. A. Irwin, "The Hebrews," in Frankfort et al., *Intellectual Adventure* (as in n. 9), 223-360; Voegelin, *Israel* (as in n. 9); M. Silver, "Prophets and Markets Revisited," in Irani and Silver, *Social Justice* (as in n. 10), 179-98; K. Seybold and J. von Ungern-Sternberg, "Amos und Hesiod. Aspekte eines Vergleichs," in Raaflaub and Müller-Luckner, *Anfänge* (as in n. 2), 215-40; H. Avalos, "Legal and Social Institutions in Canaan and Ancient Israel," in Sasson, *Civilizations* (as in n. 11), 615-32.

king as supreme leader in charge of maintaining and dispensing justice; the enactment of written law as a means to enhance justice; and a concept of social justice that protects the weaker members of society from abuse of power by the stronger (including the possibility, attested widely in the ancient Near East, of cancelling debts to offer relief to the impoverished):<sup>15</sup> these are phenomena that find obvious parallels in archaic Greece. It is especially striking that Hesiod, who strongly insists on the importance of justice to the well-being of human society, draws broadly on Near Eastern traditions. Solon, the early sixth-century Athenian lawgiver, also emphasizes the need to uphold divinely supported justice and, like the Near Eastern king, steps between the rich and the poor, the strong and the weak to protect both from each other; he urges the restoration of a traditional form of “good order” (*eunomia*) that shows remarkable similarities to the Egyptian concept of *ma'at*; he introduces measures of debt relief and thereby realizes a central concern of Near Eastern social justice, and he is the author of perhaps the most comprehensive collection of laws enacted in archaic Greece.<sup>16</sup> Given such correspondences, it is tempting to assume that the political thinking of these two men was also directly influenced by Near Eastern precedents.<sup>17</sup>

This is probably true to some extent – but things are more complex. There exist, for example, interesting similarities between

Hesiod and his near-contemporary, the Hebrew prophet Amos, and recently the suggestion was made that, rather than searching for individual traces of direct influences, we should consider as the source of such analogies an intellectual *koinē* in the Eastern Mediterranean of the first part of the first millennium.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, the Greeks' own views of Near Eastern antecedents are often naive and questionable; I shall come back to this.

For all these reasons, we should appreciate real analogies without overlooking obvious and important differences. In Near Eastern societies, legislation and jurisdiction are the responsibility of the king and his appointees. Although he may react to, or anticipate, popular complaints, he alone decides whether and how to act, and when he acts it is usually to uphold divinely sanctioned order. For example, the measure of debt cancellation is introduced at the Mesopotamian king's assumption of power and at irregular intervals during his reign; it is designed to give temporary, not permanent relief, to demonstrate the king's care for his people, and to increase his popularity. Irregularity and unpredictability insure the measure's success; even when it is institutionalized to take place in regular intervals – as in Israel, at the initiative of priestly circles opposed to the kings – it is legitimized directly by the highest divine authority.<sup>19</sup> In Greece, the principle of upholding justice is voiced as a demand by the

<sup>15</sup> See Westbrook, “Social Justice” (as in n. 13), and the comment by V. Haas in Raaflaub and Müller-Luckner, *Anfänge* (as in n. 2), 378.

<sup>16</sup> Hesiod: above n. 6. On Solon, see recently K.-W. Welwei, *Athen: vom neolithischen Siedlungsplatz zur archaischen Grosspolis* (Darmstadt, 1992), 150-206; O. Murray, *Early Greece* (2d ed. Cambridge MA, 1993), chap. 11; K. Raaflaub, “Solone, la nuova Atene e l'emergere della politica,” in S. Settis (ed.), *I Greci*, vol. II.1 (Turin, 1996), 1035-81. See esp. frgs. 4 and 36 in M. West, *Iambi et Elegi Graeci Ante Alexandrum Cantati* (2d ed. Oxford, 1992). *Eunomia* and *ma'at*: V. Fadinger, “Solons Eunomia-Lehre und die Gerechtigkeitsidee der

altorientalischen Schöpfungsherrschaft,” in H.-J. Gehrke and A. Möller (eds.), *Vergangenheit und Lebenswelt: Soziale Kommunikation, Traditionsbildung und historisches Bewusstsein* (Tübingen, 1996), 179-218. His position in the middle: frgs. 36.20-27; 37; 5 West.

