

# Herodotus and the Origins of Political Philosophy

The Beginnings of Western Thought  
from the Viewpoint of its Impending End

A doctoral thesis by  
O. H. Linderborg



UPPSALA  
UNIVERSITET

Dissertation presented at Uppsala University to be publicly examined in Engelska Parken, 7-0042, Thunbergsvägen 3H, Uppsala, Monday, 3 September 2018 at 14:00 for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The examination will be conducted in English. Faculty examiner: Docent Elton Barker (Open University).

### **Abstract**

Linderborg, O. H. 2018. *Herodotus and the Origins of Political Philosophy. The Beginnings of Western Thought from the Viewpoint of its Impending End.* 224 pp. Uppsala: Department of Linguistics and Philology, Uppsala University. ISBN 978-91-506-2703-9.

This investigation proposes a historical theory of the origins of political philosophy. It is assumed that political philosophy was made possible by a new form of political thinking commencing with the inauguration of the first direct democracies in Ancient Greece. The pristine turn from elite rule to rule of the people – or to δημοκρατία, a term coined after the event – brought with it the first ever political theory, wherein fundamentally different societal orders, or different principles of societal rule, could be argumentatively compared. The inauguration of this alternative-envisioning “secular” political theory is equaled with the beginnings of classical political theory and explained as the outcome of the conjoining of a new form of constitutionalized political thought (cratistic thinking) and a new emphasis brought to the inner consistency of normative reasoning (‘internal critique’). The original form of political philosophy, Classical Political Philosophy, originated when a political thought launched, wherein non-divinely sanctioned visions of transcendence of the prevailing rule, as well as of the full range of alternatives disclosed by Classical Political Theory, first began to be envisioned. Each of the hypotheses forming the theory – the hypotheses concerning the Ancient Greek beginnings of a “secular”-autonomous political rationale, political theory and political philosophy – is weighed against central evidence provided by the *Histories* of Herodotus. The passages thus given new interpretations are the Deioeces episode in Book I, the Constitutional Debate in Book III and Xerxes’ War Councils in Book VII. Aside from the Herodotean evidence, a range of other relevant Greek literary sources from the archaic and classical ages – e.g. passages from Homer, Hesiod, several pre-Socratic thinkers, Plato and Aristotle – are duly taken into consideration. Included is also a reading of the Mytilenean Debate of Thucydides’ Book III, which shows how the political thought of the classical democracies worked in practice. Finally, the placing of the historical theory against a background of contemporary relevance provides an alternative to all text-oriented approaches not reckoning with the possibility of reaching historically plausible knowledge of real-world events and processes.

*Keywords:* Herodotus, Herodotean studies, origins of political philosophy, origins of political theory, early history of political thought, beginnings of Western civilization, contemporary social analysis, Sino-Hellenic studies

*Otto H. Linderborg, Department of Linguistics and Philology, Box 635, Uppsala University, SE-75126 Uppsala, Sweden.*

© Otto H. Linderborg 2018

ISBN 978-91-506-2703-9

urn:nbn:se:uu:diva-350646 (<http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:uu:diva-350646>)

# Acknowledgments

This thesis is mainly intended to add knowledge to the fields of Classical philology and history of political thought, but the nature of this investigation is present-oriented. The context of contemporary relevance that the historical theory defended here has been placed in is based on the works of a collection of writers in the fields of social analysis and economic theory. These are works that have appeared during the last decade and that deal with the perceived decay of our present world system, the system of industrial capitalism in its so-called neoliberal phase. Therewith, it should be understood that my research has the additional motive of giving new perspectives also with regard to questions related to the societal crisis inherent in our own time and place. The justification for using a study focusing on ancient texts and ancient societal systems in order to expound on questions of contemporary relevance is the following. Although researchers in historical subjects may never distort their sources to make them conform to their theories without turning their works into false accounts, it is still the case that the researcher's own worldview and own preoccupations determine which questions he or she pose to the sources. This study deals with questions of progressions within the Ancient Greek cultural sphere leading to the development of political thought into political theory and philosophy proper. In connection with this investigation, the questions asked therefore naturally take the form of a set of conceptual assumptions rising from the researcher's presuppositions of which kinds of progressions the investigated societies may have witnessed. To truthfully determine if these progressions really occurred in the Ancient Greek cultural sphere is the object of this investigation. However, that it is exactly these assumed progressions and not some others that form the centre of interest follows from the researcher's own understanding of which aspects of ancient moral and political thought could still be of major interest today – i.e., in the real-world context of what one now often finds described as our “present predicament.”

I am happy to mention the number of people in Uppsala who have assisted me greatly in my research. Of these people, my project leader, Johan Tralau, has been the most important background figure for my whole investigation. With regard to the question of the origins of political philosophy, it was Tralau's idea to turn the focus decisively to the historical developments detectable in arguments and argumentative techniques surrounding normative questions.

I found this suggestion so attractive that I chose to write my doctoral thesis under his supervision and as part of his project. If my own theory to some extent departs from Tralau's original idea of equalling the origins of political philosophy with the development of normative arguments of an internally critical kind, this is so mainly because of one reason. If the beginnings of political philosophy were to be equalled with progressions in normative critique, this would downplay the world-historical impact of the fundamental societal re-settling taking the form of the first completed turnover in the principle of rule, which was witnessed for the first time in the Ancient Greek world. This turnover was realized with the creation of the first full-scale direct democracies, and ultimately it was this event that made possible the amounting of internal critique in the Graeco-Roman cultural sphere as well.

Of others involved in Classical studies at Uppsala, I would like to especially thank the following people for contributing to my work. Fredrik Sixtensson, who is in the midst of writing his thesis on early Greek developments in central political and military terminology, has been of great help in my attempts to specify some of the breaks in constitutional terminology that occurred because of the breakthrough of δημοκρατία. Eric Cullhed, who entered as my supervisor at a late stage of the writing process, has challenged me to add more close readings of my Greek sources, and I think these additions have been important for the argument of my thesis. Patrik Klingborg and Axel Frejman, working in the field of Classical archaeology, have shown me the real Ancient Greek world on our trips together in Caria (modern-day Turkey) and the Peloponnese. Both of them have also assisted me in my attempts to form an adequate picture of early Archaic and Mycenaean Greek history, and I hope that I, in my turn, have been able to assist them correctly with the queries they have had of Greek passages in the sources they work with. Tuomo Nuorluoto, who is working on a doctoral thesis on Roman female names in the field of onomastics, has been a welcome reminiscence of my home country in a foreign land.

Of people working in the field of Herodotean studies abroad, one person deserves special notice. Rosalind Thomas, who welcomed me as an academic visitor at Oxford for some weeks in the early spring of 2016, has been a great inspiration for my work in that she has shown how directly connected the investigations of Herodotus truly were to the wider intellectual milieu of his time.

I will not mention any friends outside of academia, since I am afraid that I may forget some important person. Of family members, I would above all like to thank my mother Lena Linderborg (1958-2015) for never-ending unconditional love. I would also like to thank my father Henrik Linderborg for being a rock and always being there for me whatever I have tried to do – whether that would be a 90-kilometer cross-country ski race or writing a thesis. Onyinyechi Duru has been with me during the last year of this writing process, and has given me the inner and outer calm I so badly needed to be able to finish

my work. My sister Ellen Linderborg deserves special honour and recognition. When I had run out of money, and Swedish academia and Swedish society had shown me their most excluding face, she was willing to borrow from the funds she had inherited from our mother. Without her, I could never have finished this thesis. I can only take it, then, that she must have recognized the “same womb” community that only me and her can belong to now.<sup>1</sup>

Last but not least, I would like to thank Christian Meier for giving me the political.

---

<sup>1</sup> See Soph. *Ant.* 909-912. Cf. Hdt. 3.119.6.



# Contents

## ***Introduction: The Redeification of the Human Order; Approaching the Origins of Political Philosophy through the Histories of Herodotus 9***

*Ancient political thought and the failure of neoliberalism 9*

*The Histories of Herodotus 12*

*Herodotus and political thought, theory and philosophy 15*

*The historical theory and the heuristic assumptions 18*

*Reaction against postmodernism 20*

*Real world over and against text 21*

*The “I” as the present-oriented ἵστωρ 23*

*Aboriginal secularization 25*

*Classical Greek de-deification and the inaugurations of “secular”-autonomous political thought and political theory 28*

*Modern secularization vs. ancient “secularism” 31*

*Imperial redeification and the conceptual underpinnings of political philosophy 35*

*Structuring the investigation: modern theoreticians vs. ancient sources and the selection of evidence 37*

## ***Chapter 1: The End of Industrial Capitalism and the Fresh Relevance of the Question of the Origins of Political Philosophy; the Mytilenean Debate and the Trans-Historical Value of Egalitarian κράτος 42***

*The waning of industrial capitalism – and then what? 45*

*The fundamental discontinuity of the political and of political philosophy 49*

*The trans-historical value of egalitarian κράτος 55*

*The Mytilenean Debate and the working of autonomous political thinking 66*

## ***Chapter 2: The Greek Invention of Autonomous Political Thinking and the Deioeces-episode in the Μηδικὸς λόγος; Kingship Desacralized 73***

*Carl Schmitt and the contradistinction between liberal democracy and autonomous politics 75*

*Leo Strauss and the beginnings of the possibility of politics in the essential meaning of the term 78*

*The question of the value of modern-day politics and the extreme conception of autonomous political thinking 83*

*Kingship desacralized; the Deioces-episode and the finalizing of autonomous Political Thinking 87*

**Chapter 3: The Constitutional Debate and the Beginnings of Political Theory in Ancient Greece: a Two-Folded Hypothesis 97**

*Connecting the debate with the hypothesis and determining the real context of interest 99*

*Forming the hypothesis: cratistic thinking, internal critique and the heuristic assumption 106*

*Otanes for democracy, Megabyzus for oligarchy and Darius for monarchy 125*

*Outcome: the internal critique of Darius and the beginnings of Classical Political Theory 134*

**Chapter 4: The War Councils of Xerxes and the Emergence of Political Philosophy: Constructing a Theory of Absolute Beginnings 139**

*Louis Gernet and the idea of the advent of the Greek city-state as equaling the emergence of reason 142*

*Criticism of the essentialist conception of the Greek city-state 145*

*Jean-Pierre Vernant and the birth of philosophy as a “desacralizing” of knowledge: moving towards the theory of the origins of political philosophy 148*

*Xerxes’ War Councils and the beginnings of Classical Political Philosophy 155*

**Conclusion: The Origins of Political Philosophy – and the End of History and Progress? 164**

*Recapitulation of the theory 167*

*The contemporary relevance of the question of the origins of political philosophy 178*

**Appendix: The Warring States Period of Ancient China and the Classical Age of Ancient Greece; Internal Critique as a Trans-Cultural Phenomenon 184**

*The Axial Age and the societal setting of the Warring States Period 184*

*Ancient Chinese vs. Ancient Greek political utopias 187*

*Ancient Chinese internal critique 189*

*The origins of internal critique in Ancient Greece and China 193*



# Introduction: The Redeification of the Human Order; Approaching the Origins of Political Philosophy through the *Histories* of Herodotus

## **Ancient political thought and the failure of neoliberalism**

Political thinking, in one form or another, may have existed for as long as human beings have been living together. This is so because wherever humans have formed communities, there must also have been some kind of comprehension of morality and law, and thus a need to adjust this understanding to the realities of communal life; political thinking, like law and morals, is a human universal.<sup>2</sup> As to the question of the origins of each of these three, a speculative answer could be that they arose when our ancestors first began to make room for a “generalized other” – i.e., for the community at large – in their actions and in their thinking.<sup>3</sup>

Now, if political thinking has been around for as long as there have been communities, one could also claim that political theory and political philosophy must have been present in human societies for as long. Indeed, this would be the case if any kind of political thought would count as political theory and/or philosophy proper. In order to be meaningful, the question of the origins of political philosophy seems thus to require some conceptual assumptions, namely regarding what may, and what may not, be counted as theory and philosophy, properly speaking.

In this investigation, I propose a historical theory of the development of political thinking towards political theory and political philosophy, connecting them both to the inauguration of a particular kind of political thought. This specific strand of political thought – which I have labelled “secular”-autonomous political thinking (to be defined later) – I shall claim came into existence for the first time in history in Ancient Greece in the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. As it stands, the historical theory proposed here singles out three fundamental phases in the development of political thinking towards political theory and political philosophy proper in Ancient Greece. These are the inaugurations of autonomous political thinking (Chapter 2), of political theory (Chapter 3) and political philosophy proper (Chapter 4). In the context of this investigation, each of these three components has been given specific meanings. These

---

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Black 2009, 8.

<sup>3</sup> See Mead 1973, 384. Cf. Särkelä 2018.

meanings will be outlined later in this introduction, and will then be explicated more clearly in the respective chapters dealing with them.

The main ancient texts, against which I weigh my theoretical constructs, are the *Histories* of Herodotus and Thucydides, but these are certainly not the only authors upon which my work builds. Although constructed directly on the basis provided by works of hundreds of ancient writers and modern scholars, and indirectly on thousands more, the historical theory I propose here is – seen as a whole – new. The reason I put forward this theory now is that I believe in its historical plausibility as well as in its contemporary relevance.

The theory as it is presented in the present investigation may be recast as a series of hypotheses giving answers to a chain of questions. The questions are the following. When and how did humans first begin to think of their societies and the principles determining their societal rule in terms which do not presuppose any forms of religious authorizations or cosmically naturalizing principles determining the human order? How could the kind of political theory admitting of an actual alternative to the prevailing order that we in the West typically reckon with as forming the prototype for political theory proper first commence? How could it be that a type of investigation emerged, which not only reckoned with a radical alternative to the given order, but which also began to envision the possibility of a humanly attainable transcendence of all admitted alternatives? Underlying this series of questions is a bundle of assumptions regarding progressions taking place in the Ancient Greek cultural sphere relating to the human capability to problematize societal issues. These heuristic assumptions will be presented more methodically some pages further below.

The contemporary relevance of my work, on the other hand, rises from the awakening consciousness of the imminent downfall of the Western world. In my understanding, this overhanging threat is not caused by Western societies and Western values standing under attack from hostile outside forces.<sup>4</sup> What the most convincing historical-economical analyses to date reveal is, on the contrary, that our present predicament is nothing but the awaited outcome of the inability of the current world order – the system of industrial capitalism – to restructure and move beyond its latest, neoliberal, phase.<sup>5</sup> The failure of neoliberalism to produce sustainable growth is all the more striking, since as a system it had been introduced for the purpose of achieving just this. The fatal nature of what neoliberalism has had to offer to the world – as a sort of sardonic recompense for the failure of its central promise – may be summarized under the following two points.

---

<sup>4</sup> *Contra* Siedentop 2014: “If we look at the West against a global background, the striking thing about our situation is that we are in a competition of beliefs, whether we like it or not.”

<sup>5</sup> With regard to the clarification of this matter, see primarily: Lind 2013, esp. 377-391, Mason 2015, esp. 3-30 and Streeck 2016, esp. 12-46. These works will be referred to continuously in the sections dealing with the crisis of contemporary industrial capitalism.

1. On the one hand, the direct result of the failure of neoliberalism to trigger investment and growth has been endless stagnation and ever-increasing social, economic and political inequality. This effect has been especially noticeable in the West – with its initial relatively high living standards – after the economic collapse of 2008.<sup>6</sup>
2. On the other hand, the overarching pro-market and -business-mindedness inherent in the neoliberal order has resulted in governments having become unable to enforce the control mechanisms needed to ensure that the reckless greed of some of us might not endanger the environmental preconditions necessary for the survival of our species. This effect forms a major concern for the whole world.<sup>7</sup>

In works of Classical scholarship of the last decade, one stumbles upon lament over the current world order in combination with regret of the fact that the subject under study cannot be of assistance in the seeking of solutions.<sup>8</sup> In contrast, one of the central motives underlying this investigation is that the very opposite scenario may be shown to be the case – namely, that the legacy of Classical Antiquity is in fact even more urgently in need of recovery in our present predicament than it has been before. The place where I will deal most thoroughly with the connection between the historical theory proposed here and the marked contemporary relevance – rising forth from our current state of world system distress – is the first chapter and the concluding remarks. In what follows, I provide a summary of the purported contribution of the present investigation to the field of research on Herodotus, after which I proceed to present some more methodological positions and guidelines for taking on the content of the investigation.

---

<sup>6</sup> The universal agreement, in the face of hard facts, among economists and social scientists as to generally deepening socio-economic inequality is perhaps best shown by economists on the right wing having abandoned trickle-down arguments in favour of claims regarding “social mobility”. See Sowell 2016, 323: “What are we to make of the undisputed fact that the incomes in the top bracket are increasing over time, not only absolutely but relative to the incomes in the lower brackets? It means that incomes paid for higher levels of economic activity are increasing relative to incomes paid for lower levels of economic activity. This might be alarming if most people in the lower brackets stayed there for life.”

<sup>7</sup> On the unchanging socioeconomic condition of neoliberalism underpinning the massive environmental threat formed by climate change, as well as on the general uselessness of free-market solutions to battle this threat, see Parr 2013, 2-7. Cf. Jacobs & al. 2017, 14-17. On the comprehensive pro-business-mindedness and *ersatz*-capitalism inherent in the neoliberal order, see Stiglitz 2014, 125.

<sup>8</sup> See e.g. Honig 2013, 9: “...in current contexts of inegalitarian, neo-liberal capitalism and globalization, the reinterpretation of classical texts hardly seems the most pressing task. There is something undeniable in this.” This assessment may be contrasted against studies dealing with the Ancient Greek heritage in other fields. In bioethics, e.g., the contemporary relevance of ancient issues has long been recognized. See e.g. Kuczewski & Polansky 2002.

## The *Histories* of Herodotus

The *Histories* of Herodotus is an immensely complex work, which in all likelihood was composed over the course of several decades.<sup>9</sup> The manifoldness of the work – certainly not reducible to an account of some “great and marvellous deeds” and to a description of the war between Persia and Greece – has led commentators to very differing characterizations of Herodotus’ literary activity.<sup>10</sup> It was Cicero who first gave Herodotus the title *pater historiae*.<sup>11</sup> An inscription honouring Herodotus’ birthplace Halicarnassus emphasizes his affinities with his forerunners in the narration of the past, namely the epic poets; here, Herodotus is referred to as “the prose Homer”.<sup>12</sup> In modern scholarship, on the other hand, which takes into account Herodotus’ relations with the evolving philosophical and scientific thinking of his time, he has been called “the only Pre-Socratic writer preserved in full”.<sup>13</sup> In his *Poetics*, Aristotle was the first to classify history as its own genre, and for him Herodotus’ work forms a prime example of the type of exercise in the collecting of particularities without any inner connections and without any master plan, which he understood to be the essence of historiography.<sup>14</sup> In order to assess the generic content of the *Histories* in our modern terms, one could say that it incorporates a wealth of geographical and ethnographical data, as well as myths and folk tales, and also travelogues and examples of sophisticated treatises. In all probability, it contains an abundance of reliable historical information as well.

In an attempt to try to install some order into this complexity, Felix Jacoby – in his lengthy entry in *Realencyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft* that set the standard for later scholarship on Herodotus – famously suggested a developmental hypothesis for Herodotus’ work as a writer. According to this view, Herodotus – taking after the example of earlier Ionian prose writing, e.g. the work of Hecataeus – would have begun his career as a geographer and ethnographer. He would then have become especially interested in Persian

---

<sup>9</sup> On the basis of some clear allusions in the *Acharnians* of Aristophanes, a *terminus ante quem* around 425 B.C. may be postulated for when at least parts of Herodotus’ work had become well known in Athens. See Aristophan. *Ach.* 523-529. Cf. Hartog 1988, 275. That Herodotus was still actively writing the *Histories* when the Peloponnesian War had already broken out is shown by the references “to the later war” at Hdt. 7.137 and 9.73. Cf. Jacoby 1913, 230.

<sup>10</sup> For the description of the *Histories* as an account of the Graeco-Persian War and ἔργα μεγάλα τε καὶ θαυμαστά (“great and marvellous deeds”), see Hdt. 1.1.

<sup>11</sup> See Cic. *De. Leg.* 1.5. Later, he became also “the father of lies”: “*Herodotus quam verius mendaciorum patrem dixeris quam quomodo illum vocant nonnulli, parentem historiae*” (“Herodotus, who more truthfully could be called the father of lies than the father of history, which is how some address him”). See Vivès, 1636, 155.

<sup>12</sup> See Lloyd-Jones 1999, v. 43.

<sup>13</sup> See Myres 1953, 43.

<sup>14</sup> See Aristot. *Poet.* 1451a-b. This *contra* How’s and Wells’ Loeb-commentary: “He (Herodotus) is the first to construct a long and elaborate narrative, in which many parts are combined in due subordination and arrangement to make one great whole.” See How & Wells 1921, Introduction.

history, after which, having visited and been greatly impressed by Athens of the Periclean age, he would have progressed into the narrator of Athens' greatest object of pride – i.e., into the historian of the Persian Wars.<sup>15</sup> In truth, Jacoby's suggestion has served as a yardstick against which both completely differing and to some extent agreeing views have been put forward. As with similar discussions concerning, e.g., the works of Homer and Plato, a long-lasting feud between Unitarianism and separatism has thus come to torment the scholarship on Herodotus as well.<sup>16</sup>

Be it as it may with the questions of classification and the essential unity or disunity of his work, the ancient identification of Herodotus as a Homer writing in prose points at some essential characteristics regarding the Herodotean authorship.<sup>17</sup> This would be so at least as far as Herodotus can be seen to have taken much of the structure and some of the content of his work from epic poetry and utilized it in an altogether different style, namely prose.<sup>18</sup> In the Ionian world, where Herodotus had his origins, this style of writing had become specifically connected with the mundane world – a preoccupation which in turn marks a contrast between Herodotus and his epic forerunners.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, in turning from verse to prose, Herodotus' affinities with contemporary science, represented by the fifth-century heirs of the Ionian rationalism of the sixth century: the so-called sophists and the Hippocratic medical writers linked to them, becomes clearly visible – a point which in this context is of utmost importance.

Herodotus' involvement with the intellectual milieu of his contemporary world has long been recognized by scholars.<sup>20</sup> However, it was not until the turn of the millennium and Rosalind Thomas' *Herodotus in Context* that a more systematic attempt to establish the intellectual and theoretical setting –

---

<sup>15</sup> See Jacoby 1913, 341 ff.

<sup>16</sup> See Fornara 1971, 1-23 for an enlightening discussion of this controversy.

<sup>17</sup> μόνος Ἡρόδοτος Ὀμηρικώτατος ἐγένετο (“Herodotus alone became the most Homeric”). See Long, 13.

<sup>18</sup> For instance, the division between narrative and direct speech, many motifs such as the focus on a great war, and perhaps most importantly, the ordering of the result of his inquiries into a narrative structure of pictures, most of which the author himself had never seen. See Fornara 1983, 29-31. Moreover, already in the proemium of the *Histories*, there is evidence of thorough parallels of both content and form in relation to the first verses of the *Iliad*. See Bakker 2002, 6-7.

<sup>19</sup> See Cartledge 2009, 70. In all probability, Herodotus was a religious man, or at least a great believer in the power of the divine to influence human affairs. Cf. Munson 2001, 164-165. In truth, Herodotus' religious beliefs may also have influenced the way he structured his work: “Nor is it only the human individual will which decides; it is the superhuman above all. The fortunes of individuals and communities are presented to us as they appear to a Greek who sees in human life ‘a sphere for the realisation of Divine Judgments’”. See Godley 1920, xv. However, Herodotus' piousness has been questioned on the basis that Herodotus invites his readers to doubt his own reports about divine intervention. See Keith 1989, 31. Cf. Hdt. 2.3.

<sup>20</sup> “[Man darf] wohl getrost behaupten, dass es höchst merkwürdig und allenfalls der Lückenhaftigkeit unserer die Sophisten betreffenden Überlieferung zuzuschreiben wäre, wenn sich bei Herodot keine Spuren einer Auseinandersetzung mit sophistischen Doktrinen nachweisen liessen”. See Dihle 1962, 213.

against which Herodotus developed his interpretation of history and his methodology of investigation – appeared.<sup>21</sup> Thomas noted that it is very often futile to try to establish any clear-cut relationships between Herodotus’ inquiries and one or another known author among his contemporaries so that it could be said either that Herodotus borrowed from this or that sophist or Hippocratic medical writer or vice versa.<sup>22</sup> Instead Thomas proposed that “what we are seeing is an area of inquiry into nature and human society that belonged not exclusively to the activities of any group, but more commonly to the pursuit of ‘science’ [...] in the later fifth century.”<sup>23</sup> With a view to the present investigation, what is most interesting about Thomas’ work is that she explicated the affinities between Herodotus and his contemporary intellectual milieu by overviewing some of the arguments forming instances of indirectly refuting deductive proof, which are included in Herodotus’ work. In the course of her investigation she took note of examples of arguments of the *reductio ad absurdum* type, and specifically of those that can be rendered as examples of *modus tollens* (if A, then B; but not B; therefore not A) or *modus ponens* (if A then B; A; therefore B).<sup>24</sup> The abundance of these kinds of logically well-rounded arguments in the *Histories* and their comparability with similar types of arguments employed by contemporary authors, show that the scientific vigour of at least parts of Herodotus’ work is on a par with some of the most elaborated science of his days.<sup>25</sup>

In the course of this investigation, it will be made clear that the work of Herodotus also includes an abundance of logically sound, indirectly refuting arguments dealing specifically with questions of a normative character. One central contribution of the present investigation at hand to the research on Herodotus will thus be the bringing to knowledge of the fact that the *Histories* of Herodotus offer a view towards the argumentative developments, which lay at the root of the progression of Greek political thought towards political theory and political philosophy proper.

---

<sup>21</sup> See Thomas 2000. Although in his dissertation *Herodot und die Wahrheit*, Franz Haible made many of the same observations as Thomas about the links between Herodotus and contemporary science. See Haible 1963.

<sup>22</sup> The case in point would be the struggle to establish a connection between the Constitutional Debate of Hdt. 3.80-82 and the original authorship of Protagoras. This was first attempted by Ernst Maass in 1887. See Maass 1887, 581-595. When aiming to prove Maass’ hypothesis some ninety years later, François Lasserre had to admit, however, that “La preuve, évidemment, n’existe pas, sinon il y a longtemps qu’on l’aurait apportée.” See Lasserre 1976, 81.

<sup>23</sup> See Thomas 2002, 67. Kurt A. Raaflaub has also brought attention to this common interest of the yet unspecified different branches of Greek science, and labeled it “an intellectual *koinē* in late fifth-century Hellas”. See Raaflaub 2002, 154.

<sup>24</sup> See Thomas 2000, 175-190.

<sup>25</sup> For examples of arguments of the *modus tollens* type in connection with rationalizing explanations of natural phenomena and myths and folk tales extant in Herodotus’ Book II, see Hdt. 2.11, 2.15, 2.45 and 2.16.

## Herodotus and political thought, theory and philosophy

For the works of modern scholarship purporting to deal specifically with the political thinking of Herodotus, or with the political thought evidenced in his *Histories*, Karl Wüst's *Politisches Denken bei Herodot* marks a beginning. The work of Wüst forms a prime example of what Sarah Forsdyke has called attention to as an old scholarly paradigm with regard to Herodotus' approach to politics. In this view, the *Histories* would not even evidence any kind of more systematic analysis of politics, political history or political thought.<sup>26</sup> Throughout his investigation, in truth, Wüst stressed the "universally human" (*allgemein-menschliche*) and "portentous" (*schicksalhafte*) character of Herodotus' text, and emphasized its lack of strictly political motives.<sup>27</sup> In more general accounts of ancient political thought and theory, Herodotus' *Histories* has in fact mostly been utilized indirectly, namely by reference to selected passages as a source of certain societal-intellectual trends deemed to form a background to the Classical Political Philosophy of Socrates Plato and Aristotle. These trends include such characteristics as criticism of traditional values understood by some scholars to form an especially important spur to political theorizing, as well as Classical Greek citizen-equality with its conditional freedom of speech (*ισηγορία*) thought of as equally important.<sup>28</sup> However, in his more recent broader history of political thought, Alan Ryan has pointed at the authorship of Herodotus as bearing witness to the instigation of what he calls the classical conception of politics. In the view of Ryan, Herodotus would have been the first to reckon with self-governance and government by law as a prerequisite for politics, and this is the reason why Ryan chooses the *Histories* as the starting point of his own history.<sup>29</sup>

In the work of Ryan, we may witness the effect of the replacement of the old paradigm instigated by Wüst and acknowledged by Forsdyke on the question of Herodotus as a political thinker. In Forsdyke's own account of Herodotean political thought, the assumption of the possibility of reaching an understanding through the *Histories* of the developments of Greek political thought is placed in the foreground. Forsdyke assumes that Herodotus consciously employed the past and foreign cultures in his narrative in order to give his audience the opportunity to think through the political problems of their own time and place.<sup>30</sup> In her analysis, Forsdyke then pays special atten-

---

<sup>26</sup> See Forsdyke 2006, 224-225. Cf. Raaflaub 1987, 221.

<sup>27</sup> See Wüst 1935, 75: "Die herodoteische Geschichtsschreibung ist in ihrem eigentlichen Wesen und in ihrer Absicht nicht politisch...".

<sup>28</sup> See Klosko 2012, 15 and Coleman 2000, 28-29. Cf. Hdt. 5.78.

<sup>29</sup> See Ryan 2012, 23-24. The Herodotean reckoning with self-governance and government by law as a prerequisite for politics is exemplified by Ryan with reference to the answer of the exiled Spartan king Demaratus to the Persian king Xerxes to the question of why the Greeks would be prepared to fight against low odds: because of their freedom and their laws. See Hdt. 7.104.

<sup>30</sup> See Forsdyke 2006, 227-228.

tion to Herodotus' use of the Persian example to point at the hubris and dangers of the Athenian expansion witnessed after the Greek success in the Persian Wars.<sup>31</sup> In Rosaria Vignolo Munson's contribution to the scholarship on Herodotus, *Telling Wonders*, the idea of a Herodotean reaction against Athenocentrism is thought of as amounting to a more generalizing backlash against cultural expansionism: "Herodotus establishes an implicit parallel between Greek ethnocentrism and Greek polis particularism". "Herodotus' ongoing polemic against cultural chauvinism, cultural imperialism and racism [...] takes the remarkable form of an ideology that squeezes this double standard out of existence".<sup>32</sup>

Through the contributions of Munson and Forsdyke, we may specify the content of the break in scholarly attitude towards political thinking evidenced in Herodotus. From being thought of as next to non-existent in any strict sense of the word, the political thought of Herodotus has come to be understood more and more in terms of a present-oriented critique of supremacist tendencies within political ideology. Thus, we may witness how a new approach to the old question of unity/disunity in the work of Herodotus has taken shape in the scholarly output of recent decades: in the deconstruction of ethnocentric imperialism, the relativistic ethnographer and absolutist historian turn out to be interdependent.<sup>33</sup>

However, the claim could well be made that this type of questioning of prevailing "ideologies" – if indeed such a critique may be ascribed to Herodotus – does not yet amount to political theory. In this vein, Norma Thompson in her *Herodotus and the Origins of the Political Community* characterized Herodotus and his *Histoires* as being "'against theory' or, more suitably, pre-theory".<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, the assumption has also been put forward repeatedly that the *Histories* bear witness to the kind of investigations that could be counted as political theory as properly understood. This presumption has been particularly common with regard to one specific passage in the Herodotean corpus: the Constitutional Debate set at the Persian court in Book III.<sup>35</sup> Less common, however, have been the attempts to explicate why the Herodotean

---

<sup>31</sup> See Forsdyke 2006, 229-232.

<sup>32</sup> See Munson 2001, 79 and 172. Cf. Raaflaub 1987, 247: "What, then, is the political message conveyed by Herodotus through his *Histories* to his contemporary audience? I think it is exactly what I tried to work out in the last section: if the hunger for power becomes excessive, if imperialism, disregarding justice and the rights of others, is pursued to the extreme and becomes a goal in itself, then disaster is inevitable."

<sup>33</sup> See Munson 2001, 18.

<sup>34</sup> See Thompson 1996, 5.

<sup>35</sup> See Cartledge 2009, 73: "The Persian Debate, though, informed as it is by Sophistic discourse, moves qualitatively onto a different and higher plane of political thinking from anything visible previously, in terms both of abstraction and of sophistication: onto the plane of theory proper." Cf. Myers 1991, 541: "Si, d'autre part, ce sont les « origines » de la théorie politique que l'on cherche, c'est encore Hérodote qu'il faut consulter, car le plus ancien texte de théorie politique dont nous disposons est le « Débat sur les régimes » qui se trouve dans le troisième livre de son ouvrage".



debate setting forth the question of the best form of government may actually be singled out as the primeval example of political theory proper. In his *Ancient Political Thought in Practice*, Paul Cartledge concluded that behind the Constitutional Debate lies the stunning new intuition that “all constitutionally ordered polities must form species subsumable in principle under one of just three genera: rule by one, rule by some or rule by all”.<sup>36</sup> As far as it goes, Cartledge’s assumption is correct, but surely more can be said. An article by Edmond Lévy thus adds that apart from the recognition of the first clear distinction between three different principles of rule, the Herodotean debate also bears witness to a first implicit connection between each of these three principles and a reputable vis-à-vis corrupt form of government. Hence, the debate may actually be seen to prefigure the six-partite theorization of regimes, which was given its classical form in the works of Plato and Aristotle.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless – aside from some separate valid insights such as these ones provided by Cartledge and Lévy – there has as of yet been no expounding on the central developments clustered in the Constitutional Debate that would amount to a more systematic account establishing the Constitutional Debate as the primeval representative of political theory.

Turning to previous research connecting the work of Herodotus with the question of the origins of political philosophy in Ancient Greece, what must be realized first is that it is not at all common to count with political philosophy proper before Socrates and Plato.<sup>38</sup> In this regard, an article by the Canadian political theorist Danielle Allen forms an exception. Allen actually reckons with the work of Herodotus in general and the Constitutional Debate in particular as forming the very beginnings of political philosophy. In Allen’s view, the central question of the Constitutional Debate – the question of the best form of government – turns out to be the essential investigation of the whole *Histories*, as this very question would be the one acted out throughout the Herodotean narrative. According to Allen, the queries that the text seen as a whole and the debate have in common may be explicated, then, under the three headings of how well different types of regimes are able to deal with the inevitable presence of human equality, democracy and the future.<sup>39</sup> Allen’s idea may be contrasted against the view that was put forward by Sidney Robert Keith in his excellent but forgotten dissertation from the University of Toronto, *The First Political Scientist: Herodotus of Halicarnassus*. Keith raised the Constitutional Debate to the status of a “first political science” because he thought that with it “Herodotus indicates that the different forms of government are distinguished essentially by the human qualities they admire and seek

---

<sup>36</sup> See Cartledge 2009, 73.

<sup>37</sup> See Lévy 2003, 139. Cf. Aristot. *Pol.* 3.1279b and Plat. *Stat.* 302d-e.

<sup>38</sup> In the third edition of Leo Strauss’ and Joseph Cropsey’s *History of Political Philosophy*, a chapter on Thucydides was placed at the beginning before the one dealing with Plato. See Strauss & Cropsey 1987.

<sup>39</sup> See Allen 2011, 86.

to foster". Thus, democracy would value above all freedom, oligarchy nobility and monarchy stability and wealth. In this understanding, the characters and qualities fostered by the different types of regime would be distinct and mutually exclusive, and thus neither equality nor democracy would be inevitably present.<sup>40</sup>

The present investigation may be seen to continue on the path disclosed by that part of the scholarship on Herodotus of the recent decades, which approaches Herodotus as a genuine source of Ancient Greek political thought. The novelty in the contribution of this investigation consists in the use of Herodotus as factual evidence for a stridently constructed historical theory, which assumes the shape of a series of hypotheses designed to trace and expound on the central progressions in the developments of political thinking towards political theory and philosophy proper. Each of these hypotheses, in turn, rests on a heuristic assumption allowing for the reading of the relevant ancient evidence in a way which may either consolidate or weaken the defended historical theory. In the following, the heuristic assumptions at the basis of the historical hypotheses forming the theory will be introduced.

### **The historical theory and the heuristic assumptions**

The paradigm for the kind of historical theory proposed in this investigation is the approach taken by Reinhart Koselleck in his lexicon *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*. In Koselleck's work, a number of hypotheses are set forth concerning the transformation of central social and political vocabularies during the "Saddle Period" (*Sattelzeit*) (1750-1850 A.D.). According to the heuristic assumption (*heuristische Vorgriffe*) of the lexicon, this transformation was so radical that many concepts acquired a completely new meaning – a meaning which then quite rapidly brought the concepts so close to our present understanding of the terms denoting them, that we no longer require any translation of them.<sup>41</sup>

In the present investigation, I proceed from the assumption that just as in early modern Europe a thorough change in the world of central socio-political concepts occurred in a quite rapid fashion, so too in the ancient Greek world did a similar radical break in some of the central aspects of political thought take place during a relatively short period of time. What triggered the changes

---

<sup>40</sup> See Keith 1989, esp. 327.

<sup>41</sup> See Koselleck 1972, XV: "Begrifflichkeit und Begreiflichkeit fallen seitdem für uns zusammen." 'Temporalization' (*Temporalisierung*) expresses one key aspect of this radical transformation of the world of the politico-social concepts during the *Sattelzeit*. In essence, temporalization means that in an escalating scale the politico-social concepts become more dynamic than before. In other words, they begin in an ever-increasing extent to involve more of expectations than mere observations or experience. Indeed, it seems that the aspect of temporalization was altogether lacking in the ancient Greek world-view and in the ancient Greek counterparts to our social and political concepts.

in the Ancient Greek societal-intellectual setting, I assume, was the first realization of full-scale direct democracy (δημοκρατία; see further below for the question of when this breakthrough took place).

The preeminent forerunner for the presumption of the importance of this turnover is the ancient historian Christian Meier. Meier's idea is that the societal and intellectual breaks realized with the emergence of δημοκρατία may be seen to have crystallized in a "cratistic turn". This cratistic turn amounted to a break in the collective problematizing of societal issues to the effect that the essential problem of communal life, from being centered in the question of how best to realize the right order, came to revolve more and more around the question of who should rule.<sup>42</sup>

Moving from Meier's assumption of a radical societal-intellectual interruption realized as a consequence of the emergence of the first full-scale direct democracies, I have strived to explicate how this break may be seen to have enabled further progressions within the political thought of the communities affected by democratization. As I have hypothesized, these progressions would amount to a new form of problematizing capacity with regard to societal issues as well as to novel types of investigations relating directly to the political life of the democratized communities. Given some plausible conceptual assumptions explicated further below, these kind of investigations may well be identified as the primeval forms of political theory and political philosophy proper. The heuristic assumptions underlying the hypotheses forming the historical theory of the present investigation thus consist in three separate but connected presumptions regarding the origin of a proto-typically Western form of political thought, theory and philosophy:

1. The materialization of δημοκρατία altered the problematizing capacities within the communities affected by democratization so that the prevailing order could be approached for the first time as a human construct allowing for a range of radical alternatives.
2. The resettled societal order was first scrutinized against its alternatives by means of a new type of argumentative technique critically dealing with norms, and which was imposed on the new form of political thought applying to alternative orders.
3. Finally, investigations striving to transcend the prevailing order as well as all of its alternatives without resort to a religiously authorized and cosmically naturalized sphere of thought is assumed to have first emerged after the breakthrough of direct democracy in the Ancient Greek world.

The ancient evidence and the scholarly insights discussed in the course of this investigation have been gathered for the purpose of testing the viability of the historical theory, which the above heuristic assumptions combine into.

---

<sup>42</sup> See Meier 1983, 427-428.

In the following, some further methodological positions will be outlined, after which a provisional presentation of the main content and ideas of the investigation at hand will be provided.

### **Reaction against postmodernism**

I do not mean to imply that any part of the content of my investigation would form a reaction against postmodernism as such. Postmodernism, as a general epistemologically based “loosening of substructures”, is a larger cultural phenomenon, as is the reaction against it. In truth, one could claim that this is a backlash which is now witnessed all over the world, namely in the form of the rise of the new “Mazzinis” and “Alcibiadeses”. These would be the various figureheads of different schools of neofascism and a sort of renewed “φύσις-egoism”, which seems to have been already present in 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Greece. Actually – by way of seriously confusing the acclaimed natural superiority of its own proclaimed, strictly defined and highly exclusive in-group with the common good of the society – the new-fangled φύσις-egoism may now have joined hands with neofascism.<sup>43</sup>

In contrast, the motivation for my work stems from a reaction against that which I label a postmodern approach to history writing. A postmodern approach to history writing does not take into account qualitative differences between the writing of history and any other kind of narrative relating to events of the past. Such an approach assumes that with regard to potential validity, all kinds of narratives, both fictional and non-fictional, are on a par with each other: they may all be equally true.<sup>44</sup> According to this outlook, the general unavoidability of imagination in the constructing of discourses and in the writing of narratives would entail that “any historical object can sustain a

---

<sup>43</sup> On Giuseppe Mazzini as the founding father of fascism, see Mishra 2017, 223-228. For evidence of a way of thinking confusing selfish ideas of natural superiority with the common good as witnessed already in 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Athens, see Thucydides’ portrayal of Alcibiades boasting in front of the assembly on the eve of the Sicilian expedition: *καὶ ὅσα αὖ ἐν τῇ πόλει χορηγίας ἢ ἄλλω τῷ λαμπρύνομαι, τοῖς μὲν ἄστοις φθονεῖται φύσει, πρὸς δὲ τοὺς ξένους καὶ αὐτῇ ἰσχὺς φαίνεται. καὶ οὐκ ἄχρηστος ἦδ’ ἡ ἄνοια, ὅς ἂν τοῖς ἰδίοις τέλεσι μὴ ἑαυτὸν μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν πόλιν ὠφελῇ* (“and as far, again, as I have shined forth in the city by founding choruses or in other ways, these things are naturally envied by (inferior) fellow-citizens, whereas for strangers they turn out to be a sign of strength. Thus, it is not useless or a folly, when a man by way of benefitting himself, gives help also to the city”). See Thuc. 6.16.3.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. White 1987, 57: “One can produce an imaginary discourse about real events that may not be less “true” for being imaginary [...] The same is true with respect to narrative representations of reality, especially when, as in historical discourses, these representations are of the “human past.” How else can any past, which by definition comprises events, processes, structures, and so forth, considered to be no longer perceivable, be represented in either consciousness or discourse except in an “imaginary” way?” This idea of the necessity of taking resort to imagination with regard to accounts of the past may be contrasted with the clear-cut separation between factual account and fiction that modern novelist often give expression to in relation to their work. See e.g. Adichie 2006, 435: “This book is based on the Nigeria-Biafra War of 1967-70, but I have taken many liberties for the purpose of fiction; my intention is to portray my own imaginative truths and not the facts of the war.”

number of equally plausible descriptions”<sup>45</sup> This is a flawed conception, I think, but before turning to the reason why it is so, let us consider in which respects the postmodern view may be adequate.<sup>46</sup>

Moreover, as far as the postmodern critique is directed against certain grandiose promises, which at some point in time may have pertained to the art of history writing in its varying modern forms, these objections should by now also have become generally accepted. Indeed, the time of positivity with regard to the prospects of obtaining “objective knowledge”, or of reaching “higher meaning”, through any account of the past, must be long gone. Objectivity and meaning are always determined in and by a subject, although many subjects may of course agree as to what these criteria are – as well as that they may each be constrained and/or enabled in their comprehensions by “social practices ordered across space and time”.<sup>47</sup>

However, I think it is simply untrue that in all cases equally plausible historical narratives of real events of the past might be constructed. With regard to many “historical objects” (i.e., those events of the past that we have clear evidence of), by carefully weighing evidence against theory, we may conceive of an account that is simply more plausible than any “alternative truth”, no matter how suitable for ideological use that account may be.<sup>48</sup> Of course, this would not entail that the most plausible account should be regarded as being by any means “final”.<sup>49</sup> On the contrary, it should be viewed as standing in constant need of revision, and perhaps even correction, in light of new evidence and scholarly insights. Despite all this, the historical theory put forward here aims towards historical plausibility.