<sup>17</sup> In the case of Solon, a strong ancient tradition suggests this as well; but see the bibl. cited in n. 31 below.

<sup>18</sup> Seybold and von Ungern-Sternberg, “Amos und Hesiod” (as in n. 14) with bibl. Cf. E. M. Yamauchi, “Two Reformers Compared: Solon of Athens and Nehemiah of Jerusalem,” in *The Bible World: Essays in Honor of C. H. Gordon* (New York, 1980), 269-92.

<sup>19</sup> Westbrook, “Social Justice” (as in n. 13); cf. M. I.

powerless (Hesiod) and realized programmatically, upon massive popular pressure, by an elected mediator (Solon). Protest and reform are prompted by the elite's failure to live up to their obligation. This obligation is founded not in divine law outside or above society but in communal values and norms. Jurisdiction is the responsibility of all members of the aristocracy and handled, individually or collectively, in a public setting. Written law is enacted, upon communal approval, by lawgivers whose mandate rests on a decision by the entire community. The cancellation of debt in Athens is only the prelude to much more incisive measures: the permanent abolition of debt bondage and an initial fixation of the free citizens' political rights and responsibilities.<sup>20</sup> [Based on these and other observations, some scholars see democracy substantially realized already in Solon's time.<sup>21</sup> By contrast, in my view all the phenomena discussed here represent necessary preconditions, but remote antecedents of a truly democratic system as it was realized in Ath-

ens by the middle of the fifth century. Rather, I think, these phenomena can still be explained by renewed awareness and further development, in a time of marked class differences and conflicts, of the elementary egalitarian foundations upon which the Greek polis emerged, and which are best expressed by the triple function, visible already in Homer and Hesiod, of the citizen as landowner, soldier, and assemblyman.<sup>22</sup>]

Overall, then, in the aspects discussed here Near Eastern influence was partial. It gave crucial impulses and suggested means and procedures (such as the cancellation of debts or the inscribing of laws on stone). But the scope, purpose, realization, and social-political significance of such measures in the Greek context were determined by the structure and needs of the polis and its society and, since these differed greatly from Near Eastern societies, turned out to be different, too.

In fact, the differences seem to be substantial. For example, the relations of the Near Eastern kings and the archaic leaders

Finley, "Debt-Bondage and the Problem of Slavery," in id., *Economy and Society in Ancient Greece* (New York, 1982), 150-66, esp. at 162-63. Role of the people: M. A. Dandamayev, "The Neo-Babylonian Citizens," *Klio* 63 (1981), 45-49; E. W. Robinson, *The First Democracies: Early Popular Government Outside Athens. Historia Einzelschrift* 107 (Stuttgart, 1997), 16-22 with bibl.

<sup>20</sup> K. Raaflaub, *Die Entdeckung der Freiheit. Vestigia* 37 (Munich, 1985), 54-65; id., "Solone" (as in n. 16), 1062-71; P. B. Manville, *The Origins of Citizenship in Ancient Athens* (Princeton, 1990), chap. 6. On lawgivers: M. Gagarin, *Early Greek Law* (Berkeley, 1986), chaps. 3-4; W. Eder, "The Political Significance of the Codification of Law in Archaic Societies," in K. Raaflaub (ed.), *Social Struggles in Archaic Rome* (Berkeley, 1986), 262-300; K.-J. Hölkamp, "Written Law in Archaic Greece," *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 38 (1992), 87-117; id., "Arbitrators, Lawgivers and the 'Codification of Law' in Archaic Greece," *Metis* 7 (1992), 49-81; id., *Schiedsrichter, Gesetzgeber und Gesetzgebung im archaischen Griechenland. Historia Einzelschrift* 131 (Stuttgart, 1999); H.-J. Gehrke, "Gesetz und Konflikt: Überlegungen zur frühen Polis," in J. Bleicken (ed.), *Colloquium aus Anlass des 80. Geburtstages von Alfred Heuss* (Kallmünz, 1993) 49-67; Sealey, *Justice* (as in n. 13), chap. 2. More generally, see C.

Meier, *The Greek Discovery of Politics* (Cambridge MA, 1990), chap. 3.