### **Real world over and against text**

This investigation may be seen to be taking a specifically differing approach as compared to a collection of tendencies within the field of Classical philol-

---

<sup>45</sup> See White 1987, 76.

<sup>46</sup> The account of the prefiguring of the industrial revolution in the “industrious revolution”, located in the depopulated “post-Black Death” Europe of the late Middle Ages, could certainly count as an example of a plausible historical account, which would lend itself easily to ideological use. Cf. Frankopan 2015, 187-195.

<sup>47</sup> See Giddens 1984, 2. Of course, the subject(s), in turn, may not be anything akin to a Cartesian substance in its own right, but rather itself an abstract object created by consciousness, as Jean-Paul Sartre once ferociously argued. See Sartre 1960.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Evans 1997, 120-121: “The first prerequisite of the serious historical researcher must be the ability to jettison dearly-held interpretations in the face of the recalcitrance of the evidence [...] There is nothing mysterious about this; historians are perfectly used to trying out ideas on the evidence and throwing them away when they don’t fit.”

<sup>49</sup> Such a reassurance with regard to the historian’s ability to reach certain and objective knowledge may have been widespread in the 19<sup>th</sup> century under the influence of positivist ideas conceiving of historically and geographically varying social and cultural conditions as sequences in an evolutionary process, but can certainly no longer be defended. See Comte 1877, 318. Cf. Spencer 1873, iii-iv.

ogy that have materialized in the aftermath of the so-called linguistic turn affecting humanities at large. The linguistic turn has resulted in the coming to the fore of questions of relativism and problems of verification and falsification in most or all fields of the humanities and social sciences. By the 1980s, this had already been seen to have transmuted into a heightened concern with epistemological issues, with the further consequence in many fields of the growth of a reluctance to try readings moving beyond the text.<sup>50</sup> Interpretative strands based on an explicit or implicit approval of the postmodern approach to history writing – i.e., interpretations stressing the “autonomy of the work” and the laying of “emphasis on the text” to the point of neglecting the historical reality out of which the work has grown – also gained ground in philology during the 1990s.<sup>51</sup> The continued influence of the idea that a narrow focus on the text is the epistemologically safest alternative is shown clearly in the statement of purpose of the latest scholarly work on the Herodotean speeches. Here, the objective of the study is expressly confined to the disclosing of the interrelations between modes of speech and narrative themes ascribed to the *Histories*.<sup>52</sup>

However, by aiming to reclaim the possibility of decisively turning the focus back towards the reality behind the text, I do not at all mean to discredit the work of Classical scholars, who have conducted their investigations against the background of the linguistic turn. In many cases the new textual approaches – such as variant structural readings and interpretations focusing on speech acts and modes of speech – that have emerged as a response to the linguistic turn have resulted in readings of ancient works that have allowed for novel insights with regard to the historical context as well.<sup>53</sup> The present study, however, assumes an entirely different approach and aims at readings in which the texts are more directly used as historical evidence – and not mainly as evidence of historical particularities, which of course always remains a possibility, but rather precisely for the kind of more comprehensive

---

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Giddens 1984, xx.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Jong & Sullivan 1994, 1-26.

<sup>52</sup> See Zali 2015, 31: “The purpose of this book is [...] a comprehensive study of particular modes, kinds and effects of speech, exemplified through in-depth discussions of case studies and of the ways these relate to two overarching narrative themes: the Greco-Persian polarity and the problem of Greek unity”.

<sup>53</sup> For a reading of *Antigone* based in speech-act theory and allowing for new insights of the play’s problematizing of competing (democratic vs. elite-centered) conceptions in 5<sup>th</sup> century Athens on the ultimate source of societal justice, see Honig 2013, Chapter 4. For a reading of the 12<sup>th</sup> century Byzantine novel *Hysmine & Hysminias* that convincingly connects the mimetic structuring of the novel to the historical context consisting in intimate relations between authors, colleagues and patrons in the intellectual milieu, within which the novel was produced, see Nilsson 2001, esp. 289. For structural approaches to ancient classics in general, Henry R. Immerwahr’s *Form and Thought in Herodotus* (1966) marks a beginning. For further examples of research on Herodotus within the field of Classical philology concentrating on modes of speech, see Hohti 1976, and Barker 2009.

theory of the *longue durée* this investigation sets out to defend. Why this approach has been assumed is simply because I have concluded that the most fruitful way to address the question of the origins of political philosophy through the work of a pre-Platonic author is by means of a prior construction of a clearly defined historical theory. Only thus may an understanding of the beginnings of political philosophy predating the first canonical Classical Political Philosophers stand a chance of becoming more widely accepted.

In truth, the approach taken by me here is of a kind in which a traditional historical method consisting in a conjoining and mutual weighing of theory and evidence may be seen to be accompanied by a likewise more traditional philological method. The latter would consist, then, in the close attention paid to the evidence in the form of ancient texts – i.e., in the close readings of the passages most relevant with regard to the defended theory contained in the present investigation. In connection with these readings, details with regard to language and grammar may come in focus, as may the narrative context and modes of speech as well as narrative patterns encountered in the relevant passages. This happens whenever some part of the evidence requires closer attention with regard to the literary context within which it occurs or the language in which it is framed in order to be plausibly connected to the theory. The attempt of the present investigation, however, is not that of a historicist hermeneutics aiming to recover an original authorial mindset or an otherwise authorized state of the text.<sup>54</sup> Assumed here is instead that all versions of the transmitted text of Herodotus give clear expression to common mindsets and discourses worth investigating. Thus textual criticism, although it occurs in relation to several ancient texts, forms no large part of the method of this study. Through a detailed account of the relevant texts but with a clear focus on the defended historical theory, the ultimate aim is to as truthfully as possible illuminate real-world historical events and processes.

In the course of this investigation, literary evidence will be treated exactly as historical evidence and as nothing more or less than that. After due notice of the literary setting has been taken, the endeavour is to connect the evidence directly to a real-world context. In the following, I will further elaborate on the purported real-world event- and process-centred orientation of my investigation by looking into the beginnings of this kind of approach in the work of Herodotus.

### **The “I” as the present-oriented ἴστωρ**

In her *Narratology and Classics*, Irene de Jong explicitly approves of the post-modern approach to history writing, at least in the case of ancient historiography, which she conceives of as being – from the point of view of the structuring of the narrative and with regard the possibility of contesting for truth – on par with any other genre of ancient literature:

---

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Cullhed 2014, 117-120.

We may assume that Herodotus the author travelled, although this point is contested, but not every conversation with local inhabitants that he records needs to be historically true. Ancient historians, in fact, had a rich arsenal of devices for authoritative self-representation at their disposal [...] All in all, for ancient historiography our position can be [...] that of [...] White: ancient historians make use of the same narrative devices as their literary counterparts [...] Where the narrator of the Homeric epics could rely on the Muses, later historians had to use their own eyes, ears, and reasoning but still adopted much from the traditional epic format. Therefore, there is no need to develop a separate historiographic narratology, and narratology can help to detect how historians adapt traditional narrative devices or invent new ones to convey their view of the past.

Actually, I do not think there is any fault whatsoever in the conception of ancient literature as sharing similarities of structure across genres, and across time into the present – making, for example, modern critical literary theory a fitting device for its interpretation.<sup>55</sup> On the contrary, I think this is a sound assumption.<sup>56</sup> However, there is a looming danger here, namely the danger of not seeing that ancient historiography, from its beginning in the work of Herodotus, represents not only a continuation with regard to the epic form of the narrative of the past.

The ancient historian, the ἵστωρ disclosing events of the past, is not merely the narrator “present in his own text as a person who travels and talks with informants” and who “compares and weighs stories”.<sup>57</sup> The ἵστωρ is also the factual author of the *Histories*, the person who has conducted his investigations, his histories, in order to arrive at historical truth, at that which in the language of Ancient Greece is ἀτρεκής, or beyond reasonable doubt.<sup>58</sup> The reason why the ἵστωρ no longer appeals to the Muses, but rather to his own reason, is that he believes that there is such a historical truth out there, and that this truth is for humans to find out, without assistance from the sphere of the divine.

---

<sup>55</sup> Cf Schmitz 2007, 7: “if it were true (as I firmly believe it is not) that classical texts cannot be understood in modern terms, if modern eyes and modern methodologies had no business looking into these texts, they would be dead for our time, and their existence would have to be considered a mere museum of leftovers from a long defunct culture.”

<sup>56</sup> The merit of de Jong is to have shown how some of the narrative devices typical for modern literary fiction but lacking or at least seriously played down in modern historiography are present in the works of ancient history writing. These devices include focalization, an omnipresent and omniscient narrator not identical with the author, internal and external prolepses and analepses, etc. See Jong 2014, 170-172 and 176.

<sup>57</sup> See Jong 2014, 172: “This narrator is also overt and dramatized: he is present in his own text as a person who travels and talks with informants and, as a *histor*, compares and weighs stories.”

<sup>58</sup> On Herodotus’ use of ἀτρεκής, see Haible 1963, 39-70. Cf. Bakker 2002, 15 and Bakker 2006, 92.



The author of the *Histories* was Herodotus from Halicarnassus, whereas I am the author of this investigation. Like Herodotus before me, I am a person, who lives in a real world of events and places, and like Herodotus, I have spent a considerable amount of time investigating this world and its history. I have seen things for myself and I have talked with people, but most importantly, I have read quite a few accounts pertaining to our past and present, and I have been able to draw some conclusions, some of which I think are both plausible and beyond reasonable doubt, while other things I claim may indeed remain dubious.<sup>59</sup> To my aid – in reaching out both for that which is ἀτρεκής and that which is not – I have had never-ending curiosity and a willingness to go quite far back in time. The skills I have obtained along the way have helped me to gather insight from some records, which tell fundamental things about our past, and which I believe need to be disclosed, perhaps now more than ever. This is the display of my inquiries.

### **Aboriginal secularization**

We may begin with going quite far back in time, namely to 9000 B.C. and to the earliest traces of organized religion, or to what perhaps less anachronistically could be described as the first stationary cult activities. What we should notice is that these remains (found at Göbekli Tepe in modern-day Turkey), in fact predate sedentary life.<sup>60</sup> Actually, from these days onwards, human co-living seems to have settled around some or other notion of divine authorization of the societal order, although these authorizations could take several different forms in communities in and across different cultural spheres. Thus, we may compare, e.g., the post-Mycenaean Greek world up and until the beginning of the Archaic Age (1100-800 B.C.) with the early settlements of the Igbo people of modern-day south-eastern Nigeria. What we may note first, then, is that we are clearly dealing with typically decentralized societies in both locales.<sup>61</sup> In these types of communities, societal issues were conclusively settled on the village- or village-group level and consequently there would have been no automatic need for a strongly centralized authority – such as a “sacred

---

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Hdt. 7.152.3: ἐγὼ δὲ ὄφειλω λέγειν τὰ λεγόμενα, πείθεσθαι γὰρ μὲν οὐ παντάπασιν ὄφειλω, καὶ μοι τοῦτο τὸ ἔπος ἐχέτω ἐς πάντα λόγον. (“I am bound to tell that which have been told, but I am not bound to believe in it altogether, and this word shall follow me through my whole story.”)

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Harari 2014, 102: “In the conventional picture, pioneers first built a village, and when it prospered, they set up a temple in the middle. But Göbekli Tepe suggests that the temple may have been built first, and that a village later grew up around it.”

<sup>61</sup> On the markedly decentralized nature of the early sedentary communities of the Igbo people, see Falola & Heaton 2008, 21-22. On the assumed next-to full dismantling of the social hierarchies pertaining to the centralized Greek societies of the Mycenaean Age after the collapse of 1100 B.C. and on the turn thereafter to a tribal-based system of self-governing on the village-level (still *communis opinio* among Classical archeologists), see Donlan 1985, 301-302.

king” (see below) – around which ideas of divine legitimation most often in the history of the world have been constructed.<sup>62</sup>

Although often lacking such centralized authority, the ruling bodies in the communities in question could nevertheless rely on a range of different means of achieving divine legitimation of their rule. Among these may be counted varying forms of elders’ councils with assumed patrilineal connections to ancestral spirits, secret religious societies, oracles and offerings – and, not least, religiously sanctioned rigid social hierarchies.<sup>63</sup> According to one historical theory, it is actually in the beginning of the Archaic Age in Greece (ca. 800-500 B.C.) that a breakdown of these “sanctified” societal-hierarchical structures first transpires. The idea here is that what Classical scholars refer to as ‘πόλις-religion’ – i.e., the cults and types of worship typical for the Ancient Greek city-states – saw its beginnings around this time, and that this religion from its onset was a system characterized by sacred authority being more and more dispersed in the public sphere. The result of this diffusion would have been a societal situation in which it became difficult to hold on to religious prerogative either as a birthright or as a once and for all acquired right. This in turn would very soon have had its consequence in the decline of the older more rigidly structured γένη (‘noble families’) and in their replacement with a societally and politically privileged “top bracket”, which, however, had become much more movable with regard to its individual members and much more purely based in wealth.<sup>64</sup>

If the theory of the πόλις-religion’s doing away with religiously sanctioned social distinctions were correct, the preoccupation of the ruling elite with “divine horizons of authorization” would make even more sense. In the poems of the Athenian political leader Solon (ca. 600 B.C.), for example, the very emblem of the “well-ordered” societal order (Greek: εὐνομία, later: ἰσονομία≈‘like order’) has been raised to divine status.<sup>65</sup> Obviously, there would have been great need for some kind of strong conceptions “placing

---

<sup>62</sup> On the absence of sacred kings among the Igbo, see Isichei 1976, 23. For an absolute denial of sacredness with regard to the chieftains typically in charge of the post-Mycenean Greek village communities up to and including the 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C., the βασιλεύς, see Starr 1961, 131. For further discussion of the same question, see Hammer 2002, 116-120. For an account of the decline of the power of the βασιλεύς and of a re-centralization of sorts within the ancient Greek world effected by novel elite-differentiation of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, taking the form of an emerging new land-owning nobility taking over more and more from the old γένη, see Donlan 1985, 305-306.

<sup>63</sup> For the Igbo case, see Isichei 1976, 21-24. For the Greek case, see Hammer 2002, 59-63.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Linke 2015, 30. Cries on the part of the more rigidly defined old nobility in its state of decline have come down to us in the collection of poems ascribed to Theognis of Megara. See Theognid. 54-58: οἱ πρόσθ’ οὔτε δίκας ἤιδεσαν οὔτε νόμους, ἀλλ’ ἀμφὶ πλευραῖσι δοράς αἰγῶν κατέτριβον, ἔξω δ’ ὥστ’ ἐλαφοὶ τῆσδ’ ἐνέμοντο πόλεος, καὶ νῦν εἰς ἀγαθοί, Πολυπαῖδη· οἱ δὲ πρὶν ἐσθλοὶ νῦν δειλοί. τίς κεν ταῦτ’ ἀνέχοιτ’ ἐσορῶν; (“...those, who of old knew neither justice nor law, but wore out the goatskins around their sides, and strolled outside this city like deers, are now also good, Polypaide, and those who before were good are now base. Who could stand the sight of such a thing?”).

<sup>65</sup> See Sol. fr. 4 (30-32) (West).

down” the still utterly hierarchical human order, if the hierarchies as such could no longer be divinely sanctified and sanctioned. Thus, concept such as θεσμός or θέσμιος (‘laid down ordinance’) were utilized, by way of which the archaic power-elite as a collective body could keep the lower strata of the populace in check.<sup>66</sup> A recollection stemming from an era of realized δημοκρατία of the commanding power once inherent in θεσμός may be gathered from Book I in Herodotus, where it is stated that the Athenian 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. tyrant’s Peisistratus’ rule was good since he

ἦρχε Ἀθηναίων, οὔτε τιμὰς τὰς ἐούσας συνταράξας οὔτε θέσμια μεταλλάξας.<sup>67</sup>

ruled the Athenians without disturbing the existing honour-relations and without altering the laid down ordinances.

Here, the supporting power of the θέσμια for the maintenance of the “existing honour-relations” (τιμὰς τὰς ἐούσας) – those that Herodotus assumed to have prevailed between the noble families in control of the political life – is clearly presupposed, and thus the connection between the dominant form of elite rule and the divine authorization provided by the concept is also given clear expression.

One of the main purposes of this investigation, then, is to establish an identification between an ancient form of de facto secularized rationale and a primeval detachment from all types of divine authorizations of the societal status quo. In my view, it was this aboriginal secularization, as it was finalized in Ancient Greece of the Classical Age (ca. 500-300 B.C.), which on the one hand marked the fulfilment of a form of autonomous political thinking, and which on the other hand enabled the further development of political theory and political philosophy.

The work of connecting and defending the ideas of aboriginal secularization, autonomous political thinking and an earliest de-deification of the human order will be carried out thoroughly in the first three chapters of this investigation. In what follows, I will give a preliminary view of how the de facto secularized rationale and autonomous political thinking of the Greek Classical Age got underway.

---

<sup>66</sup> See Ostwald 1969, 18-19: “We may, then, state that in the case of θεσμός the etymological relation to τίθημι supports what we find in actual usage: it is a thing imposed by a higher power upon those for whom the authority of the imposing agency makes the θεσμός an obligation.” For inscriptional evidence of θέσμιος used as a fundamental constitutional element in the establishment of colonies during the Archaic and early Classical Ages, see Tod, *GHI* I<sup>2</sup>, no. 24 (46).

<sup>67</sup> See Hdt. 1.59.6,

## **Classical Greek de-deification and the inaugurations of “secular”-autonomous political thought and political theory**

There seems to be consensus among anthropologists and historians of religion that the common, religiously/ritually authorized principle for the formation of early forms of more organized co-living, as well as for civilizations proper, is that of one man’s rule in the form of sacred kingship.<sup>68</sup> This would mean that in most or all cases early sedentary man lived under a rule crystallized in the body of one man, a holy man, in the sense that the rule symbolized by him received its legitimation from a conception relating his person more or less intimately to the sphere of the divine.<sup>69</sup> To this may be added, as I have already pointed at, that ultimate divine legitimation of the human order seems to have been markedly, albeit variedly, present also in such early civilizations as in the societies of the “Dark” and Archaic Ages of Ancient Greece (ca. 1100-500 B.C.), where monarchy was largely absent.<sup>70</sup> In fact, *my claim is that it is with the beginning of the Classical Age of Greece that a kind of political thinking not reckoning with the deification of the human order first emerges and gains ground.* As I have conjured, this undoing of divine legitimation within political thought was made possible by the earliest completed turnover in the inherited order, which in turn, I hypothesize took place with the establishing of the first full-scale direct democracies. Before turning to the question of how the emergence of δημοκρατία might have marked an earliest upheaval of the inherited order, the debated question of when this break is supposed to have taken place must be dealt with.

At the moment of writing, the dominant opinion among Classical scholars as to when the breakthrough of δημοκρατία occurred, is that this shift was first completed with the reforms instigated by Cleisthenes, i.e., in Athens in and around 507/508 B.C.<sup>71</sup> In truth, this is a view collaborated by ancient evidence – starting from Herodotus’ explicit ascription of democratizing power to the Cleisthenean reforms, and echoed in the pseudo-Aristotelian Ἀθηναίων

---

<sup>68</sup> See Black 2009, 17: “In nearly all early civilizations, monarchy was [...] sacred [...] It related to the king’s perceived relationship with divinity...” Cf. Hill & al. 2013, 3-4: “...(for) almost three thousand years, Egypt and Mesopotamia shared the concept of ultimate legitimate authority being invested in the single sacred office of kingship”. See also Jones 2005, 331-332 and Frankfort 1948, 53. For the importance of the concept of sacred kingship in the ancient Indian cultural sphere, see Gonda 1956.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Heusch 1997, 232: “Though it appears in diverse historical forms, sacred kingship always has a common theme: the body-fetish of the chief or king articulates the natural and social order.”