<sup>21</sup> E.g., E. Ruschenbusch, "Zur Verfassungsgeschichte Griechenlands," in K. H. Kinzl (ed.), *Demokratia: Der Weg zur Demokratie bei den Griechen* (Darmstadt, 1995), 432-45, at 440-45; R. Wallace, "Solonian Democracy," in I. Morris and K. Raaflaub (eds.), *Democracy 2500? Questions and Challenges* (Dubuque, Iowa, 1997), 11-29. *Contra*: e.g., Raaflaub, "Power in the Hands of the People: Foundations of Athenian Democracy," *ibid.* 31-66, at 38-39, 50-53.

<sup>22</sup> Polis and equality: Vernant, *Origins* (as in n. 9), esp. chap. 4; I. Morris, "The Strong Principle of Equality and the Archaic Origins of Greek Democracy," in J. Ober and C. Hedrick (eds.), *Demokratia: A Conversation on Democracies, Ancient and Modern* (Princeton, 1996), 19-48; K. Raaflaub, "Equalities and Inequalities in Athenian Democracy," *ibid.* 139-74, at 150-53. Soldiers and assemblymen in Homer: Raaflaub, "Citizens, Soldiers, and the Evolution of the Early Greek Polis," in L. Mitchell and P. J. Rhodes (eds.), *The Development of the Polis in Archaic Greece* (London, 1997), 49-59; id., "Politics and Interstate Relations in the World of Early Greek Poleis: Homer and Beyond," *Antichthon* 31 (1997), 1-27.

(*basileis*) to their supreme gods differ strongly. Accordingly, political and religious structures and thinking are much more intertwined in the Near East than in Greece. The early Greek poets certainly attribute to the gods (particularly Zeus) an important role as promoters and enforcers of justice, but the problems with which their political thinking is concerned fit into an entirely human framework of cause and effect. The gods are thought to punish evildoers and their communities and, through seers, poets, or leaders blessed by them, to offer advice about salutary measures to be taken in a crisis, but they neither cause nor resolve such a crisis. Rather, the crisis is recognized as having been caused by specific human mistakes or irresponsible acts within a given society, and it must be resolved by that society itself. It is man's responsibility for the well-being of his community, therefore, upon which Greek political reflection focuses from the very beginning. This is obvious already in Homer and Hesiod, and Solon makes it explicit.<sup>23</sup> In other words, in Greece political thinking does not originate in a setting of comprehensive and absolute divine order and justice, the maintenance of which is recognized as the supreme duty of the divinely authorized and legitimized king; it does not, as in Egypt, stand in the horizon of *ma'at* or, as in Mesopotamia, in that of a comprehensive conception of the cosmos as a state, nor again, as in Israel, in that of the laws of Yahweh.

To illustrate these differences further, I focus for a moment on the Mesopotamian idea of the cosmos as a hierarchically struc-

tured state that is ruled by the gods under the leadership of the sky god, Anu. The human world structurally corresponds to the cosmos; in cosmic hierarchy, man's position corresponds to that of slaves in human society. It is the function of humans and state to serve the gods and to perpetuate the cosmic order. The individual, whether high or low, is tied into a strict hierarchy that determines the system of values and norms. To cite Jacobsen,

In a civilization which sees the whole universe as a state, obedience must necessarily stand out as a prime virtue. For a state is built on obedience, on the unquestioned acceptance of authority. It can cause no wonder, therefore, to find that in Mesopotamia the 'good life' was the 'obedient life.'<sup>24</sup>

It would seem that in such a system the individual's freedom of action was restricted; independence of mind and thought were not valued; political thinking almost by definition was restricted to the ruling circles and focused on legitimizing the existing order and distribution of power in order to secure their stability and permanence. The king's responsibility to maintain social justice equally served the primary purpose of anticipating dissatisfaction and stabilizing the system.