<sup>70</sup> To conclusively prove the presence of ultimate divine authorization of the human order with regard to all early societies and civilizations, one would have to take into account all societies in the ancient African, European, Middle Eastern, Indian, Chinese and American cultural spheres, in which some kind of assemblies for the deliberation of the “common affairs” of the community had been established. Cf. Detienne & Lloyd 2006, 69-70. Such a task cannot be undertaken here.

<sup>71</sup> The latest defence of this view is found in Matthew Simonton’s work on Classical Greek oligarchy. See Simonton 2017, 20-25. Cf. Cartledge 2007, 164 and Forsdyke 2005, 133-135.

πολιτεία (*Constitution of the Athenians*), according to which Cleisthenes “handed over the constitution to the people” (ἀποδιδούς τῷ πλῆθει τὴν πολιτείαν).<sup>72</sup> Elsewhere in the Ἀθηναίων πολιτεία, it is brought to knowledge, however, that in fact it was only with the reforms of Ephialtes – i.e., half a century later, in 462 B.C. – that the elite-ruled political organs were deprived of their “guardianship of the constitution” (τῆς πολιτείας φυλακή).<sup>73</sup> As the most plausible view suggests, this guardianship would amount to nothing less than significant remains of political privileges – continued elite control over the assigning of all important offices, e.g. – amounting to the power to effectively “deny democracy”.<sup>74</sup> Moreover, as the actual term for people’s rule, δημοκρατία, is attested for the first time in the work of Herodotus – who probably was born between 490 and 480 B.C. – it seems unwarranted, at least in Athens’ case, to posit a realized people’s power, or a true “democratic power of decision and control”, before the reforms of Ephialtes.<sup>75</sup>

The earliest changeover in the inherited order may thus be equalled with the first break in the main principle followed regarding the rule of society. This turnover was effected by the finalization of the transition from elite rule to realized people’s rule. In the case of the Athenians – which is the one we will always have the most knowledge of – the shift in question seems, then, to have been completed by and around 460 B.C.

Now, concomitant with this break, there occurred, as I hypothesize, a shift in the collective problematizing capacities within those human societies that had lived through this change. This would be a breakthrough pertaining specifically to political thinking. It would amount to the first recognition of fundamentally different, but respectably applicable, societal orders and to the re-

---

<sup>72</sup> See Aristot. *Ath. Pol.* 20.1. For the Herodotean explicit ascription, see Hdt. 6.131.1: Κλεισθένης τε ὁ τὰς φυλάς καὶ τὴν δημοκρατίην Ἀθηναίοισι καταστήσας. (“Cleisthenes having established the phyles and the democracy for the Athenians”). For an account of how the Cleisthenian reforms may have aided the breakthrough of democracy at Athens by making the regionally based demes, rather than the old tribes controlled by the noble families through their hold on the phratries, the new basic political unit, see Ostwald 1969, 151-153.

<sup>73</sup> See Aristot. *Ath. Pol.* 25.1-2.

<sup>74</sup> See Rihill 1995, 97: “Before Ephialtes, magistrates who had been selected democratically, by sortition or both, could have been denied entry to office by men who were socially superior, and were essentially unaccountable: democracy denied.” On the δοκιμασία (‘scrutiny’) of the citizens before taking up office as it was conducted under democracy by a democratically ruled court, see Aristot. *Ath. Pol.* 55.3.

<sup>75</sup> For the birthdate of Herodotus, see Dion. Hal. *Thuc.* 5: Ἡρόδοτος, γενόμενος ὀλίγω πρότερον τῶν Περσικῶν, παρεκτείνας δὲ μέχρι τῶν Πελοποννησιακῶν. (“Herodotus, born some time before the Persian Wars, whose life lasted until the Peloponnesian War”). For the earliest occurrence of δημοκρατία, see Hdt. 6.43. Matthew Simonton has attempted to push the *terminus ante quem* of δημοκρατία back beyond the 460s B.C. This he bases on formulations such as δήμου κρατοῦσα χεῖρ. As this formulation occurs in a play (the *Suppliant Women* (604)), which itself possibly does not predate Ephialtes’ reforms, I must, however, remain skeptical to the proposal of Simonton. See Simonton 2017, 21-22. For a view according to which the breakthrough of direct democracy could have taken place earlier than the 460s in Greek city-states other than Athens (e.g. in Argos), see Robinson 2011, 196-197.

alization that these alternative orders are all manmade – as well as to the admittance that there is, in fact, no sphere beyond the human that may be referred to with regard to societal legitimation of the prevailing rule.<sup>76</sup> This shift in the ability to problematize societal issues, particularly regarding the alternatives as to the rule of society, would have been the outcome of the first actualization of the most fundamental alternative order – namely of realized people’s rule in place of the hitherto universally (in one form or another) prevailing divinely sanctioned elite rule or one man’s rule.

It was the birth of the notion of the viability of a radically different settlement, which – when working in conjoint effort with argumentative development (see below) – marked the beginnings of political theory, and enabled the further development of political philosophy in its earliest, Greek, forms. The beginnings of a “secular”-autonomous rationale – a way of thinking and practicing politics that rises from a prior resettling of the human order, as well as from an emancipation of the political decision-making process from all forms of outside control (especially notions of divine legitimation) – is thus, in my understanding, tightly knit together with the birth of political theory.

Obviously, the fundamental restructuring of the societal order and the beginnings of the political thought rising from it, could be understood to mark the beginnings of political theory – or to set its Western prototype – only in relation to a specific conceptual understanding of what political theory really consists of. In truth, this would be an understanding akin to a “modern liberalist view”, as far as in view of this, all resolutions, even those pertaining to which rule to follow, should have to acknowledge the residual possibility of a societal alternative to the effect that the “order of the human things” may never come to be finally settled.<sup>77</sup>

In what way, then, could this supposedly novel form of political thought be conceived of as “secular”? In what follows, I aim to answer this question more clearly by explicating the difference between ancient Graeco-Roman “secular” thought and modern secularization. I will move from an account of the origins of the latter, wherein I take resort to a somewhat modified version of the traditional narrative of the beginnings of “modern Western secularization”, where these beginnings are conceived of as having commenced from religious (protestant) reform affecting the political realm.<sup>78</sup> My preferred version would be a rendering, in which the beginnings of the secularization of the modern

---

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Meier 1990, 11, Raaflaub 1993, 383-384, Allen 2011, 77 and Bleicken 1979, 164-165.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Locke. *Sec. Tr.* 106: “Thus, though looking back as far as records give us any account of peopling the world, and the history of nations, we commonly find the government to be in one hand, yet it destroys not that, which I affirm, (*viz.*) that the beginning of politic society depends upon the consent of the individuals, to join into and make one society; who, when they are thus incorporated, might set up what form of government they thought fit.”

<sup>78</sup> Whereas the secularization of, for instance, modern Japan would have been the outcome, rather, of the acts of political hegemony harnessing religion. See Paramore 2017, 27.

(≈post-1500 A.D) world connects intimately with the birth of the modern concept of sovereignty in a Christian world still totally dominated by the papacy. However, as I base my understanding of this specific matter solely on the scholarship of others, the conclusion that modern Western secular thought saw its beginnings already prior to the reformation should be approached with some caution. The basic idea of modern secular thought consisting in a conceptual differentiation, or alienation, confining religious authority to its own sphere of influence, should be beyond doubt, however.

After having provisionally dealt with the ancient Graeco-Roman counterpart to secularization, we may finally turn to the question of which conceptual presuppositions relating particularly to political philosophy my theory presupposes.

### **Modern secularization vs. ancient “secularism”**

On Christmas Day 800 A.D., Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne to be the new emperor of Rome. In fact, it was only after Charlemagne’s death and the ensuing splitting of his enlarged *Frankenreich* – an empire, which under the rule of Charles had united most of Christian Europe – that the feudal-hierarchical social structure generally considered to have characterized Medieval Europe emerged. In the “feudal discourse”, the social-political splitting into smaller kingdoms and aristocracies contrasted sharply against the continuing expression of the ideal of a universal Christian Empire. All the same, in the feudal system, the earthly rulers could still quite comfortably pass over the discrepancy between the Christian ideal and the political reality. This they could do by appealing, e.g., to the universal authority of the Pope, or by striving to legitimize their own much more limited claims to power by allowing these claims to be viewed as just another expression of God’s mysterious will.<sup>79</sup>

As the rulers, on the eve of the consolidation of the modern states, found themselves in control of larger and larger territories, they began to require a universal authorization of the power they held over their own dominion. Here, the godly sanctioned papal claim to sovereignty over “the egalitarian souls” of the Christian congregations may well have served as a model for the earthly rulers’ similar claim over their minions. When the notion of sovereignty pertaining to the Christian church transferred to the emerging states of modern Europe, the modern concept of sovereignty, with its clear-cut separation between earthly and sacral powers, was established. At the same time, the foundations were also laid for modern secularization, and for the partition of questions of secular and religious character, which is – or ought to be – a given in the contemporary Western world.<sup>80</sup>

---

<sup>79</sup> See Fischer 1992, 435-437.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Siedentop 2014, 358-360 and Bireley 2009, 222-223.

With regard to the ancient counterpart to the modern concept of secularization, the most important thing to understand is that the societies of the ancient Graeco-Roman cultural sphere generally lacked this type of officially sanctioned separation between secular and religious matters.<sup>81</sup> Not in any Greek or Roman society – apart from some mythical stories and/or semi-atheistic philosophical ideas, which in themselves give evidence to an expressed disregard on the individual level – did there occur anything amounting to a societally relevant move towards conscious and conceptually manifested alienation from religious authority.<sup>82</sup> On the contrary, the gods, and more generally things divine (δαίμόνια), in whichever shape or form they were imagined (concrete or abstract), seem in general to have been reckoned with as both originators as well as guarantors of societal life.<sup>83</sup> Throughout Antiquity, this holds true with regard to both Greece and Rome, wherefore postulations assuming conceptual separations with regard to the ancient world between religious and political realms are unwarranted. This would be the case at least as far as the societal arrangements and the thought-constructs of the Graeco-Roman cultural sphere are concerned.<sup>84</sup>

The general reckoning with the ability of the divine realm to stay in control over human matters does not mean that in the actual political practice and in the political thought and theory stemming from it, religion would have remained always and everywhere an “embedded force”, even within the Graeco-Roman world.<sup>85</sup> Rather, in connection with the “political things” (Greek: τὰ πολιτικά, Latin: *res publica*) – in those locales where these things were actually decided upon – the power of the divine may, at a certain time and place, have come to be largely neglected. Most expressly, this seems to have been

---

<sup>81</sup> For an outright rejection of any kind of Graeco-Roman counterpart to modern secular thought, see Siedentop 2014, 352.

<sup>82</sup> On ancient Greek and Roman atheism generally, and specifically as it is evidenced in mythical stories of a divinity-defying character, such as those representing theomachy, see Whitmarsh 2016. In this connection, it may be noted that ancient philosophers were usually quite disdainful of the popular anthropomorphic images of divinities. Cf. Wifstrand Schiebe 2014, 348. One strand in the research on the causes of the trial of Socrates even holds that the charge of ἀσέβεια (impiety) against Socrates was actually motivated by him being thought of as an atheist in a modern sense – i.e., not believing in any sort of divinity. See Brickhouse & Smith 2002, 216.

<sup>83</sup> See Sourvinou-Inwood 1990, 305-306. For an account of the abstractialization of Greek religious thought pictured to have reached its height in the 5<sup>th</sup> B.C., see Snell 1955, 60.

<sup>84</sup> This is not to say that the same would hold true in connection with all other cultural spheres of the premodern world. With regard to premodern Japan in the aftermath of the introduction of Buddhism (552 A.D.), e.g., the claim has been made that a conceptual separation between the political and religious realm was in place for many centuries. In fact, clear-cut separation of matters pertaining to the “religious community” (Sanskrit: *sangha*) and those decided by the (aristocratic) political power-holders, may be a trait typically pertaining to stable Buddhist-influenced societies. See Paramore 2017, 24-25.

<sup>85</sup> On religion as embedded in the totality of the societal arrangements in an early Roman context, see Beard & al. 1998, 43. For a similar claim in connection with research focusing on Ancient Greece, see Price 1999, 89, according to which religion “was embedded in all aspects of ancient life”.



the case with regard to the political thought witnessed in the Classical Age in Ancient Greece.<sup>86</sup>

Thus, in the Constitutional Debate in Book III of the Histories of Herodotus', the classical (Greek) constitutional forms – democracy, oligarchy and monarchy – are played out against each other for the first time. They are judged, then, with regard to their respective merits and disadvantages, but with only minimal reference to religious considerations.<sup>87</sup> In all actuality, Herodotus' *Histories* is a work within which the ever-present need of humans to yield to the order-restoring power of the gods is always admitted – but still evidence of a kind of rationale expressly bypassing the sphere of the divine is encountered here.

Such a passage may be found in Book VII of the Histories. Here, in the midst of his march against Greece, Xerxes asks his advisor and uncle Artabanus if in the case that the godly sent vision – which had persuaded both Xerxes and his uncle to actually embark upon the campaign – had not appeared so 'manifestly' (ἐναργῆς), Artabanus would instead have dissuaded Xerxes from going on the fatal march.

εἴ τοι ἢ ὄψις τοῦ ἐνυπνίου μὴ ἐναργῆς οὕτω ἐφάνη, εἶχες ἂν τὴν ἀρχαίην γνώμην, οὐκ ἔῶν με στρατεύεσθαι ἐπὶ τὴν Ἑλλάδα, ἢ μετέστης ἄν; φέρε τοῦτό μοι ἀτρεκέως εἰπέ. ὁ δὲ ἀμείβετο λέγων· ὦ βασιλεῦ, ὄψις μὲν ἢ ἐπιφανεῖσα τοῦ ὄνειρου ὡς βουλόμεθα ἀμφοτέροι, τελευτήσῃ· ἐγὼ δ' ἔτι καὶ ἐς τόδε δειμάτος εἰμὶ ὑπόπλεος οὐδ' ἐντὸς ἐμεωυτοῦ, ἄλλα τε πολλὰ ἐπιλεγόμενος καὶ δὴ καὶ ὀρῶν τοι δύο τὰ μέγιστα πάντων ἐόντα πολεμιώτατα.<sup>88</sup>

Had the vision of the dream not appeared so manifestly, would you still have kept to your original point of view (εἶχες ἂν τὴν ἀρχαίην γνώμην), not allowing me to march against Greece, or would you have changed your mind? Go on, tell me this for certain (τοῦτό μοι ἀτρεκέως εἰπέ). Artabanus answered saying: O king, may the vision that appeared in the dream bring things to the conclusion the way we both desire. Still I am somewhat afraid and not quite in my senses (δειμάτος εἰμὶ ὑπόπλεος οὐδ' ἐντὸς ἐμεωυτοῦ), but counting many things and seeing many, I fear two things are your worst enemies (τοι δύο τὰ μέγιστα πάντων ἐόντα πολεμιώτατα).

---

<sup>86</sup> Although one should also keep in mind Polybius' claim regarding the role of religion in connection with the institutions holding political power in Republican Rome of his days, namely that the "fear of the gods" was used by them as a simple mean to constrain the populace. See Polyb. 6.56.6-11. Cf. Olsen 1997, 189.

<sup>87</sup> Perhaps such a recognition may be gleaned from the closing words of Darius in defence of monarchy: πατρίους νόμους μὴ λύειν ἔχοντας εὖ· οὐ γὰρ ἀμεινον. ("the ancestral laws, when they are good, should not be loosened. It will not be better that way"). See Hdt. 3.82.5.

<sup>88</sup> See Hdt. 7.47.

The two things Artabanus fears will cause the worst troubles for Xerxes on his march are the land and the sea.<sup>89</sup> The relevant point to be gathered from the passage above, however, is that in it Xerxes in fact gives Artabanus free rein to counter the final decision (to go on the march) authorized by both himself and the divine sphere. This opportunity is offered to Artabanus by the fact that Xerxes expresses the hypothetical situation in which Artabanus may reconsider the decision in the form of a counterfactual conditional sentence – which follows from the coupling of εἰ with ἐφάνη in the protasis and ἂν with εἶχες in the apodosis. Thus, the hypothetical situation in relation to which Artabanus is asked to take a stand is envisioned to be at such a distance from any actual occurrence that Artabanus is allowed thereby to express his opinion freely without fearing either the wrath of Xerxes or the gods. Given this background, it is highly significant that Artabanus then chooses to bypass the divine sphere in a fashion, which does not connect to the counterfactual hypothetical situation put in view by Xerxes. What Artabanus does is rather to make an implicit claim about the real world facing both himself and Xerxes in the space and time they occupy at the very moment they conduct their discussion. “May the vision that appeared in the dream bring things to the conclusion the way we both desire (ὄψις ὡς βουλόμεθα ἀμφοτέροι τελευτήσῃε)”, but our concerns are not really with the sphere of the divine at all. The latter is what Artabanus is implying, thereby effectively circumventing claims regarding the influence of divine authorizations on the human affairs.

One could also claim that with Herodotus’ successor, Thucydides, the history writing of the Greek Classical Age makes this circumvention of the sphere of divine an even more expressed tendency. This exact argument has been made by Peter Euben.

...parts of Herodotus' *Histories* (such as the debate over forms of government) are so self-contained and secular, and the gods are so often distant from the action, that we are invited to regard politics as an autonomous activity [...] With Thucydides this process of secularization goes further, as does the emergence of politics as an autonomous activity and realm. Although it is true that Thucydides' History retains the structure of retribution for transgressions found in Aeschylus and Herodotus, his analyses of those transgressions omit the gods. And those who continually invoke them, such as Nicias and the Spartans, are ridiculed for doing so.<sup>90</sup>

In this connection, one could certainly also pay attention to the Mytilenean debate of Book III in Thucydides. The debate is set at Athens in 427 B.C. and forms nothing less than a discussion on the question of whether or not the

---

<sup>89</sup> See Hdt. 7.49.1-2.

<sup>90</sup> See Euben 1986, 371-372.

Athenians should extinguish a whole community. In the debate, Cleon is portrayed as opening the discussion by bringing forth his utter contempt for democracy as the prevailing societal order. This rejection of δημοκρατία he bases on nothing but his conception of the inability of this specific principle of rule to answer to the political realities stemming from the present power-pre-tensions of the Athenians: those adhering to a democratic principle were, as Cleon would have it, simply unable to rule over others.<sup>91</sup>

Indeed, the implication of the above evidence – provided by the pair of writers from the very beginnings of the ancient genre of historiography – is quite clear.<sup>92</sup> What we encounter here, is a political thought in the form of a “practical-political” rationale (Herodotus and Thucydides), or of political thinking consisting in pure “political-theoretical” constructs (Herodotus) – where both types of thought may be understood to have arisen directly from the political life these theories, or this practice, centred on.<sup>93</sup> Moreover, in both cases the political thought is of a kind, which in modern terms could be described as “de facto secular”. This would be a political thinking, then, directed conclusively at the matter at hand by way of strictly paying heed to the best argument or solution (λόγος) to the given situation. In political thought of this kind, no outside influences – e.g., no notions of divine sanctions – are allowed to interfere with the argumentatively based process of human decision-making and/or theorizing. If my hypothesis is correct, the origin of this kind of rationale was the other side of the coin of the inauguration of politics as an autonomous activity in Greece in the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.

### **Imperial redefinition and the conceptual underpinnings of political philosophy**

Even today the monuments symbolizing the decisive readmitting of the force of the divine sphere over the human arrangements may be witnessed, namely on the Forum Romanum in Rome. Straight through the Forum cuts the Roman holy road, the Via Sacra, dominated by the imposing triumphal arches of the

---

<sup>91</sup> See Thuc. 3.37.1: πολλάκις μὲν ἤδη ἔγωγε καὶ ἄλλοτε ἔγνων δημοκρατίαν ὅτι ἀδύνατόν ἐστιν ἐτέρων ἄρχειν. (“Often already have I, on other occasions, noticed in democracy its inability to rule over others”).

<sup>92</sup> By recognizing Herodotus and Thucydides as the pair of writers standing at the very beginning of history writing, I certainly do not mean to defend any outworn *entwicklungsgeschichtliche* conception, taking Herodotus’ individual progress as a writer and researcher to represent that of a whole genre. It remains undeniable, however, that when history writing is first explicitly recognized as its own genre, namely in Aristotle’s *On Poetry*, Herodotus is first also referred to as the archetypal representative of that genre. εἴη γὰρ ἂν τὰ Ἡροδότου εἰς μέτρα τεθῆναι καὶ οὐδὲν ἦττον ἂν εἴη ἱστορία τις (“...it would be possible to put the Histories of Herodotus into metre and still it would be some kind of history...”). See Aristot. *Poet.* 1451a.35-1451b.5. On Herodotus’ relationship with his contemporaries, predecessors or followers, the other Ionian logographers, see Marincola 2012, 2-8. For an example of “proto-history” in Hesiod’s “myth of races”, see *WD* 151: χαλκῶ δ’ εἰργάζοντο: μέλας δ’ οὐκ ἔσκε σίδηρος (“they worked with bronze, since they did not have black iron”).

<sup>93</sup> Cf. Strauss 1959, 84.

Roman Emperors Titus Flavius Vespasianus and Septimius Severus. On the side of the holy road, overshadowed by the arch of Severus, stands an anonymous rectangular building. It is the Roman Senate.

By the beginning of the Principate of Augustus, the notion of the sacred monarch had triumphed anew as the sole dominant principle for ordering society.<sup>94</sup> The case could thus well be made that it was at the end of the Roman Republic and the beginning of the Imperial Age that the “secularization” of Graeco-Roman political thought actually came to a halt – as the deification of the Roman emperors brought divine authorization and sacred kingship right back into the centre of communal life.<sup>95</sup> By the same token, Classical Political Theory must have ended even sooner, namely when the democratized Greek city-states lost their independence to the expanding monarchy of the Macedonians (338 B.C). This is not to say that either form of rationale ever disappeared from human thinking – certainly, the texts giving expression to them may still be read and even admired today.<sup>96</sup> It is to say, however, that by then they had been fully stripped of their bearing on actual political life, through the radically new ordering of which they had first arisen – and that the same scenario would apply to Classical Political Philosophy.<sup>97</sup>

For a short time, however, also Classical Political Philosophy had been a living substance in the midst of the community, which had given birth to it. The accomplishment of Classical Political Theory had been that of the earliest disclosure of radical humanly attainable alternatives for ordering society. Classical Political Philosophy, in its turn, gave the earliest visions of a whole-

---

<sup>94</sup> Cf. Verg. *Aen.* 1.286-288: *Nascetur pulchra Troianus Origine Caesar, Imperium oceano famam qui terminet astris, Iulius a magno demissum nomen Iulo* (“With an illustrious beginning a Trojan Caesar will be born, who’s rule will reach the ocean and fame the stars, Julius, a name derived from the great Iulus.”).

<sup>95</sup> Of course, already from Alexander onwards, the Hellenistic rulers seem to have called for divinity as a “birthright”, and this would also be bestowed upon them, at least by writers from the Roman era. See Plut. *Alex.* 2.1: Ἀλέξανδρος ὅτι τῷ γένει πρὸς πατρός μὲν ἦν Ἡρακλείδης [...] τῶν πάνυ πεπιστευμένων ἐστί. (“That Alexander was a descendant of Heracles from his father’s side [...] this is generally accepted”). Cf. *ibid.* 2.4-6. Thus, already in the Greek world of the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C., the redeification of the human order may have been well on its way.

<sup>96</sup> Cf. Ober 1999, 368: “Even if (counterfactually) the Athenian critics of democracy had been uniformly rejectionist and had contributed nothing of positive value to Greek democracy in its own day, it would still be the case that it was their texts that kept alive the memory of a very real era, both glorious and terrifying, when the ordinary people of a great state were masters of their own fate and ruled themselves by open debate and democratic ballot.”

<sup>97</sup> The claim could be made, of course, that democracy as a political culture and democratic institutions flourished in the Hellenistic Greek city-states well into the time of Roman rule, but this sort of “democratic culture” would certainly differ essentially from an era when “the ordinary people of a great state were masters of their own fate”. Cf. Ober 1999, 367-368 and the footnote above. Therefore, the political thought, political theory and political philosophy of the Greek societies of the Hellenistic and Roman Ages were bound to change substantially as well, as far as it still was the case that “political life itself sets the main problems for the political theorist” See Skinner 1978, x.

some, humanly applicable reordering of societal arrangements. In the *Apology*, Plato ascribes such transformative potential to the life and thought of Socrates:

ἐάντ' αὖ λέγω ὅτι καὶ τυγχάνει μέγιστον ἀγαθὸν ὃν ἀνθρώπῳ τοῦτο, ἐκάστης ἡμέρας περὶ ἀρετῆς τοὺς λόγους ποιεῖσθαι καὶ τῶν ἄλλων περὶ ὧν ὑμεῖς ἐμοῦ ἀκούετε διαλεγόμενον καὶ ἑμαυτὸν καὶ ἄλλους ἐξετάζοντος, ὁ δὲ ἀνεξέταστος βίος οὐ βιωτὸς ἀνθρώπῳ, ταῦτα δ' ἔτι ἦττον πείσεσθέ μοι λέγοντι. τὰ δὲ ἔχει μὲν οὕτως, ὡς ἐγὼ φημι, ὃ ἄνδρες, πείθειν δὲ οὐ ῥᾴδιον.<sup>98</sup>

...if again I say that to talk every day about virtue and the other things about which you hear me talking and examining myself and others is the greatest good to man, and that the unexamined life is not worth living, you will believe me still less. This is as I say, gentlemen, but it is not easy to convince you.

My work has been designed to trace the beginnings of political philosophy thus understood. of philosophy as being able to affect a transmutation of the “nomological knowledge” or of the whole understanding relating to the norms decisive in relation to the prevailing order of the society.<sup>99</sup> Socrates would never have been brought to trial had there not been a very real fear of his ability to change some of the most valued ordering principles of life in the actual society he lived in: the Athenian democracy of 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Greece.

In the following, I conclude this introductory chapter by overviewing the content of the three main chapters of the present work – each of which connects a new reading of a Herodotean passage with one of the three hypotheses forming the historical theory defended in this investigation.

### **Structuring the investigation: modern theoreticians vs. ancient sources and the selection of evidence**

In the theoretically constructive parts initiating the final three chapters contained in this investigation, a reversal of the usual order between primary (here: ancient and early modern) and secondary (here: modern scholarly) sources occurs. This reversal applies particularly to the central modern theoreticians used in each chapter of this investigation. These scholars are Carl Schmitt and Leo Strauss (Chapter 2), Christian Meier (Chapter 3) and Louis Gernet and Jean-Pierre Vernant (Chapter 4). With this switch, I certainly do not intend to rate the value of the theories of modern commentators more

---

<sup>98</sup> See Plat. *Apol.* 38a.

<sup>99</sup> For an explication of the concept of nomological knowledge (Germ.: *nomologische Wissen*), see Weber 1988, 276ff.

highly than the evidence provided by the ancient texts. The reason I have chosen to focus especially on these scholars in my work is that I have found their theoretical constructs particularly useful with regard to my own attempts at forming hypotheses that would actually match the ancient evidence. In the closing parts of the chapters – where I bring in the readings of the essential ancient texts of Herodotus – the reversal of the order between primary and secondary sources is again turned back.

In Chapter 2, I strive to shed light on the finalization of the process leading up to the actual inauguration of a “secular”-autonomous rationale. Here, the modern theoreticians in focus are Carl Schmitt and Leo Strauss. On the one hand, the theories of Schmitt and Strauss allow for a glimpse of the decisive moments in the intellectual history of the modern appreciation of the “autonomy” of the political experience of the Classical Greeks. On the other hand, the Schmittian/Straussian conception of autonomous political thought, in its pronounced “top-down” understanding of political autonomy, provides a useful contrast against the “bottom-up” comprehension defended by me – a comprehension rising from the commonly admitted view of how the political system in the direct democracies of the Greek world actually worked.<sup>100</sup>

The historical hypothesis of the chapter will be tested against the Deioeces episode in the first book of the *Histories* of Herodotus. The importance of the evidence provided by the episode lies in the mythical story’s demythologizing character with regard to divine authorization of the human order. This demythologizing is brought to the forefront in my reading, which provides an alternative to the common scholarly emphasis regarding the episode’s dealing with “reminiscences of tyrannical rule” from the Archaic Age of Ancient Greece.<sup>101</sup> Although the story may indeed be seen to be constructed against the background of backward-looking Greek conceptions of tyrannical rule, upon closer inspection it seems quite clear that the Deioeces episode also has a specific background in a prior “deconstruction” of one world-historically dominant notion of divine authorizations of the human order – namely in the deconstruction of the notion of “sacred kingship”. As the Deioeces episode thus provides the earliest evidence of an undoing of the notion of the divine king, while setting in its place the idea of kingship as just another humanly applicable societal settlement, an interest should be taken in what the wider implication would be with regard to developments within political thought. I claim that the story also signals the first completion of the awareness of the artificial, or humanly applicable, nature of all constitutional alternatives, which would be tantamount to the finalization of a political thought consisting in a “de facto secular” rationale.

---

<sup>100</sup> For the commonly accepted bottom-up view of the working of the political systems in the direct democracies in Ancient Greece, see Cartledge 2016, 7-8. Cf. Ober 1989, 336-338.

<sup>101</sup> For the common view connecting the story with tyranny, see Patzek 2004, 69, Bichler 2000, 235 Thomas 2012, 250-251 and Raaflaub 2002, 173.

In Chapter 3, the attempt is to build a historical hypothesis that would respond to the evidence provided by the Constitutional Debate of Herodotus' Book 3 of how political theory proper came to be inaugurated in the ancient world. The modern theoretician, upon which the theoretical constructs of this chapter in most parts are built, is the German ancient historian Christian Meier. Christian Meier's insights are particularly important with regard to his examination of the first completed break in the inherited societal order, which occurred with the creation of the first full-scale direct democracies in Ancient Greece. It is this earliest transition in the main principle of rule followed in and by the society at large – the replacement of elite rule with realized people's rule – which may be seen to have formed one effectively enabling precondition for Classical Political Theory. I strive to complete the understanding of the main shifts in the collective problematizing capacities having effected the birth of political theory by taking up argumentative development as the second decisive element in the prehistory of political theory proper. Here, I emphasize the radical increase in the importance of 'internal critique' – an argumentative technique dealing with norms and striving to uncover inconsistencies in how these norms are applied – in the democratized city-states of Greece in the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.

The text of the Constitutional Debate is central, since it actually forms the earliest evidence we have of the juxtaposition of different constitutional alternatives and the weighing of them against each other with arguments. As evidenced in the Constitutional Debate, the birth of political theory may be equalled with the inauguration of a kind of theorization, in which a radical political alternative is taken into account for the first time, and then dealt with through arguments alone. In my reading of the debate, I strive to bring forth how the different constitutional alternatives – here for the first time considered as abstract, transferrable and humanly applicable entities – are being juxtaposed exactly by way of internal critique. Thus, the conflating of internal critique and of the new way of thinking of constitutions may be seen to have causally effected the inauguration of Classical Political Theory. My reading of the debate builds on quite a few insights by previous scholars. Particularly important, however, are the observations of Victor Ehrenberg and Jochen Bleicken of the debate as representing, on the one hand, the earliest theoretical account of alternative constitutions, and on the other hand, that constitutional alternatives are here actually for the first time considered as changeable and humanly applicable.<sup>102</sup> In my reading of the juxtaposing of the constitutional alternatives as taking place by way of internal critique, I strive to offer an alternative to Helmut Apffel's reading of the speeches forming the debate as evidencing a "pre-logical" mindset.<sup>103</sup>

---

<sup>102</sup> See Ehrenberg 1950, 525 and Bleicken 1979, 164-165.

<sup>103</sup> See Apffel 1958, 54-55.

In Chapter 4, I finally turn to the question of the origins of political philosophy proper, or of Classical Political Philosophy. The modern theoreticians in focus in this chapter are the two most well-known representatives of the Paris philological school, namely Louis Gernet and, particularly, his disciple Jean-Pierre Vernant. Within the works of the latter, the historical account – superior to all others, as far as I can see – of the inauguration in the Greek world of that which I have termed “aboriginal secularization” may also be found.<sup>104</sup> I strive to utilize the account of Vernant – which in effect equalizes the beginnings of political philosophy with the origins of an ancient form of secular rationale – by amending it with a conceptual understanding of what political philosophy presupposes: the ability to envision an alternative transcending the prevailing order, as well as all of its collectively admitted alternatives.<sup>105</sup>

The historical hypothesis thus arrived at will be tested against a reading of Xerxes’ War Councils and their surrounding narrative in Book VII of Herodotus’ *Histories*. The councils are set at the Persian court in Susa on the eve of Xerxes’ campaign against Greece. The relevant narrative context, in turn, is provided by an ominous dream in which Xerxes is ordered to go on his march by an imposing figure. Xerxes obeys the command of the dream-figure against the conclusion reached by himself after having given second thought to the councils. In the scholarly literature, this decision has repeatedly been connected with Herodotus’ tragic “philosophy of history”, as Xerxes’ has been thought of as having been predestined by the gods to go on his hubristic march,

---

<sup>104</sup> Although Vernant seems not to have explicitly acknowledged the difference with regard to modern secularization.

<sup>105</sup> *Loci* for explicit reckoning with the philosopher’s need to produce utopian visions of societal transcendence and corresponding individual transperformance are to be found, among other places, in Book VII of Aristotle’s *Politics* and in Book V of Plato’s *Republic*. See Aristot. *Pol.* 7.1333b.5-11 and Plat. *Rep.* 472c-d: οἱ δὲ νῦν ἄριστα δοκοῦντες πολιτεύεσθαι τῶν Ἑλλήνων, καὶ τῶν νομοθετῶν οἱ ταῦτα καταστήσαντες τὰς πολιτείας, οὔτε πρὸς τὸ βέλτιστον τέλος φαίνονται συντάξαντες τὰ περὶ τὰς πολιτείας οὔτε πρὸς πάσας τὰς ἀρετὰς τοὺς νόμους καὶ τὴν παιδείαν, ἀλλὰ φορτικῶς ἀπέκλιναν πρὸς τὰς χρησίμους εἶναι δοκούσας καὶ πλεονεκτικώτερας. “The ones among the Hellenes who are now thought to have the best constitutions, and the lawgivers who established these constitutions, seem neither to have designed them with a view to the best end, nor did they put in order the education and the laws by taking into account all the virtues, but they seem rather to have leaned vulgarly towards what they thought would benefit their greed for gain.” παραδείγματος ἄρα ἔνεκα, ἣν δ’ ἐγὼ, ἐζητοῦμεν αὐτό τε δικαιοσύνην οἷόν ἐστι, καὶ ἄνδρα τὸν τελέως δίκαιον εἰ γένοιτο, καὶ οἷος ἂν εἴη γενόμενος, καὶ ἀδικίαν αὐτῶν καὶ τὸν ἀδικώτατον, ἵνα εἰς ἐκείνους ἀποβλέποντες, οἷοι ἂν ἡμῖν φαίνονται εὐδαιμονίας τε πέρι καὶ τοῦ ἐναντίου, ἀναγκάζομεθα καὶ περὶ ἡμῶν αὐτῶν ὁμολογεῖν, ὅς ἂν ἐκεῖνοις ὅτι ὁμοιότατος ἦ, τὴν ἐκείνης μοῖραν ὁμοιοτάτην ἔξῃν, ἀλλ’ οὐ τούτου ἔνεκα, ἵν’ ἀποδείξωμεν ὡς δυνατὰ ταῦτα γίνεσθαι. “For the sake of a model, I said, did we look for the nature of righteousness, and for the perfectly righteous man if he were to be, and if indeed he were of which kind he would be, and for unrighteousness and for the unrighteous person did we look for in the same way, so that by gazing at them, that is, at how they turned out to be in our view with regard to happiness and the opposite, therewith would we also be forced to agree with regard to ourselves, meaning that whoever would resemble these the most, should also have to be considered to have the portion in life most resembling them, but this we did not do in order to show that these could actually come to be just so”.



thus becoming the subject of divine retribution.<sup>106</sup> In an alternative, and in my opinion more convincing, interpretation, Herodotus would have used the dream-figure to convey a view of the binding nature of custom (νόμος), which would be binding, then, even on a god-king like Xerxes.<sup>107</sup> However, as Friedrich Solmsen first brought to knowledge, there remains a deep tension between the “metaphysical” explanation of Xerxes’ decision given by the dream-story and the “secular” version provided by the account centred in the councils.<sup>108</sup> In my own reading, I suggest that this tension may be conceived of as dissolving if and when Herodotus’ separate accounts giving the background to Xerxes’ march – one account centred on the power of argument, the other on the power of custom – are understood to have moved to the plain of a critique of political life *tout court*. Herein would also lie the key to an understanding of the work of Herodotus as actually giving evidence of political philosophy proper.

In constructing and defending the series of connected hypotheses presented in the central chapters of my work, I have taken into consideration all the significant ancient evidence I know of, as well as all the accounts based on the evidence that I have been able to gather. I cannot be sure, however, that I am familiar with all relevant evidence. Therefore, if it could be shown, e.g., that already prior to the turn to direct democracy, different constitutional alternatives were tried against each other with normative arguments, the historical theory proposed here could certainly be falsified. Likewise, the theory could be falsified if it could be shown that already before the emergence of δημοκρατία there was a general consciousness among the Greeks of the fact that gods, or personified cosmic-natural forces, do not sanction the varying principles according to which societal rules are determined. A falsification could also be obtained if a transcending of all varieties of societal rules without resort to a sphere of the divine had been envisioned already prior to the fulfilled democratization of Greek societies – or, similarly, if movements of thoughts freed from “mysterious-religious” pretensions while nevertheless seeking transformation of the societal order had sprung up before the democratic breakthrough.

---

<sup>106</sup> See Pohlenz 1937, 125. Cf. Grethlein 2009, 203-205.

<sup>107</sup> See Evans 1961, 111.

<sup>108</sup> See Solmsen 1974, 157-159.

# Chapter 1: The End of Industrial Capitalism and the Fresh Relevance of the Question of the Origins of Political Philosophy; the Mytilenean Debate and the Trans-Historical Value of Egalitarian κράτος

In this chapter, I aim, on the one hand, at a tentative vision of some of the major underpinnings of the rise of political philosophy in Ancient Greece. On the other hand, the purpose of this chapter is to begin building a bridge between these bases and some of the concerns, which are now widely conceived of as the dominant ones of our own time. Because of its nature as a preliminary account, both the content and the structure of the chapter are bound to undulate. Not all claims made will be argued for comprehensively here. They will, however, be backed up more thoroughly in later chapters. In the following, I give an outline of the central content of the chapter and contemplate the question of the justification of a contemporary setting for the presentation of the kind of historical theory the present investigation defends.

To begin with the question of justification, I understand that some readers may think it superfluous to try to establish a connection between the “dawn of Western thought” and our present predicament, represented by the crisis of industrial capitalism. This viewpoint seems, however, quite antiquated. Although all over the world, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle are still taught at school, it should now be less evident than ever how their central concerns match ours. If philologists and historians are unable to relate these thinkers, and the ground from which their thought arose, to the prospects we all have of making or maintaining our societies as places worth living in, they (I) might as well throw their editions of Plato out of the window. This could well mean, then, having to surrender in the face of the technocratic dream, or nightmare, of allowing only “useful” and/or “productive” subjects to be studied, but then so be it.<sup>109</sup> If I am unable to contribute to the envisioning of a real-world alternative, I had in fact best remain silent. Because now, at the latest, should the

---

<sup>109</sup> On the technocrat’s ultimate fear, the “educated unemployed”, see Sowell 2016, 145: “People who have acquired academic degrees, without acquiring many economically meaningful skills, not only face personal disappointment and disaffection with society, but also have often become negative factors in the economy and even sources of danger, especially when they lash out at economically successful minorities and ethnically polarize the whole society they live

justification of pretensions of detachment have been recognized as untenable, and what academics in all fields should have realized instead is that – to a significant part – the world may actually be their creation.<sup>110</sup> This is something I mean to take seriously:

Habitual thinking and practice have to be replaced by a more utopian imagination – one that injects disobedience into the institutionalized political order.<sup>111</sup>

I would claim, though, that never before this very investigation has the study of Classical Political Philosophy been so directly employed in the service of present-oriented social analysis. The thinkers who I conceive of as having come closest to doing this in the past, the likes of Hannah Arendt, Leo Strauss and Christian Meier, have all emphasized the rupture of the Western philosophic-political tradition so strongly, that the prompting of changes has either been lacking completely in their works or been overridden by lament.<sup>112</sup> Here, of course, they have themselves joined a very strong tradition. At least ever since the disciplines of anthropology and sociology began to influence the study of Classical Antiquity, there has been a rather firm tendency to emphasize the alien nature of the object under study.<sup>113</sup> Especially for one of the central theoreticians I make use of in this chapter as well as in the next, the ever-controversial Strauss, one main concern seems to have been to broaden our understanding of this gulf between modernity and antiquity. I take note of this

---

in.” However, the question, which the technocrats always seem unable to answer, is who is going to employ all the medical doctors, engineers and material scientists in their preferred future world?

<sup>110</sup> Most obviously, this would be verified by the case of the massive influence of the “Chicago school” of economic theory – proposing thoroughgoing free-market liberalism in the place of Keynesianism – with regard to the disastrous political decisions inaugurating the neoliberal phase of industrial capitalism. Cf. Lind 2013, 376-379. To take an example from before the age of industrial capitalism, we may consider the “history of the ideas of sovereignty” as formative for the very ideas of state sovereignty we may still take for granted. See Giddens 1984, xxxiv: “The notion of sovereignty and associated theories of the state were stunningly new when first formulated; today they have in some degree become part of the very social reality which they helped to establish.”

<sup>111</sup> See Parr 2013, 7.

<sup>112</sup> Cf. Arendt 2006b, 12: “The trouble, however, is that we seem to be neither equipped nor prepared for this activity of thinking, of settling down in the gap between past and future. For very long times in our history, actually throughout the thousands of years that followed upon the foundation of Rome and were determined by Roman concepts, this gap was bridged over by what, since the Romans, we have called tradition. That this tradition has worn thinner and thinner as the modern age progressed is a secret to nobody. When the thread of tradition finally broke, the gap between past and future ceased to be a condition peculiar only to the activity of thought and restricted as an experience to those few who made thinking their primary business. It became a tangible reality and perplexity for all; that is, it became a fact of political relevance.”