The contrast between this type of society and that of the early Greek poleis seems rather stark.<sup>25</sup> To emphasize just a few aspects, Greek society was not dominated by a sacred kingship; obedience and subordination were not the principal virtues. Authority was not unassailable; criticism and

<sup>23</sup> Esp. *Odyssey* 1.32-44; Solon 4 West; see Raaflaub, "Die Anfänge des politischen Denkens bei den Griechen," *Historische Zeitschrift* 248 (1989) 1-32, at 27; "Solone" (as in n. 16), 1058-59. The different concepts of the origins of evil are illustrative: in Hesiod humankind receives the evils as punishment for the wrongs committed by its champion, Prometheus (*Theogony* 521-616; *Works and Days* 47-106); the analogy with the

suffering experienced by the entire polis because of the injustice of one man (*Works and Days* 238-47) is evident. In Sumerian myth the evils were created at the whim of some gods who momentarily forgot their responsibility (Jacobsen, "Mesopotamia" [as in n. 13], 165).

<sup>24</sup> See Jacobsen, "Mesopotamia" (as in n. 13), 138-39, 202.

<sup>25</sup> See Vernant, *Origins* (as in n. 9).

independence were not discouraged. Whatever the situation in the Bronze Age had been, after the turmoils of the “Dark Ages” no large and centralized territorial states emerged around the Aegean world – which for centuries was left to itself and developed outside the power sphere of major empires. In this world, the polis – usually translated as “city-state” but better labelled a “citizen-state” – gradually became the predominant form of community; interactions within and among a multitude of these mostly small communities determined outlook and thought of the Greeks.<sup>26</sup>

From about the mid-seventh century, wars, mostly in the form of conflicts between neighboring poleis, usually did not threaten the survival of the community. The leadership in these poleis was weak; the overall leader (*basileus*) was a *primus inter pares* whose position was based on his personal resources and qualities. The members of the “proto-aristocratic” leading class of *basileis* depicted in the epics of Homer and Hesiod enjoyed basic equality, despite differences in wealth, power, and authority. In their intensive competition, the paramount *basileus* was vulnerable to criticism like everyone else (in the *Iliad*, Agamemnon and Hector illustrate this impressively).<sup>27</sup> Although the elite was ambitious, their efforts to set up barriers against the other

members of the community failed because, despite their glorious self-presentation, only a relatively small gap separated them from the broad class of independent farmers. These “masses” played an indispensable role in the communal army and assembly; hence, as said earlier, polis society was founded on a strong egalitarian component. The elite therefore depended on the farmers, had to recognize and respect their sentiments and were in turn open to criticism – and the poleis as small and open communities provided fertile ground for criticism and conflict.<sup>28</sup>

I could go on but this should suffice to make my point. Needless to say, my conclusions, preliminary though they are, are not intended to imply any kind of value judgement. Near Eastern political thinking served the needs of societies, communities, and states that differed greatly from their early Greek counterparts; accordingly, such thinking was different in nature, function and expression. Nothing else should be expected. Hence the influence of Near Eastern political thought on early Greek political reflection, although by no means negligible, was perhaps more limited than is suggested at first sight by the broad range of influences in other spheres of culture that have been emphasized in recent research.

<sup>26</sup> On the connection between the nature of early Greek society and the emergence of political thought and, eventually, democracy, see many publications by C. Meier, including “Die Griechen: die politische Revolution der Weltgeschichte,” *Saeculum* 33 (1982) 133-47; “Die Entstehung einer autonomen Intelligenz bei den Griechen,” in id., *Die Welt der Geschichte und die Provinz des Historikers* (Berlin, 1989) 70-100; “The Emergence of the Trend toward Isonomy,” in id., *The Greek Discovery* (as in n. 20), chap. 3. On the nature and origins of the polis, see recently M. H. Hansen (ed.), *The Ancient*

*Greek City-State* (Copenhagen, 1993); id., *Polis and City-State: An Ancient Concept and Its Modern Equivalent* (Copenhagen, 1998).

<sup>27</sup> K. Raaflaub, “Die Anfänge” (as in n. 23); “Homeric Society,” in I. Morris and B. Powell (eds.), *A New Companion to Homer* (Leiden, 1997), 624-48; “Politics” (as in n. 22).

<sup>28</sup> For discussion of all these aspects, see C. G. Starr, *The Economic and Social Growth of Early Greece 800-500 B.C.* (New York, 1977), chap. 6, and the bibl. cited in n. 22 above.