<sup>113</sup> The post-humously published collection of essays expanding the whole career of the foundational figure of the highly influential philological school of Paris, Louis Gernet, is aptly titled “The Anthropology of Ancient Greece” (*Anthropologie de la grèce antique*). See Gernet 1981.

line of thought, but *I follow another possibility envisioned by Strauss, namely that of the raising of questions of trans-historical value.*<sup>114</sup>

*Trans-historical value actualizes when some central questions or concerns of one age, after having lain dormant for an unspecifiable amount of time, are suddenly reawakened and brought to the fore of the collective consciousness and/or discourses of another epoch.* The age of “industrial capitalism” (ca. 1800-2000 A.D.), with its ten-folding of the world average per capita income and six-folding of the total world population, introduction of globalized mass production, information technology etc., may be an age especially prone to its own issues of “rapid societal change”. Within this “epoch of overall progress”, there have been periods, however, when the world system as a whole has begun to be conceived of as particularly unjust.

The first period of such a kind befell at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (the ‘Gilded Age’), with the aggravated economic growth facilitated by intensified industrialization. This unprecedented surge in economic prosperity resulted in the immense enrichment of a few individuals and their families (the “robber barons”), and in the first radical widening of the social divide hitting the industrializing societies. Due to successful social struggle, the long-term effect of the expanded industrialization of the first Gilded Age was, however, real wage growth and better living conditions for all income classes. With the ‘second Gilded Age’ (post-1970’s), empowered by the expanded markets of a globalized and technologized world, what has materialized is the opposite effect of an income growth largely concentrated to the highest census class – i.e., the top 1% of the world population, or now even the top 0.1% – along with real wage stagnation and heightened unemployment for the rest. Across the world of today, more and more people are becoming redundant, and as they lose whatever bargaining-power they still may possess, there seems to be no way of escaping ever-widening economic divides. These, in their turn, are quickly developing into new forms of social and political degradation and seclusion.<sup>115</sup>

By force of trans-historical value, the essential concerns of bygone ages return to the center of social interest, when after having been fast asleep for more than 200 years, “many-headed and fire-breathing Sansculottism”, with his “glare of fierce brightness”, threatens to “yawn the earth asunder” one more time.<sup>116</sup> In a time of reawakened consciousness of thoroughgoing injustice, rising from social and economic division, we may have no choice but to

---

<sup>114</sup> For the concept of trans-historical value, see Strauss 1953, 23-24.

<sup>115</sup> For the contrast between the first and the second Gilded Ages, see Freeland 2012, chapter I. For the natural transfer of economic inequality to social and political seclusion, see Stiglitz 2014a, 147. Cf. Piketty 2014, 20: “There is no fundamental reason why we should believe that growth is automatically balanced. It is long past the time when we should have put the question of inequality back at the center of economic analysis and begun asking questions first raised in the nineteenth century.”

<sup>116</sup> See Carlyle 1887, I.VI, writing of the French Revolution: “When the age of Miracles lay faded into the distance as an incredible tradition, and even the age of Conventionalities was

look back in time. My idea is that we ought to turn our gaze even beyond the French Revolution to an age that saw the only other political revolution in the history of the world that resulted in a complete turn-over of the inherited order, and where the ground first began to be cleared for the rise of the universal ideals of equality and political inclusiveness. This would mean nothing less than looking back one more time to the Classical Age of Ancient Greece.

Only by coming to grips with the earliest social struggles and unprecedented movements of thought that have shaped our history and our whole way of thinking, may we begin to approach an informed and peaceful solution to coming periods of radical societal change. Never before have these kinds of changes been brought about without being preceded by violence, but maybe that, as well, could change.

### **The Waning of industrial capitalism – and then what?**

For two weeks in the beginning of the spring of 2017, I had the opportunity to visit Oxford as an Academic Visitor. Most of the days I would begin with a long run along the public paths of the River Thames. I would then do a quick workout at the hotel gym, after which I would eat lunch in the city centre. The rest of the day and the evening I usually spent in the Bodleian library, reading classical works from different ages on the history of political thinking. One day, after having finished some track running intervals with the Oxford University Athletics Club, I did not feel like going back to the Bodleian Library, however, so instead I went to the nearby Blackwell's bookshop. As it happened, I stayed in the shop until it closed, deeply engrossed in a recent book by Paul Mason, which I had picked up from the bestsellers' shelf.

The book, called *Postcapitalism: a Guide to Our Future*, fascinated me to the extent that it did, for the simple reason that for me, a 31-year old European, a large portion of its content had a peculiar sound of truth to it. Somehow, the writer had been able to penetrate right to the kernel of the realities and concerns of my whole generation. My generation would be the one represented by all those who were still young when the secular stagnation, or the non-short term economic depression, of the post-2008 world kicked in.<sup>117</sup> By now, we

---

now old; and Man's Existence had for long generations rested on mere formulas which were grown hollow by course of time; and it seemed as if no Reality any longer existed but only Phantasms of realities, and God's Universe were the work of the Tailor and Upholsterer mainly, and men were buckram masks that went about becking and grimacing there,--on a sudden, the Earth yawns asunder, and amid Tartarean smoke, and glare of fierce brightness, rises *Sansculotism*, many-headed, fire-breathing, and asks: What think ye of me?" I do not acknowledge any other genuine and successful political revolutions in the history of the world, besides the ones of 462 B.C. and 1789. Only in these cases was the total dismantling of the old rule, symbolized in such acts as the disempowering of the Areopagus and the beheading of the French king, followed by a full, albeit temporary, turnover in the principle of rule.

<sup>117</sup> On the concept of secular stagnation and for an attempt at tracing the origins of the post-2008 euro area (secular) economic stagnation, see Podkaminer 2015.

were all thirtysomething, but we were still the ones who had been most critically caught up right in the middle of the crisis and the concomitant stagnation.<sup>118</sup>

In fact, the waning of the quintessential promise of ‘industrial capitalism’ – i.e., of our current economic system, favouring private ownership and profiting from industrialized means of production – the fading of the prospect of ever-increasing prosperity, domestically as well as internationally, could be conceived of as the canvas on which the painting of our whole existence had been drawn.<sup>119</sup> At the same time, we were the ones who had matured amidst the first flowering (in the modern era) of a solid (in the sense of being non-ideologically generated) promise – realized by intensified development of information technology – of radical socio-economic and political change. This promise had gained its substance from the nurturing bosom of the globalized, technologized and financialized industrial-capitalistic system itself.<sup>120</sup> However, for the great majority of us, in the now decade-old age of stagnation, there had never yet surfaced any tangible positive effects – nothing with the potential to outweigh the all too real insecurity and frustration felt in our lives, which was a simple consequence of the societal situation at hands.

Technologically, we are headed for zero-price goods, unmeasurable work, an exponential takeoff in productivity and the extensive automation of physical processes. Socially, we are trapped in a world of monopolies, inefficiency, the ruins of a finance-dominated free market and a proliferation of ‘bullshit jobs’.<sup>121</sup>

The working class probably died already in the 1980s.<sup>122</sup> During the following decades – those of the victory march of neoliberalism, understood not as a laissez-faire system but, more adequately I think, as an ideology promoting globalized finance and private as well as corporate rent-seeking: “ersatz-capitalism” – the work-force of the world, what we in the West call ‘the precariat’, doubled, and it was made global.<sup>123</sup> By the time of writing, the “positive” effects of this international exploitation of cheap labour have, however, surely been outworn. The last ‘Kondratieff wave’ – basically: an approximately 50-

---

<sup>118</sup> On escalating youth unemployment in the EU-region after 2008, see Choudhry et al. 2012, 14.

<sup>119</sup> Cf. Streeck 2016, 1: “Capitalism promises infinite growth of commodified material wealth in a finite world, by conjoining itself with modern science and technology, making capitalist society the first industrial society, and through unending expansion of free, in the sense of contestable, risky markets, on the coat-tails of a hegemonic carrier state and its market-opening policies both domestically and internationally”.

<sup>120</sup> See Mason 2015, 23: “It was the increase in computing power that enabled a complex global finance system.”

<sup>121</sup> See Mason 2015, 144.

<sup>122</sup> See Gorz 1982.

<sup>123</sup> See Mason 2015, 177, 273. On the pro-market and -businessmindedness captured in the phrase “ersatz capitalism”, see Stiglitz 2014, 125. Cf Lind 2013, 11.

year long structural cycle within the industrial capitalistic system, with an upswing and a downswing phase of economic growth, ending in system-restructuring – was prolonged by means of utter globalized blood-sucking and high reliance on ‘financialization’ – i.e., on new, inventive and highly risky, means of expanding the market.<sup>124</sup>

As above all we – the un- or underprivileged thirty-somethings of the Western world – have been unable to disregard, however, it all ended a decade ago. In truth, we now seem to be on a path that leads towards either system-decay or system-destruction. The consequence of prolonging the dominant social-political and economic world order in its present shape would be continued toil within the framework of a system, now obviously unable to fulfil its own central promise: that of ever-increasing prosperity (notwithstanding the ever-increasing prosperity of the few at the top, of course). There remains the alternative scenario, however, which would mean nothing less than that “the 240-year lifecycle of industrial capitalism may be nearing its end”.<sup>125</sup> In this view, comprehensive system change is in fact continuously interrupted by the political choice of embracing austerity, a clinching that only functions as a means to give artificial breath to the industrial capitalistic system in its neoliberal phase of enforced low-growth.<sup>126</sup>

At this juncture, I would like to pinpoint that whichever way the world may be turning, whether there will be a major system change or not, I think that we have already witnessed – and in fact gone far beyond – the beginnings of the undoing of many of the central political divides pertaining to the age of industrial capitalism. A perfect example of such a divide would be the opposition between left-wing and right-wing politics – however stigmatizing these labels continue to be among people belonging to older and more prosperous generations, or among traditionalists generally, for whom utopian visions have no bearing on reality.<sup>127</sup>

---

<sup>124</sup> For the concept of Kondratieff waves, see Mager 1987 and Korotayev & Grinin 2012, 15-20. For the concept of financialization, see Mason 2015, 15-20. Cf. Jacobs & al. 2017, 16. For an account of the intensification of the deregulation of the financial markets that resulted in the economic collapse of 2008 understood to have had its ultimate cause in the so-called Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act of 1999, see Roncaglia 2010, 17-18. For a vision of the post-2008 world as plagued by the “three apocalyptic horsemen” of contemporary capitalism: stagnation, debt and inequality, see Streeck 2016, 18.

<sup>125</sup> See Mason 2015, 144. Cf. Mishra 2017, 7-8.

<sup>126</sup> Cf. Stiglitz 2013: “The embrace of austerity, from Britain to Germany, is leading to high unemployment, falling wages, and increasing inequality [...]. That things may have bottomed out – that the recession may be ‘officially’ over – is little comfort to the 27 million out of a job in the EU. On both sides of the Atlantic, the austerity fanatics say, march on: these are the bitter pills that we need to achieve prosperity. But prosperity for whom?”

<sup>127</sup> On the decline of traditional partisanship and parties in modern-day politics, see Stoker 2006, 59-60. Cf. Soral 2012, 9. On the necessity of a thorough reregulation of the financial markets in order to avoid the kind of severe social and political tensions that could lead to a total upheaval of capitalism, see Roncaglia 2010, 69-70.

All the same, for those with children or planning to have children, one special concern for the future ought to be that these now essentially outdated political divisions will be replaced by a much more thorough polarization. This would be the opposition between a small in-group of “full humans” and a much larger group of essentially alien “sub-humans”. The latter group would consist of all those who do not, for whatever reason, qualify for the new in-group.

evidently natural rights to life, liberty and security, already challenged by deep-rooted inequality, are threatened by political dysfunction and economic stagnation, and, in places affected by climate change, a scarcity and suffering characteristic of pre-modern economic life.<sup>128</sup>

At a moment like this, I can say nothing else than that I take it as my foremost duty to turn the gaze back once more to the world, where the notions of natural inequality and segregation were taken to their extreme – i.e., to look back one more time at Classical Antiquity.<sup>129</sup> With me attempting to gain, once again, a fresh view of the societal arrangements and the intellectual conceptions of the Classical Age of Ancient Greece, I would like to invite those who agree with me that the essentially inhuman divide – ingrained in their world and threatening to invade ours – can only be abhorred. It is my conviction, however, that by grappling with the beast, we may uncover some of its true beauty, which would be tantamount to the opposite of any idealized picture of a lost – but still exquisitely shining, and in principle trackable – heritage.<sup>130</sup> In truth, we may even come to find that exactly there and exactly in that deeply excluding and highly racial societal setting, something radically new and potentially extremely valuable came to light – something which all too soon was lost again.<sup>131</sup>

---

<sup>128</sup> See Mishra 2017, 14.

<sup>129</sup> For the extreme case of Classical (Athenian) inequality and segregation, see the evidence of the double-descent law for citizenship – requiring both parents of an aspiring citizen to be Athenians – passed at the height of Athenian “imperialism” in 450/1 B.C: Aristot. *Ath. Pol.* 26.3. For recent discussion of this ‘Periclean law’, see Cartledge 2016, 88-90. Cf. Blok 2009.

<sup>130</sup> Cf. Nietzsche 1964, 163: “Möge uns niemand unsern Glauben an eine noch bevorstehende Wiedergeburt des hellenischen Altertums zu verkümmern suchen; denn in ihm finden wir allein unsre Hoffnung für eine Erneuerung und Läuterung des deutschen Geistes durch den Feuerzauber der Musik. Was wüßten wir sonst zu nennen, was in der Verödung und Ermattung der jetzigen Kultur irgend welche tröstliche Erwartung für die Zukunft erwecken könnte?”

<sup>131</sup> One way of coming to grips with the exclusiveness characteristic of the democratized Greek societies is analysing them in terms of them giving witness to a “strong principle of equality”. With regard to the Athenian case, this has been done by Ian Morris: “In most situations some group of people impose their view that a particular quality – wealth, birth, strength, education, beauty, or whatever – is *the* dominant good [...]. In Athens, the one best thing was male citizen birth [...]. Everyone who was born an Athenian man was *metrios*, deserving equal respect and an equal share in the polis, unless he forfeited it. What mattered was that Athens was a group of *metrioi*. Every *metrios* had a share in the community, and no one else had any share at all.” See Morris 1996, 23-24.



## The fundamental discontinuity of the political and of political philosophy

Coming to terms with ourselves in our present predicament with the aid of the Classical Greeks presupposes a prior understanding of the deep chasm that separates “us from them”. Although from the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Greece to the Western world of the present day, series of continuities may be assumed – such as those pertaining to the basic social need of humans to live together in communities and to distinguish between their members, ‘anthropological constants’, the discontinuities in the areas concerning us here are certainly most profound.<sup>132</sup> I am referring now to the comprehensive breaks in those arrangements of the societies, and in those architectures of the intellect, which we – with our modern terminology – address with the labels social, political or economic, or by means of some combination of these.<sup>133</sup> Here, we may begin to grasp the character of the gravity of change by holding before us the radical discontinuity relating to the concept, or the notion, of the political – as well as to the nature of political philosophy itself. At least of some central aspects of

---

<sup>132</sup> For a general outline of the issues pertaining to the juxtaposition between cross-cultural universalism, on the one hand, and cultural relativism, on the other hand, see Lloyd 2012, 1-7. For the “principle of uniformity” as a *sine qua non* of disciplines such as historical socio-linguistics, see Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 2012, 24-25. Cf. Blomqvist 2017, 58.

<sup>133</sup> In Reinhart Koselleck’s *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, a lexicon dealing with the development of central terms denoting key political and social concepts (*Leitbegriffe*), the following claims regarding the formation of the modern concepts of the economical (*Wirtschaft*, *Ökonomie*), the social (*Gesellschaft*) and the political (*Politik*) can be excerpted: “Brunner hat darauf aufmerksam gemacht, daß die aus dem griechischen Oikos entwickelte Ökonomie vor dem 18. Jh. nichts anderes als eine Lehre vom ”ganzen Haus” gewesen ist, die alle dort lokalisierten Lebensbereiche als eine Einheit faßte und noch nicht von rein erwerbswirtschaftlichen Gesichtspunkten her konzipiert war [...]. Die nationalökonomischen Dogmengeschichten pflegen mit einem gewissen sachlichen Recht in den scholastischen und frühneuzeitlichen Auseinandersetzungen um Preis, Zins, Monopole und Geld und in den merkantilistischen Handels- und Gewertheorien eine Vor- oder Frühform ihrer Wissenschaft zu sehen [...] Im Laufe des 18. und 19. Jh. gelang die Vermittlung der beiden Stränge zu einem Gesamtbegriff für den im modernen Sinne wirtschaftlichen Bereich, der Produktions- und Tauschsphäre umfaßt und aufeinander bezieht.” ”Bürgerliche Gesellschaft’, ein Terminus der europäischen politischen Philosophie, heißt in der älteren, seit Aristoteles überlieferten und bis etwa zur Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts in Geltung gebliebenen Sprachtradition soviel wie ’Bürgervereinigung’ oder ’Bürgergemeinde’. Darunter versteht man eine Gesellschaft bzw. Gemeinschaft von Bürgern, die als Freie und Gleiche miteinander verbunden und einer (in der Regel von ihnen selber getragenen) politischen Herrschaftsform (z. B. der Politie und Aristokratie, aber auch der Monarchie) unterworfen sind [...]. Nach dem jüngeren Sprachgebrauch werden ’bürgerliche Gesellschaft’ und ’Staat’ gerade einander entgegengesetzt.” ”Der Politikbegriff, wie er der Neuzeit aus der Antike übermittelt wurde, ist ein philosophisches Begriff. Als solcher ist er nur aus dem Zusammenhang der politischen Philosophie heraus zu begreifen, in der er seine weiterwirkende Prägung erhielt [...]. Aristoteles bestimmte die Politik in ihrer höchsten Form als die Aufgabe, das gute und tugendhafte Leben der Bürger zu verwirklichen. Die Geschichte des Politikbegriffs in der Neuzeit ist die Geschichte der Auseinandersetzung dieses aristotelischen Verständnisses mit der zuerst von Machiavelli begründeten Auffassung, demzufolge Politik nichts anderes ist als die Kunst des Machterwerbs und der Machtbehauptung, ohne Bindung an einen bestimmten Zweck der staatlichen Gemeinschaft.” See Koselleck & al. 1992, 511-512, Koselleck & al. 1975, 719-720 and Koselleck & al. 1978, 789-790.

these, it is possible to grasp the development, or change (rupture?), from Classical Antiquity until today.

### *The discontinuity of the political*

Most evidently, as I see it, the radical discontinuity in the concept of the political is conspicuous in what Christian Meier once singled out as the potentiality to politicize all things. Indeed, I would say that this potentiality is unmistakably evident in the societies of our days. Not everything is politics, but everything can be turned into politics:

The political is becoming *all*-pervasive. Almost everything is subject to political decision making – even the decision as to what should be exempt from it. All this threatens to engulf the very nature of man and the world he lives in...<sup>134</sup>

It may always have been a disputed ideal, but not any longer, certainly, can the political life, the βίος πολιτικός, be described as something distinct and dignifying, *eine Art zweiter Existenz*, in the words of Werner Jaeger.<sup>135</sup> Rather, it could be understood as additional, but potentially highly dangerous, and in truth almost unavoidable. In the reality of today, however, one of the more pitiable things may be that whereas politics cannot be avoided in the life of the individual – and that in that sense there are no *ιδιωται* (people only minding their own business) anymore – political decisions have largely begun to

---

<sup>134</sup> Meier 1990, 6.

<sup>135</sup> See Jaeger 1954, 155. *Loci classici* in the ancient dispute on the value of dedication to (public) political life are Thuc. 2.37, on the one hand, Plat. *Apol.* 31d-32a, on the other hand: μέτεστι δὲ κατὰ μὲν τοὺς νόμους πρὸς τὰ ἴδια διάφορα πᾶσι τὸ ἴσον, κατὰ δὲ τὴν ἀξίωσιν, ὡς ἕκαστος ἔν τῳ εὐδοκίμῳ, οὐκ ἀπὸ μέρους τὸ πλεόν ἐς τὰ κοινὰ ἢ ἀπ' ἀρετῆς προτιμᾶται, οὐδ' αὖ κατὰ πενίαν, ἔχων γέ τι ἀγαθὸν δρᾶσαι τὴν πόλιν, ἀξιώματος ἀφανεία κεκώλυται." ("with regard to private dispute the laws are the same for everyone, but with regard to honour, in such a way is everyone valued in the public, not on account of having a greater fortune but solely on account of merit, and neither because of poverty, if something good has been done for the polis, may the obscurity of one's social standing prevent one from being honoured"). εὐ γὰρ ἴστε, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, εἰ ἐγὼ πάλαι ἐπεχείρησα πράττειν τὰ πολιτικὰ πράγματα, πάλαι ἂν ἀπολώλη καὶ οὐτ' ἂν ὑμᾶς ὠφελήκη οὐδὲν οὐτ' ἂν ἐμαντόν. καὶ μοι μὴ ἄχθεσθε λέγοντι τάληθ'· οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν ὅστις ἀνθρώπων σωθήσεται οὔτε ὑμῖν οὔτε ἄλλῳ πλήθει οὐδενὶ γνησίως ἐναντιούμενος καὶ διακωλύων πολλὰ ἄδικα καὶ παράνομα ἐν τῇ πόλει γίνεσθαι, ἀλλ' ἀναγκαῖόν ἐστι τὸν τῷ ὄντι μαχομένον ὑπὲρ τοῦ δικαίου, καὶ εἰ μέλλει ὀλίγον χρόνον σωθήσεσθαι, ἰδιωτεύειν ἀλλὰ μὴ δημοσιεύειν. ("You should know well, men of Athens, that if a long time ago I would have tried to do political things, then I would have died a long time ago as well, and I would have benefited neither you nor myself. Bear no anger with me for speaking the truth: there is no such man that will be saved, neither from you nor from any other populace, if legitimately he stands in opposition and prevents much injustice and unlawfulness from taking place in the city, but he, who truthfully fights for what is right, if he wants to be saved even for a short while, must do his fighting in private and not in public." Cf. Xen. *Mem.* 2.6.26, where the "political game" is also portrayed as a rather dirty contest, in which no rules regarding alliance-formation apply.

be disqualified. In fact, my judgment would be that if there is continuity in the notion of the political – from the Classical Age of Ancient Greece until today – that continuity is in large parts conferred to the expectations some of us still sometimes may have in our relation to the ‘political things’. From the βίος πολιτικός, the political life, we may still hope for some kind of fulfillment made possible through it – however unrealistic the fulfillment of that desire may be.<sup>136</sup>

In truth, we remain amidst the “rapid change and endless complexity” of the “dynamic mass societies” of our days, at the mercy of the politicization of more and more areas of life just referred to, and, not least, within the bounds of the overwhelming recognition of the autonomous and irresistible power of processes.<sup>137</sup> The latter form nothing less than the gods of the secular and “temporalized” universe, a circle of divinities among whom – ever since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, ‘History’ itself has been reigning as the main process-deity. Indeed, even if political knowledge could be reached, we may easily feel, as I certainly do, even though I keep trying to get at it, that such knowledge would be outdated very fast – at the hands of whatever has crystallized as the next state of “progress”.

By now, this progress may actually be seen to have taken the shape of an undermining of the clearly defined nature of the rights of humans as citizens. This is so because the overarching pro-market and -business-mindedness inherent in the neoliberal order has enabled a redefinition of human worth more akin to that of a client:

The intellectual and cultural revolutions of the second half of the eighteenth century in Europe, the Enlightenment, established the principle that democracy derives from the consent of the governed. This consent is achieved through participation in the political process, one form of which is elections. With this participation people assert themselves as citizens of the democracy [...] [However,] the interests of big business, big capital, have successfully redefined the nature of political and social existence. In place of “citizens,” people are defined as “consumers” and “taxpayers”.<sup>138</sup>

The intellectual and political revolution establishing the rights of the citizens in modern Europe was preceded by a similar revolution that took place in

---

<sup>136</sup> See Meier 1983, 20: “Der circulus vitiosus zwischen den – aus den Ansprüchen der Neuzeit sich herleitende – überhöhten Erwartungen an Politik, den Enttäuschungen und der dadurch hervorgerufenen Erwartungssteigerung (samt korrespondierendem Bedürfnis nach Politikverschönerung) ist nicht der geringste unter diesen Prozessen.”

<sup>137</sup> See Strauss 1959, 15, Meier 1983, 20 and Koselleck & al 1972, XVI-XVII. Cf. Farrar 1988, 3: “The forces that shape human life are seen to operate at a level remote from the concrete aims and interests of particular individuals”.

<sup>138</sup> See Weeks 2014, 91-92.

some of the ancient Greek city-states. The original revolution, as we shall see, resulted in participatory rights amounting to political equality in its fullest formal sense among an in-group of male citizens. In the end, the freedom of the citizens to actually influence the decisions decisive with regard to the shaping of social life was undone in both ages. In both places, as well, this downfall was caused by societal forces standing outside the control of the political community.

### *The discontinuity of political philosophy*

As we turn to the question of the profound changes in the nature of political philosophy itself, I think it is helpful to begin with what forms one of the central claims of Leo Strauss. This is the reckoning that the variant Classical Greek solutions to the central problems of political philosophy rested unanimously on the assumption that the goal of political life was virtue, and that, consequently, the best regime was to be the one with the highest potential to realize virtue.<sup>139</sup> According to Strauss, famously, it was not until the beginning of the era of modernity that this substantial view of virtue came to be seriously challenged. In other words, it was only now that the political thought evidenced in the main line of political philosophy dissented from it. What political philosophy came to assume instead, as Strauss would have it, was that virtue can only exist within society, and that morality is not, as the Classics had thought, a force in the soul of man, but that, in truth, morality rises from immorality. The educator of men was taught himself, namely by passion, passion for glory. This is what Strauss referred to as the “Machiavellianization of Western thought”.<sup>140</sup>

Now, inclusion or seclusion of thinkers from the ranks of Classical Political Philosophy is of course a question of conceptualization. If one would count the so-called Sisyphos-fragment as belonging to Classical Political Philosophy, then rather than assuming an original consensus among philosophers regarding the idea of virtue as the aim of political life, one would instead be forced to admit that already in 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Greece had philosophy begun

---

<sup>139</sup> See Strauss 1959, 40.

<sup>140</sup> See Strauss 1959, 40-43. Something like a dismantling of the substantial view of virtue, and a comprehension of “morality’s immoral origins”, may certainly be assumed in the *Prince*, but if Machiavelli really was the originator of these ideas is another question. See *Il Princ.*, ch. 15: “Lasciando adunque indietro le cose circa un Principe immagnate, e discorrendo quelle che son vere, dico, che tutti gli uomini, quando se ne parla, e massime I Principi, per esser posti più alto, sono notati di alcuna di queste qualità che arrecano loro o biasimo, o laude [...] necessario essere tanto prudente, che sappia fuggire l’infamia di quelli vizi che li torrebbono lo Stato”. “Therefore, putting on one side imaginary things concerning a prince, and discussing those which are real, I say that all men when they are spoken of, and chiefly princes for being more highly placed, are remarkable for some of those qualities which bring them either blame or praise [...] it is necessary for him to be sufficiently prudent that he may avoid the reproach of those vices which would lose him his state”. Transl. Marriott.

to conceive of deception at the very root of societal life. According to the fragment, it was “some shrewd and wise man” (πυκνός τις και σοφός ἀνὴρ), who first came to think of the gods and who gave them a fitting home so that the wicked among mortals would be frightened, hence allowing lawlessness to be quenched by laws (τὴν ἀνομίαν τοῖς νόμοις κατέσβεσεν).<sup>141</sup> As the conception of morality’s immoral origins may thus be shown to have very ancient roots, it immediately becomes much less obvious why Machiavelli should be thought of as the source of the breakthrough of this idea on a higher intellectual plane.<sup>142</sup>

All the same, it does not seem too farfetched to reckon, with Strauss, that it was the prevalence within political thinking of the notion of morality as a matter of forced agreement which first enabled a heightened detachment, bordering on indifference, with regard to the “political things”. This would certainly be the attitude that still characterizes the life of the mind of many a thinking person as far as both the theory and the practice of politics goes. In this connection, there is, however, one more important thing to consider, and here I think Strauss gets it exactly right:

Classical political philosophy was related to political life directly, because its guiding subject was a subject of actual political controversy carried on in pre-philosophic political life.<sup>143</sup>

The locus of the birth of Classical Political Philosophy was a political community, within which the fundamental political controversy had not yet been settled. The reason for why it had not been settled was that it had just arisen. The central unsettled controversy was the quarrel relating to the question of which men, or which type of men, should rule the community. In a sense this is a question that can never be settled, and it may always have been asked in one way or another.

Thus, already in some of the earliest preserved literature from the Archaic Age of Ancient Greece, in the *Odyssey* and *Works and Days* of Hesiod, we encounter evidence of a quite thorough questioning of the prevailing rulers – namely, of the chieftains or kings in charge of judicial and religious matters in the early Archaic Age’s small-state communities, the βασιλεῖς. In Hesiod’s *Works and Days* we read of the βασιλῆς δωροφάγοι (‘gift-devouring kings’), whom Hesiod advises to keep steadfastly away from crooked judgments:

---

<sup>141</sup> See Crit. *Sis. Sat.* 25.12-14 and 37-40 (DK).

<sup>142</sup> Cf. Minowitz 2009, 287: “I acknowledge that none of Strauss’ scholarship is immune to criticism, and that extremely painstaking work would be required to demonstrate his thesis that the books of Machiavelli and others have had the world-transforming influence he alleges; ironically, this thesis may now be better received because of the wide-spread allegations of a *Straussian* conspiracy.”

<sup>143</sup> See Strauss 1959, 84.

(σκολιέων δὲ δικέων ἐπὶ πάγχυ λάθεσθε).<sup>144</sup> The Hesiodic judgment is echoed in more descriptive terms in the *Odyssey*, where it is assumed that “to do beyond what is ordained [...] that is the right of godly kings” (ῥέξας ἐξαισιον [...] ἢ τ’ ἐστὶ δίκη θείων βασιλῆων).<sup>145</sup> However, what in all likelihood made this kind of questioning of the godly sanctioned rule of the earthly rulers possible was a prior reformation of the societal elite; as of yet the self-justified right regarding the holding of political privileges of the societally dominant parties had not been put into question.<sup>146</sup>

*The birth of Classical Political Philosophy* seems, then, to have required something else. It *presupposed*, I think, *the ability to put into question the very principle of societal rule* to be followed by the society at large. This out-and-out transition of political thought was unlikely to form an altogether peaceful event.

In its inaugural phase, political philosophy was probably never conducted in the manner of a controlled discussion, where different alternatives could be calmly measured and weighed against each other. Originally, one may assume, political philosophy was a question of life and death. If these queries could not be settled peacefully, they would be dealt with through war instead.<sup>147</sup>

Perhaps the reason for the preoccupation of Classical Political Philosophy with questions of virtue, virtuous rule and who the most virtuous rulers may be was simply a consequence of the novelty of the whole inquest of political rule? In that case, once the rule had been settled – by means of discussion, or more likely through war – the end of Classical Political Philosophy would also have been at hand. Thus, it would have been a discipline destined to die young. Or, to take it from the other end: if the rule was settled first (as δημοκρατία prevailed) and political philosophy came afterwards, then the beginning of Classical Political Philosophy was in fact tantamount to its own end, since naturally no one would really care for a question that had already been concluded.<sup>148</sup> The question remaining for us would be whether we – in our present

---

<sup>144</sup> See Hes. *WD*. 263-264.

<sup>145</sup> See Hom. *Od*. 4.690-691.

<sup>146</sup> Perhaps, however, we may deduce a prefiguring of outright elite-rule-devaluation in the *Works and Days*, as the entire city-state is here pictured as the recipient of the wound caused by the misbehavior of the elite-rulers. See Hes. *WD*. 222: ἡ δ’ ἔπεται κλαίουσα πόλιν καὶ ἦθεα λαῶν (“weeping she (i.e. Justice) follows the city and goes to the accustomed places of the people”). Cf. Irwin 2005, 172 and Theognid. 1081-1082b.

<sup>147</sup> See Strauss 1959, 84-85. Cf. Thomas 2011, 246: “the devastating nature of internal division which rent communities and families apart, the basics of Greek life – whereas war, as Democritus could cheerfully say, could be a uniter of communities and bringer of concord.”. See also Democrit. B 250 (DK).

<sup>148</sup> Cf. Ober 1998, 5: “My thesis is that the Western tradition of formal political theorizing originated in the work of an informal, intellectual, and aristocratic community of Athenian readers and writers [...] after the collapse of the brief and brutal oligarchy of the Thirty in 403 b.c. in an atmosphere of profound disillusionment with practical attempts to establish a non-democratic government at Athens [...] in the democratic Athenian environment, finding new

state of world system distress and enforced political and philosophical disengagement – may allow ourselves to rest content with the early demise of the central questions of Classical Political Philosophy. Or could we possibly still gain something essential from the study of this most ephemeral child of the human mind?

### **The trans-historical value of egalitarian κρότος**

I found [...] that most of the conceptions round which revolve the controversies of modern philosophy [...] had appeared on the horizon of human thought at ascertainable times in the past, often not very distant times, and that the philosophical controversies of other ages had revolved around other conceptions, not indeed unrelated to ours, but not, except by a person quite blind to historical truth, indistinguishable from them [...]. The conception of ‘eternal problems’ disappeared entirely.<sup>149</sup>

The controversies around which political philosophy in its earliest form revolved seem to have been the question of the best possible rule in accordance with the highest virtue.<sup>150</sup> I wonder whether there are that many people in the world today, for whom this does not appear to be a strange way of conceiving of “fundamental problems”. On the one hand, we have left behind us a century characterized by a heightened trust in value-freed “social engineering”, a way of thinking culminating in notions such as those of the “death of ideology” or “post-ideology”.<sup>151</sup> On the other hand, ever since the 18<sup>th</sup> century political thinking has been plagued by that, which Reinhart Koselleck referred to as the ingraining of central social and political concepts with ideology, making ideology akin to a “modern surrogate for religious belief”.<sup>152</sup> In truth, it seems

---

grounds for explaining what was wrong with ‘the power of the people’ and describing alternative visions of consensual and noncoercive – yet nondemocratic – political societies. The result was a set of robust and highly original approaches to political philosophy.”

<sup>149</sup> Collingwood 1978, 67-68.

<sup>150</sup> At least this is the central question in the political works of Plato, Aristotle and Xenophon. The works of a thinker like Isocrates seem, on the contrary, to have revolved more pointedly around the question of how the citizen may best profit himself as well as his city-state. See Isocr. *Ant.* esp. 285.

<sup>151</sup> On the juxtaposition and combination of ideological thinking with social engineering and on the unavoidability of ideology *contra* the idea of a decline of ideology, see Kristol 1983, ix-xii. Cf. LaPalombara 1966, 5-16. For an account of the history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century boiling down to a fight between the three main rival ideologies of liberalism, communism, and fascism, ending in the victory of liberalism and the (re)turn to an post-ideological age of a “clash of civilizations”, see Huntington 1993, 22-23.

<sup>152</sup> On the *Ideologisierung* of social and political concepts as a defining feature of the post-*Sattelzeit* world of central social-political concepts, see Koselleck & al, 1972, XVII-XVIII. Cf. Mishra 2017, 18-19. For a possible ancient counterpart to *Ideologisierung*, one could think of how, after the breakthrough of democracy in the ancient Greek world, εὐνομία seems to have developed into a party concept, fought over by the proponents of democracy and oligarchy

that the acknowledgment of elemental political-ideological divides, even when, or just as, attempts have been made to end them in theory, have been inserted in us so thoroughly that the question of virtue and the best possible rule *per se* has lost its validity completely.<sup>153</sup> Moreover, if the problems of Classical Political Philosophy had perchance already at their inauguration become obsolete, what could then possibly motivate a reawakening of these questions today?

I have already pointed out that a renewed investigation of Classical Antiquity may be generally necessitated by the risk of us being handed back some of the darkest underpinnings of that age. This plea may now be specified as being of the urgent requiring of a renewed consideration of, if not all of the same specific questions, then at least of *the conditions* for the rise of political philosophy in its original form. *Underlying the investigation* undertaken by me here *is the major assumption that political philosophy could not begin, until a stage in the advancement of political thought had been reached, within which it had been become feasible to conceive of the possibility of actually transcending the given political order*, as well as all of its (by then) viable alternatives. Assumed here is, in other words, that humans acquired the means of conceiving the viability of an overcoming of the societal *status quo* at a specific moment in time, but that this happened long before the first great political revolution of the Modern Age.<sup>154</sup> In truth, *the impetus for this investigation rises from the viewpoint of an inhabitant of a world-system approaching its own system-determined end, with a view towards a world in which the viability of comprehensive “system-change” was first beginning to be conceived of*. As I am purporting to show, the relevant changes in political thought occurred in Ancient Greece, with the emergence of the first direct democracies – or isonomies, ἰσονομία, as before, and for a while after, the breakthrough of δημοκρατία the Greeks themselves probably called these types of societal arrangements.<sup>155</sup>

---

respectively. Although, here, in truth, there are no promises of change inherent in the concept itself. See (Pseudo)-Xen. *Ath. Pol.* 1.8-9.

<sup>153</sup> Cf. Kristol 1983, x.

<sup>154</sup> Although the actual concept of revolution, as opposed to illegitimate rebellion, is post-1789. See Sewell 1996, 853: “simply identifying the attack on the Bastille as an expression of the will of the people did not amount to inventing the modern concept of revolution. A revolution is not just a forceful act that expresses the will of the people, but such an act that puts into place a new political regime. Only when it became clear that the taking of the Bastille had forced the king to yield effective power to the National Assembly could the acts of the Parisian people be viewed as a revolution in this new sense. The epoch-making cultural change – the invention of a new and enduring political category – could therefore only take place in tandem with practical changes in institutional and military power relations. It was in the National Assembly that the new concept of revolution was definitively and authoritatively articulated”.

<sup>155</sup> For the presumption that ἰσονομία for a while after the breakthrough of δημοκρατία was the term in use for the broadest possible participatory regimes in the ancient socio-political setting, see Debrunner 1947, 22.



Now, the earliest extant evidence of the appearance of *ἰσονομία* as an adjective is found in the drinking song in honour of “the tyrannicides” Harmodius and Aristogeiton.<sup>156</sup> As for the noun-form of *ἰσονομία*, here a traditional “constitutional” model of “good order” (*εὐνομία*), is adjusted with a criterion of (some notion of) equality, thus establishing a link between equality and justice. This may be taken as a terminological indication of “a new type of participation by the *demos* in the functioning of institutions” and of a more widespread conception of “equality before the law”.<sup>157</sup> Gregory Vlastos argued against Arnold Wycombe Gomme’s assumption that *ἰσονομία* could refer to any kind of “constitutional regime” in contrast to “irresponsible tyranny”, and for the close association of the term with democratic and approximately democratic constitutional forms. Vlastos based his argument in Herodotus’ use of *ἰσονομία* which seems to confirm its “unique reference to democracy”.<sup>158</sup> However, an alternative explanation was put forward by Charlotte Triebel-Schubert, according to which we may distinguish between two layers in the history of the concept – one pre-democratic and one democratic. In the first phase, the contrast could then still be conceived of as being that between a general “representation of equilibrium” (*Gleichgewichtsvorstellung*) and a likewise general “idea of lordship” (*Herrschaftsvorstellung*, while the “democratic concept of isonomy” (*demokratische Isonomie-Begriff*) would presuppose a genuine mixture (*echte Vermischung*) realized through specific democratizing reforms.<sup>159</sup>

Regarding *δημοκρατία*, the noun first explicitly appears in Herodotus.<sup>160</sup> Decades before that, however, it is prefigured in more obscure formulations, such as in Aeschylus’ *Suppliant Women* (ca. 460s B.C), where the use of “*demos*’ ruling hand” appears: *δήμου κρατοῦσα χεὶρ ὅπη πληθύνεται* (“whereto does the ruling hand of the people lead?”).<sup>161</sup> It is noteworthy that after the introduction of *δημοκρατία*, *ἰσονομία* seems to have acquired a specific use as a banner or watchword for the Greek forms of popular government.<sup>162</sup>

It should be noted, as well, that Eric Robinson has called into question the old conception of Athens as a “prime mover” in the spread of Classical Greek democracy. In his study, *δημοκρατία* is presented as a geographically broadly based phenomenon within the Classical Greek world, where such important Ancient Greek city-states as Argos, Mantinea and Elis are pictured as having

<sup>156</sup> See “Scolia anonyma” (Diehl), 13: “αἰεὶ σφῶν κλέος ἔσσεται κατ’ αἴαν, φίλταθ’ Ἀρμόδιε κἀριστόγειτον, ὅτι τὸν τύραννον κτανέτην ἰσονόμους τ’ Ἀθήνας ἐποίησάτην”. (“Forever their fame will be on earth, dearest Harmodion and Aristogeiton, since they killed the tyrant and made Athens an isonomy”).

<sup>157</sup> See Meier 1990, 66-68 and Raaflaub 2007, 119-120.

<sup>158</sup> See Gomme 1949, 125 and Vlastos 1964, 2-6. Cf. Hdt. 3.81, 3.83 and 3.124.

<sup>159</sup> See Triebel-Schubert 1984, 49.

<sup>160</sup> See Hdt. 6.43.

<sup>161</sup> See Aesch. *Supp.* 604.

<sup>162</sup> Cf. Vlastos 1964, 8.

been democratized quite independently from the influence of Athens. According to Robinson, especially Argos may have turned to full-scale direct democracy perhaps even earlier than Athens.<sup>163</sup> Neither in the frame of reference of this study, should Ancient Greek democracy, or Classical Greek democracy, necessarily be taken to imply only Athenian democracy.