## Thoughts on Future Research

I turn now to offering a few suggestions for future research. Some of them have already emerged in what I said earlier and are rather elementary. I wish to emphasize that I do not have a personal stake in the issues under consideration here; I am a missionary neither for Near Eastern or Egyptian nor for Greek primacy or supremacy, and it makes no difference to me whether and to what extent Greek civilization was indigenous or derivative. What interests me is the problem of cultural influence and interaction as such, and how we can arrive at a balanced and constructive assessment.

First, it seems crucial to increase knowledge and familiarity across disciplinary boundaries. This process is underway. It was initiated not least by some contributors to the current volume, and stimulated especially in the United States by the “Bernal effect” and by the tendency of some academic Deans to combine Classics in joint departments with Religious or Near Eastern Studies. It now needs to be consolidated by joint conferences or projects (like that begun by our Finnish colleagues and underlying this volume) and enhanced further by increased collaboration on all levels and by publications that are based on solid scholarship but directed toward nonspecialists.

More specifically, in my view, familiarity needs to improve especially concerning the nature and limitations of the extant sources. Ancient texts convey multiple meanings and serve their own purposes; what they are supposed to tell their readers or listeners is not necessarily identical with what a superficial reading seems to convey,

and reconstruction of historical reality on the basis of such texts can be hazardous. Many Mesopotamian texts are mythical and religious. To us Hellenists it is important to learn what they can and cannot tell us about social and political conditions or views in the world in which they were produced.<sup>29</sup> Greek texts are often historical; having grown up with modern notions of historical objectivity, insiders and outsiders still tend to assume that something close to Ranke’s ideal is valid for Herodotus’ and Thucydides’ *Histories* as well. It is not! Recent research has shown to what extent, for example, Herodotus’ narrative is determined by the fact that the past was considered interesting not so much in and of itself but primarily insofar as it was meaningful to the present: what was reported was selected and molded accordingly.<sup>30</sup>

I mention an example that is especially important for our present purposes. Herodotus, Plato, Diodorus and many other Greek authors tell stories about Greek borrowings from Egypt and travels of Greek sages and lawgivers especially to this country. (Interestingly, although overall Mesopotamian influence on Greek culture probably was more comprehensive than that of Egypt, comparable reports of Greek travels to Mesopotamia are rare.) Some of these stories are perhaps based on vague memories or traditions but most are the result of rationalizations and constructs, serving the function of etiological myths. The Greeks admired ancient civilizations (especially that of Egypt), were obsessed with the principle of the “first discoverer” (*prōtos*

<sup>29</sup> See Wilcke, “Politik” (as in n. 3).

<sup>30</sup> E.g., C. W. Fornara, *Herodotus: An Interpretative Essay* (Oxford, 1971); K. Raaflaub, “Herodotus, Political Thought, and the Meaning of History,” in D. Boedeker and J. Peradotto (eds.), *Herodotus and the Invention of*

*History*, *Arethusa* 20 (1987), 221-48; D. Lateiner, *The Historical Method of Herodotus* (Toronto, 1989). [Editor’s note: see also the contribution of R. Rollinger, “Herodotus and the Intellectual Heritage of the Ancient Near East,” in this volume, pp. 65-83.]

*heuretēs*), and tended to analogize similar phenomena in different cultures. All this prevented them from perceiving differences behind superficial similarities and from recognizing the possibility of growth or discovery in more than one historical or cultural context; it induced them to assume that the later must depend on the earlier and to construct historical circumstances that explained such apparent influences – hence famous thinkers were supposed to have travelled to Egypt where they were inspired by ancient wisdom. Although often taken literally, such stories usually do not represent historical fact. That Solon traveled to Egypt is possible; that he had some knowledge of Near Eastern methods of debt relief is likely, but that his radical cancellation of debts (*seisachtheia*) was inspired by precise information on similar measures introduced by, of all people, Bokchoris (24th dynasty), one of the least-known and least distinguished pharaohs of the period, is extremely unlikely.<sup>31</sup>

Second, responding to an urgent need to set the record straight, recent scholarship has focused vigorously on tracing Near Eastern influences on Greek culture. As a result, the impression has been reinforced which Erich Stier formulated already in 1950, when it was still necessary to emphasize it: “In view of this situation it would not be wrong at all to ask what in archaic Hellas did not come from the Orient.”<sup>32</sup> This is obviously exaggerated, and Stier himself, like many others, gave a compelling response to his question: what is decisive is

what the Greeks made of such impulses and how they integrated into their own culture what they learned from others. After all, despite these stimuli and influences, Greek culture is not a mere derivative of Mesopotamian or Egyptian culture, and crucial factors that prompted its specific development and character (such as the notions of freedom, equality, and civic government) apparently cannot be explained by outside influences. Every culture, I think, represents a combination of influences, adaptations, and indigenous developments. What is accepted, unless it is imposed by outside force, depends, among other factors, on local conditions and the needs and interests of local elites. Hence we should now focus on the question of *how* the Greeks integrated and adapted outside impulses and in what ways and why the result of this process of adaptation and transformation differed from the initial impulse. Let me illustrate this with two examples, taken from the social and political sphere.

Some scholars think that the type of community we traditionally call the Greek polis was heavily influenced in its formation by, or ultimately even derived from, Near Eastern antecedents. Even if they do not believe, as Bernal does, that the polis was imported wholesale from Phœnicia, so far those who emphasize its Phœnician roots have not explained under what conditions, how exactly, and to what extent such “roots” might have been “transplanted” into Greek soil and flourished there.<sup>33</sup> The formation of social and communal structures

<sup>31</sup> Diodorus 1.79.3-4, 96.2, 98.1; Fadinger, “Solons Eunomia-Lehre” (as in n. 16). See A. B. Lloyd, *Herodotus, Book II*, vol. I: *Introduction* (Leiden, 1975; repr. 1994), 49-60, 147-49; T. F. R. G. Braun, “The Greeks in the Near East,” “The Greeks in Egypt,” in *Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. III.3 (2nd ed. 1982), 1-31, 32-56, esp. 32-33, 53-55; Zhmud, *Wissenschaft* (as in n. 6), 65-69. On legends and travels of Greek lawgivers: A. Szegedy-Maszk, “Legends of Greek Lawgivers,” *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 19 (1978), 199-209; on the value

of Solon’s biographical tradition, M. Lefkowitz, *The Lives of the Greek Poets* (Baltimore, 1981), 40-48; cf. C. Mossé, “Comment s’élabore un mythe politique: Solon, ‘père fondateur’ de la démocratie athénienne,” *Annales ESC* 34 (1979), 425-37; Raaflaub, “Solone” (as in n. 16), 1035-38 with more bibl.

<sup>32</sup> H. E. Stier, “Probleme der frühgriechischen Geschichte und Kultur,” *Historia* 1 (1950), 195-230, at 227 (my transl.).

<sup>33</sup> R. Drews, “Phoenicians, Carthage and the Spartan

obviously is a complex process, responding to specific geophysical and demographic conditions, the developmental stage of the society involved, outside pressures and, yes, outside influences. If we knew more about the socio-political structures of the Phœnician city-states in the early first millennium, we would clearly be in a better position to judge.<sup>34</sup> Still, I would assume in principle that Phœnician influences could be effective, to the extent that they were, only because conditions in and around the Aegean favored similar developments and, this is crucial, because the Greeks were already far progressed on their way to developing a network of independent, self-contained and small communities (the future poleis) that served their own specific needs. We need to keep in mind that poleis did not develop in the entire area of Greek settlement, that local conditions differed greatly even where they did develop, that differences among poleis were considerable, that elsewhere in Greece poleis emerged much later and again under different conditions, and that similar types of communities evolved, for example, in central Italy in roughly the same period and in a process that began well before Greek or Phœnician influence could be effective.<sup>35</sup> Finally, even what little we know about the Phœnicians indicates that the differences between their city-states and the Greek poleis were as important as the similarities.

My second example is kingship. West has collected an impressive range of aspects in which archaic Greek kingship resembled at

least some forms of Near Eastern monarchy. Others, for example John Davies, have emphasized as well that “forms of monarchy closely comparable to those well attested in the Phœnician cities were palpably widespread in Archaic Greece, from Cyprus and Sparta through the *tagia* of Thessaly to the various ‘tyrant’ regimes of Ionia, the Aegean, and central Greece.”<sup>36</sup> The same could be said of the council of elders that is such an essential component of early Greek polis constitutions. Does that mean that the Greeks borrowed monarchy and council from the Phœnicians or elsewhere in the Near East? Hardly. Leadership by the outstanding member of a group or community and the tendency to make such leadership hereditary is typical of human societies. So is the evolution of a group of outstanding families whose heads share in communal deliberations and compete for influence and leadership. Anthropology and history provide innumerable examples for the fact that in the competition for distinction and influence among such families or individuals valuable prestige objects acquired from abroad or exchanged as gifts with peers in other communities, or behavior patterns and rituals observed elsewhere, assume crucial importance. Precious objects are attached to, and certain behavior patterns adopted with, rank and function; they all come to signify power and authority. In certain aspects, leadership or kingship thus end up resembling comparable institutions elsewhere, but the nature of the leadership function, and the leader’s role in

Eunomia,” *American Journal of Philology* 100 (1979), 45-58; F. Gschnitzer, “Die Stellung der Polis in der politischen Entwicklung des Altertums,” *Oriens antiquus* 27 (1988), esp. 300-302; Bernal, “Phœnician Politics” (as in n. 5); see the discussion in Raaflaub and Müller-Luckner, *Anfänge* (as in n. 2), 394-97.

<sup>34</sup> See recently M.-E. Aubet, *The Phœnicians and the West: Politics, Colonies and Trade* (Cambridge, 1993), chap. 5; S. F. Bondi, “Les institutions, l’organisation politique et administrative,” in V. Krings (ed.), *La civili-*

*sation phœnicienne et punique: Manuel de recherche* (Leiden, 1995), 290-302.

<sup>35</sup> See esp. J. K. Davies, “The ‘Origins of the Greek Polis’: Where Should We Be Looking?,” in Mitchell and Rhodes, *Development* (as in n. 22), 25-38 and, on Italy, C. Smith, “Servius Tullius, Cleisthenes and the Emergence of the Polis in Central Italy,” *ibid.* 208-16.

<sup>36</sup> See West, *East Face of Helicon* (as in n. 6), 14-19; Davies, “Origins” (as in n. 35), 33-34.

the social, religious, and political context of his society remain embedded in the conditions that characterize this specific society. Indeed, upon closer inspection, kingship and leadership in the Greek polis are markedly different from Near Eastern, even Phœnician, models. The same is true of tyranny which is often thought to be derived wholesale from the east (esp. Lydia).<sup>37</sup> Quite rightly, therefore, Davies continues, “This is not to suggest precise knowledgeable borrowings on the part of Greeks so much as the sort of awareness of institutions in Assyria or Phœnicia or Egypt which mercenaries, craftsmen, and *emporoi* will inevitably have gained and brought back.”<sup>38</sup>

Hence, this is my third point, we need to look at the issue of Near Eastern influence more cautiously, differentiate more carefully, and avoid misleading generalizations. Similarities and correspondences may indicate influences, but often of specific aspects, not necessarily of the whole thing. Because a Near Eastern thing corresponding to a Greek thing existed earlier in the Near East, it was not necessarily imported wholesale from there to Greece. The diffusion of objects of art and material culture, of myths and cults, political and social structures, and finally political concepts and ideas probably followed markedly different patterns.<sup>39</sup> What we need to understand much better than we currently do, is how and under what conditions such influences worked. To put it simply: what got imported and accepted, how and why, and how was it integrated and in the process transformed? And what, overall, was the impact of such influences and imports on the society involved? Roman society, for example, learned and integrated a lot both

from the Etruscans and from the Greeks; nevertheless, it retained its distinctive character and structures. The same is true of the Greeks. Obviously, in this investigation we can and have to learn much from anthropology.<sup>40</sup>

Fourth, so far relations between the Near Eastern and Greek cultures have been seen mostly as a one-way process. In the currently dominant picture, all influences come from the south and east and travel north and west; Egyptians, Mesopotamians, and Phœnicians, among others, are the donors, the Greeks, Italians, and other peoples in the western Mediterranean the recipients. Again, I have no personal stake in this; if it is correct, it is fine with me. But is it correct? Is it even likely? Should we not rather think of interaction and a process of mutual influence, with the nature, quantity, and direction of influences changing constantly? Certainly, initially Egyptian and Mesopotamian civilizations loomed large over the Greeks just emerging from the “Dark Ages” (however inappropriate this term may be): the Greeks had much to learn in many spheres, and they did so eagerly. But the traders who visited various places in the Levant – and even settled there – long before the Greek westward expansion began, the mercenaries who served in Egypt and other countries already in the seventh century, the settlers and merchants who venerated “Hellenic gods” in Naucratis – they all must have brought and left something in exchange for what they took back: initially probably not much more than services (their fighting power), raw materials (silver) and slaves. There are specific reasons why we do not know more about Greeks abroad before the late sixth century, but the rare hints

<sup>37</sup> Thus recently V. Fadinger, “Griechische Tyrannis und Alter Orient,” in Raaflaub and Müller-Luckner, *Anfänge* (as in n. 2), 263-316.

<sup>38</sup> See Davies, “Origins” (as in n. 35), 34.

<sup>39</sup> See my comment in Raaflaub and Müller-Luckner, *Anfänge* (as in n. 2), xxi.

<sup>40</sup> See S. C. Humphreys, “Diffusion, Comparison, Criticism,” *ibid.* 1-11.

that survive indicate that the picture was richer and more complex than is usually assumed. Gradually, the balance shifted; from the mid-sixth century the relationship was more even, and Greeks were sought after for their skills in the Achaemenid empire and elsewhere.<sup>41</sup> Just as the Athenians, as Margaret Miller has shown recently, were adopting Persian influences in their art and life style even at the height of their power, when they pretended most aggressively to be superior to the “barbarians,”<sup>42</sup> so too the highly civilized Near Easterners may have learned something from the Greeks centuries earlier, even though they might have considered them inferior and less civilized. To what extent the evidence allows us to trace this is another question, but I do believe it would be profitable to think more in terms of interaction than one-way influence.

Finally, as said before, certain concepts, structures and ideas (such as social justice

or debt relief) were widespread, valued highly, and presumably much debated in many countries around the eastern Mediterranean in the centuries under consideration. It is thus conceivable that such concepts “floated” widely in that area and that peoples or at least elites living there participated in a constant and intense exchange of ideas. This may be true for skills, knowledge and behavioral patterns as well. Hence the suggestion offered by Seybold and von Ungern-Sternberg at my Munich conference, that we should perhaps think of a cultural and intellectual *koinē* in that large area rather than specific influences, seems worth pursuing.<sup>43</sup> Of course, the one does not exclude the other, but my point is precisely that the processes in which we are interested were highly complex and multi-dimensional. We will never succeed in understanding them if we adhere to simple and single models or explanations.

<sup>41</sup> Levant: S. Aro, “Keramikfunde als Hinweis auf die Euböer als Kulturvermittler zwischen dem Vorderen Orient und Italien,” *Hamburger Beiträge zur Archäologie* 19/20 (1992/93, publ. 1995), 215-34; A. M. Snodgrass, “The Growth and Standing of the Early Western Colonies,” in G. R. Tsetschkladze and F. De Angelis (eds.), *The Archaeology of Greek Colonisation: Essays Dedicated to Sir John Boardman* (Oxford, 1994), 1-10; J. C. Waldbaum, “Greeks in the East or Greeks and the East? Problems in the Definition and Recognition of Presence,” *Bulletin of the American School of Oriental Research* 305 (1997), 1-17. (I thank S. Aro for these references.) Mercenaries: H. W. Parke, *Greek Mercenary Soldiers from the Earliest Times to the Battle of Ipsus*

(Oxford, 1933), chap. 1. On Greeks in Mesopotamia and Egypt, see the bibl. cited in nn. 6, 7 (Walser, *Hellas und Iran*, chap. 5), and 31 (Braun). On Naukratis, see recently H. Bowden, “The Greek Settlement and Sanctuaries at Naukratis: Herodotus and Archaeology,” in M. H. Hansen and K. Raaflaub (eds.), *More Studies in the Ancient Greek Polis, Historia Einzelschrift* 108 (Stuttgart, 1996), 17-37; A. Möller, *Naukratis: Trade in Archaic Greece* (Oxford, 1999).

<sup>42</sup> M. Miller, *Athens and Persia in the Fifth Century B.C.: A Study in Cultural Receptivity* (Cambridge, 1997).

<sup>43</sup> Seybold and Ungern-Sternberg, “Amos und Hesiod” (as in n. 14), esp. 233-36.