As I argued for in the introduction, I think the most plausible view is the one that suggests that the breakthrough of δημοκρατία took place at Athens in 462 B.C. after the reforms of Ephialtes – when the societally privileged had been stripped of their political authority and a radical new order thus had been realized. The new name given to the resettled order was δημοκρατία, people’s rule. However, whether people’s rule was in fact first effectively realized already earlier in Athens, with the Cleisthenean reforms of 507/508 B.C. as the dominant scholarly view holds, or first in Argos in the aftermath of the Battle at Sepeia in 494 B.C., as Eric Robinson has argued, matters less for the line of argument pursued by me here.<sup>164</sup>

*My claim is to the effect of* locating the first thorough break with the inherited order within human societies in the beginning of the Classical Age of Ancient Greece and with understanding this primeval discontinuity in political thought as being tantamount to the original stripping of the societally privileged of political power (κράτος). This would equal *the raising of this aboriginal growth of “democratic power of decision and control” to the status of an enabling sine qua non* – i.e., to a necessary and sufficient reason, in the sense of having conjoined with and pushed forth other conditions – *of political philosophy*.<sup>165</sup>

Consequently, I commit myself to an understanding of the origins of political philosophy, which connects these beginnings intimately with the creation of politics as an autonomous activity. The conception of political autonomy would equal, then, a form of politics effectively emancipated from traditional forms of rule: politics separated from, and rising above, the social order. This would be politics beginning to occupy its own space in society, or starting to operate from the base of a wholly new public ground, establishing and deciding over its own constructs. In essence, it is the politics of a fresh start, the politics rising forth from the constitutional upheavals of the early Classical Age; it is the politics of a once unique egalitarian political system.<sup>166</sup>

Basing an account of the beginnings of political philosophy on the assumption of the rise of “politics in the essential sense of the term” is controversial

---

<sup>163</sup> See Robinson 2011.

<sup>164</sup> Cf. Robinson 2011, 6-9 and 196-197. For Herodotus’ description of the Battle at Sepeia and the deceitful tactics employed by the Spartans to beat the Argives there, see Hdt. 6.75-81. At 6.83 Herodotus tells of how for a while after the defeat the slaves of the conquered Argives took control of the affairs of the community (οἱ δοῦλοι αὐτῶν ἔσχον πάντα τὰ πρήγματα). Robinson takes this as an indication of Argos having been pushed in a “democratic direction” already in the late 490s B.C. See Robinson 2011, 8.

<sup>165</sup> Cf. Meier 1990, 124 and Cartledge 2016, 7-8.

<sup>166</sup> Cf. Meier 1990, 164-167.

ground, however, and defending this take on the major underpinning of political philosophy will be a main concern throughout this work. For now, I would merely like to touch upon one attempt at an outright rejection. This is the objection rising from the acknowledgment that ancient Greek democracies – through different stages of broadened elite rule, the pre-democratic isonomies – generally arose in a slow process.<sup>167</sup> Even in the event of a realization of full-scale “popular sovereignty” would the enfranchisement of merely a small percentage of the total adult population of any given city-state have been entailed.<sup>168</sup> Consequently, just as throughout antiquity the Greek city-state would have been characterized by social and political exclusiveness – as opposed to inclusiveness – so even the most radical Greek democracy could be described in terms of broadened (and, of course, highly racialized) elite rule.<sup>169</sup> Hence, stipulation of a first creation of autonomous political thought based in a factual overturn of traditional rule would seem grossly out of place in the context of any Ancient Greek society since their moral enclosure would, in point of fact, never have been broken.

Over and against objections of this kind speaks the evidence of the murdered body of the Athenian Ephialtes at the hands of Aristodicus of Tanagra.<sup>170</sup> In 462 B.C., it was Ephialtes who had been instigating the coup amounting to nothing less than a removal of all political power, or – as it is described literally in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century rendering of this early 5<sup>th</sup> century shift – to a “stripping of the guardianship of the πολιτεία (the constitution)” from the Areopagus:

γενόμενος τοῦ δήμου προστάτης Ἐφιάλτης ὁ Σοφωνίδου, δοκῶν καὶ ἀδωροδόκητος εἶναι καὶ δίκαιος πρὸς τὴν πολιτείαν [...] τῶν Ἀρεοπαγιτῶν [...] ἅπαντα περιεῖλε τὰ ἐπίθετα δι’ ὧν ἦν ἡ τῆς πολιτείας φυλακὴ, καὶ τὰ μὲν τοῖς πεντακοσίοις, τὰ δὲ τῷ δήμῳ καὶ τοῖς δικαστηρίοις ἀπέδωκεν.<sup>171</sup>

Ephialtes, son of Sophonidus, became leader of the people, as he was esteemed for being incorruptible and rightful with regard to the constitution [...]. From the Areopagitans he removed everything, which had

<sup>167</sup> Three events in the democratization of Athens may be singled out: the establishment of a popular court under the influence of Solon in the late 7<sup>th</sup>/early 6<sup>th</sup> century B. C., the power given to the assembly to ratify laws in the early 5<sup>th</sup> century and the elite-disempowering reforms of Ephialtes in the 460s. See Aristot. *Ath. Pol.* 9.1 and 25.2. Cf. Ostwald 1986, 24.

<sup>168</sup> For an apt warning of the anachronism inherent in the applying of the term ‘popular sovereignty’, or ‘sovereignty’ generally, in an ancient context, see Cartledge 2016, 223. Cf. Siedentop 2014, 219.

<sup>169</sup> See Lape 2010, 2, 43. *Contra* Ober 1989, 7.

<sup>170</sup> Aristot. *Ath. Pol.*, 25.4: ἀνηρέθη δὲ καὶ ὁ Ἐφιάλτης δολοφονηθεὶς μετ’ οὐ πολὺν χρόνον δι’ Ἀριστοδίκου τοῦ Ταναγραίου. (“Ephialtes was put down shortly afterwards, slayed by Aristodicus of Tanagra”).

<sup>171</sup> See Aristot. *Ath. Pol.* 25.1-2

ben laid on them and through which they remained guardians of the constitution, and some (of their political power) he gave away to the (democratically ruled) council of the five hundred and some to (the assembly of) the people and to their juries.

The court of Areopagus had been the last political institution of Athens ruled by the old elite, and the act for which Ephialtes paid the price with his life resulted in the final falling of full judicial as well as decisive governmental power in the hands of the entire body of enfranchised male citizens.<sup>172</sup> If there ever was a first “revolt of the masses”, before the French Revolution, and before the actual rise, and subsequent demise, of mass movements, this was the moment of its effective realization.<sup>173</sup> Ultimately, this shift in political power relations towards radical citizen equality signalled the event of the inauguration of the first (and only) age of political autonomy.

The transition from an externally imposed order in which man figures as an all-but-unwitting agent to conscious participation in or ratification of an order still external and mysterious, and eventually to a self-determination which declares its virtual independence of external control, is ultimately a political transition.<sup>174</sup>

The two episodes of the turn towards political autonomy and the birth of the notion of equal access to political power within the in-group of adult male citizens cannot be conceived of in terms of modern conceptions of social and political inclusiveness. All societies of the ancient world were embedded with severe exclusiveness, certainly always in respect to women, slaves and foreigners.<sup>175</sup> Nevertheless, in the foreshadowing of more universal moral and political ideals – those placing value in inclusiveness relating to a broader politically, socially and culturally open group, and which are based in more admitting criteria for citizenship access and for general human worth – the part played by Ancient Greek democratization cannot be so easily overlooked.

The prefiguring of the ideal of moral equality and political inclusiveness was the outcome of the central historical process, enfolding in some of the

---

<sup>172</sup> For an account of the importance of these reforms as laying in the disempowerment of the elite with regard to their control over the process of assigning magistracies through the quintessential institution of *δοκιμασία*, see Rihill 1995, 96-97. Cf. Raaflaub 2007, 106: “... the reforms’ significance is that they not only empowered the Athenian demos to assume full control over politics but enabled the *thetes* (*thetes*, forming the lowest census class) to achieve, with very few exceptions, civic equality as active participants in politics and government.” See Raaflaub 2007, 106.

<sup>173</sup> On the rise of the (genuine) “mass man” and mass movements in European political thinking, see Ortega y Gasset 1993, 13-27. On the latter-day demise of mass movements, at the hands of heightened individualism penetrating public life, see Mishra 2017, 11-12.

<sup>174</sup> See Farrar 1988, 20.

<sup>175</sup> Cf. Siedentop 2014, 32. On the legalistically sanctioned discrimination in Classical Athens with regard to women, metics and slaves, see Cartledge 2016, 133-139.

city-states of the Greek world throughout the 6<sup>th</sup> century and into the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. This was a process involving as its quintessential premise the “politicization” – i.e., the creation of politically fully participatory subjects – of broader and broader sections of the citizen-body. In the wider Greek world, the beginning of the broadening of the in-group of fully enfranchised citizens could perhaps be traced as far back as the first elite-rule reformations taking place with the waning of the power of the βασιλεῖς and the concomitant desacralization of societal hierarchies.<sup>176</sup> What stands out clearly is that in Athens, the process of politicization was fulfilled in the aftermath of the death of Ephialtes. A few years after Ephialtes’ coup, the effective erasing of socially determined political privilege, which his reforms had effected, came to be reflected in electability to the central political offices (such as to all nine archonships) for all property classes (i.e., for the πεντακοσιομέδιμνοι, the ἰππεῖς and the ζευγῖται, as well as for the θῆτες). Here, exceptions soon remained only with regard to some offices, such as the office of military commanders, the στρατηγοί, the managing of which may have required some property to begin with. From the point of view of the disempowered elite, these were the offices which were simply too difficult to manage for ordinary people to claim a share (μετεῖναι) in them:

ἔπειτα ὅποσαι μὲν σωτηρίαν φέρουσι τῶν ἀρχῶν χρησται οὔσαι καὶ μὴ χρησται κίνδυνον τῷ δήμῳ ἅπαντι, τούτων μὲν τῶν ἀρχῶν οὐδὲν δεῖται ὁ δῆμος μετεῖναι.<sup>177</sup>

Then there are those offices that bring safety when they are well-managed and when they are ill-managed bring danger for the whole demos – of these the people demand no part.

Like so in at least a few cases – but unfortunately only Athens’ that we can form some clearer picture of – the result of the politicization process was the final stripping of most or all political privileges from a social layer once sovereign.<sup>178</sup> It was in these cases, and in these cases only, that the inauguration of autonomous political thinking, the effectuation of politics as a self-determining activity, came to be realized. Only with the actual playing out of the radical political alternative could the strangling hold of the traditional rule – up and until that point always more or less determined by prevailing social

<sup>176</sup> Cf. Linke 2015, 30.

<sup>177</sup> See Xen. *Ath. Pol.* 1.3. Cf. Aristot. *Ath. Pol.* 26.2 and Raaflaub 2007, 116.

<sup>178</sup> *Contra* Siedentop 2014, 352: “the most distinctive thing about Greek and Roman antiquity is what might be called ‘moral enclosure’, in which the limits of personal identity were established by the limits of physical association and inherited, unequal social roles.” In Ancient Greek societies, inherited inequality could be broken from underneath, through radical societal change stemming from political breakthroughs.

hierarchies – be broken. Only after this event could true political alternatives begin to be envisioned.

...when historians argue for the importance of events, they have in mind occurrences that have momentous consequences, that in some sense “change the course of history”. Historical events tend to transform social relations in ways that could not be fully predicted from the gradual changes that may have made them possible.<sup>179</sup>

There was a point before, and there was a point after, the first breakdown of “the homogeneity of social” knowledge had crystallized in the radical remaking of the inherited order.<sup>180</sup> We can specify the hour and venue of this transition. We may place it in Ancient Greece, *in the first half of the 5th century B.C.* Here, *we may affix* the birth of what amounts to *an aboriginal departure from the idea that some are – by nature or through divine intent – entitled to rule over others. The moment at which* the demos erases most or all socially determined political exclusiveness within the in-group of male citizens is also the juncture at which *we can witness the discovery of the ideal of egalitarian κράτος*. It was at this very moment – the moment of the original actualization of (conditional/pre-human-rights) political equality – that the conviction of the conservative mind, namely that “civilized society requires orders and classes”, came to be relegated to the status of an unrealized ideal for the first

---

<sup>179</sup> Sewell 1996, 842-843.

<sup>180</sup> See Meier 1990, 50-51 and 124. Cf. Farenga 2006, 162: “why should only *basileis* among humans have access to divine knowledge about apportionment? I suggest it’s because they alone possessed in each village community the accumulated experience of generations of dispute settlement; they alone therefore had the privilege of turning to these spirits of Golden Age humans as “models of mimesis” [...] for settling disputes”. After the decline of the rule of the early Greek kings, the religiously authorized power to watch over judicial and political matters may have been dispersed among a larger and more diverse group of elite rulers, but referring to a sphere beyond the human for ultimate legitimation of the prevailing order would remain a constantly utilized possibility. It was the completion of the turn to direct democracy, I claim, which finally made possible the circumvention of such authority.

time.<sup>181</sup> It would take more than 2000 years before that would ever happen again.<sup>182</sup>

If the fundamental problems persist in all historical change, human thought is capable of transcending its historical limitation or of grasping something trans-historical. This would be the case even if it were true that all attempts to solve these problems are doomed to fail.<sup>183</sup>

However, as Collingwood so clearly saw, the conception of eternal problems may be confused. Especially strange to us may seem the problems of Classical Political Philosophy, with its antiquated (in the essential meaning of the term) harangue about virtue and high rule.<sup>184</sup> I have hinted at in the passing that there is a possibility that this is so, plainly, because the problems may have been put to rest all too quickly. By now, the rule has been settled for close to 2500 years, apart from that one event – the French Revolution of 1789 – when the unprivileged managed to subdue the privileged again, this time with the help of philosophy.<sup>185</sup> Ever since that, however, the rule has been settled – nearly always in favour of the privileged – and talk of virtue in a political context today is most naturally equated with the deception of “superior values”, i.e., values which although being superior, still seem to stand in constant need of

---

<sup>181</sup> See Kirk 1953, 8. After the actualization of formal political equality it would not take long before its critics would begin to deny it. So did Thucydides, for example, when he claimed that under Pericles Athens was a “democracy in name, but in fact it was a rule of the first man”. See Thuc. 2.65.9. These kind of denials may be understood to form a subtle kind of attempted overthrow of the new principle of rule (the regime Thucydides himself thought had been the best was the broad-elite rule including 5000 men, as practiced by the Athenians in the aftermath of the temporary overthrow of their democratic government in 411 B.C. See Thuc. 8.97). Where democracies were in fact overthrown in the Classical Age of Greece, they were usually replaced by *ὀλιγαρχία*, a type of rule based on a re-narrowing of the fully enfranchised citizen-group, and which actually first seems to have materialized in the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C., expressly as a contender-regime and an elite-reaction to *δημοκρατία*. See Simonton 2017, 25-34. Cf Aalders 1968, 9: “...die Begriffe *ἀριστοκρατία*, *ὀλιγαρχία* und *μοναρχία* sind wohl nicht älter als das 5. Jahrhundert v. Chr. Sie sind wahrscheinlich geprägt worden in den politischen Kämpfen um die Verfassung, vielleicht eben im Kampfe mit der Demokratie von deren Gegnern geformt worden”. Thus, democracy and oligarchy had become the main contenders, in theory as well as in practice.

<sup>182</sup> For an account of the taking of the Bastille as the “transcending founding moment” of (modern) popular political self-legitimation, see Sewell 1996, 859.

<sup>183</sup> See Strauss 1953, 23-24.

<sup>184</sup> At least this would seem strange to those of us who are not deeply entrenched in the conservative belief “that a divine intent rules society as well as conscience, forging an eternal chain of right and duty which links great and obscure, living and dead.” See Kirk 1953, 7.

<sup>185</sup> For an overview of the decline of the Marxist interpretation of the French Revolution as a revolution of the bourgeois, carved into the necessity of a passage from feudalism to capitalism, see Chartier 1991 xiv-xvi. For a recapitulation of the Marxian idea of a bourgeois revolution in the sense of the revolution having “made the bourgeoisie even if it was not made by the bourgeoisie”, see Lucas 1973, 126. For an analysis of the intensified political and philosophical discourse in France in the decades leading up to the revolution, see Baker 1990.

defence from hostile “forces of underdevelopment”.<sup>186</sup> What would the trans-historical value of the study of Classical Political Philosophy amount to, then, if means to enhance “white supremacist hatred” are excluded?

The simple answer to this question is, to nothing whatsoever. “Our” problems are exceedingly far from “their” problems, the fundamental problems of Classical Antiquity, crystallized in the minds of the Classical authors, who also provided them with their Classical solutions of virtue and the quest for the best rule.<sup>187</sup> Our problems are, as it seems to me, as well as for many other observant people of today, intimately connected with that which I have been referring to as the waning of the central promise of industrial capitalism. The overcoming never occurred of the ever-deepening, severe, ideologically tempered, political divides.<sup>188</sup> Universal civilization, in the form of a globalized liberal government, providing equal opportunities for personal amelioration – brought about by an internationalized aspiring middle-class, who keep sailing on fortunate winds of steady economic growth – remains a mythical utopia.<sup>189</sup> What we, who are unprivileged and live in the real world, may look forward to instead, if radical changes are not brought about, is a further rapid fall in the number of those people who still today may be counted among the “reasonable well-off middle class” – with regard to those countries in which such a class ever existed, of course.<sup>190</sup> At such a juncture, who in their right mind would go on a quest for virtue?

Nevertheless, I repeat my assumption that the quintessential awakening factor of Classical Political Philosophy was nothing less than the first factual breakdown, or turnover, of the established order. This freed politics from its social constraints – although of course only conditionally and within the enfranchised in-group of citizens – and cleared the ground, in its own age as well

---

<sup>186</sup> Cf. Mishra 2017, 6.

<sup>187</sup> A neo-Aristotelian approach, such as Martha Nussbaum’s, which approaches virtues as those qualities that are found when determining how to handle the inevitable problems of human life may, however, still have the potential to be of more general interest in the world of today. See Nussbaum 1988. In that case, we would just need an updated account of what these problems really consist of. In the West, one inevitable problem in the current world system would certainly consist of the generational issue of lessened prospects for the great majority of people in the 20-30 age group to find any kind of secure employment.

<sup>188</sup> For an outstanding account of the origins of the ideological polarisation of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – the “bastard synthesis of nationalism and internationalism” giving rise to the ultimate massacres and tragedies of the two World Wars, see Talmon 1981, 13-18.

<sup>189</sup> Cf. Mishra 2017, 6, 37.

<sup>190</sup> Cf. Streeck 2016, 10: “*Electronization* will do to the middle class what mechanization has done to the working class, and it will do it much faster. The result will be unemployment in the order of 50 to 70 per cent by the middle of the century, hitting those who had hoped, by way of expensive education and disciplined job performance (in return for stagnant or declining wage), to escape the threat of redundancy attendant to the working classes.” On the necessity of maintaining a middle class for a welfare state thinking, within which governmental support is deemed a universal right and a responsibility of the state, see Pressman 2007, 196-197. For the opposite view, see Fukuyama 2012, 60-61. On the new (aspiring) class, rising forth from underneath the middle class, and preparing itself for social revolt, the precariat or the *θητες* of today, see Standing 2016, x.



as for the ages to come, for the vision of a true transcendence of the alternative rules at hands. The acutely normative character of my statement here should not escape the notice of anyone, but I maintain that *the trans-historical value of the emergence of Classical Political Philosophy lies in nothing else than in its very awakening force, namely in the inauguration of egalitarian empowering.*

The fact that political philosophy itself, in many of its earliest manifestations, came to move against its own awakening force, the realized κράτος of the people, may very well be envisioned, then, as a prefiguring of a double-tragedy. This would be the tragedy inherent in the early demise of both itself, of Classical Political Philosophy, as well as of its quintessential precondition – of δημοκρατία in its independent Classical form, or forms.<sup>191</sup> Therewith, the prior developments could not be reversed, however. It remains a fact that the one and only political revolution of Antiquity can be seen to have moved ahead, and in fact awoken, political theorizing and visions of full-blown political transformations – thus working in profound contradistinction to its modern counterpart.<sup>192</sup>

In an age where we ourselves seem to be moving towards a non-theoretically, non-philosophically and non-ideologically motivated system-change – and where our version of democracy is on the verge of being consumed as well – I can say nothing else than that I feel deeply obliged to lead the way for a renewed glimpse of the working of the system, which was the outcome of the most profound pre-ideological shift in societal arrangements the world has ever seen.<sup>193</sup> With this purpose in mind, a reconsideration of the Mytilenean

---

<sup>191</sup> *Locus classicus* for contempt within Classical Political Philosophy of democratic governance pertains to the discussion in Book VIII of Plato's *Republic* regarding the man "truthfully called democratic" (ὡς δημοκρατικός ὀρθῶς ἂν προσαγορευόμενος). With regard to pleasures, this is a man who – as if he were a democratic form of government using the lot to assign offices – is unable to differentiate between those who are noble and good and those who are base, ἀλλ' ἐν πᾶσι τούτοις ἀνανεύει τε καὶ ὁμοίας φησὶν ἀπάσας εἶναι καὶ τιμητέας ἐξ ἴσου. ("but to all such distinctions he shakes his head and says they are all the same and should be esteemed in the same degree"). See Plat. *Rep.* 562a and 561b-c. For a view of how Classical Political Philosophy first came to be conquered by Classical democracy and in which shape the "father and son quarrel" of love and hate between democracy and philosophy continued afterwards, see Ober 1998, 367-368. For a thorough account of the faith of Classical Athenian democracy before and after its two terminations in 411 and 403 B.C., and before the loss of independence to the territorial monarchies of the Hellenistic Age, see Cartledge 2016, 219-227.

<sup>192</sup> At the basis of the French Revolution, we may detect "a crisis of the very principles of the social and political order (because proponents of natural rights, national sovereignty, and civic equality had managed to dominate political discourse and gain a sizeable foothold among the deputies to the Estates General)." See Sewell 1996, 845.

<sup>193</sup> For an account of the ancient counterparts to the modern (post-1789) ("*erkenntnisleitend wie handlungsanweisend*") concept of 'revolution' (Germ.: *Revolution*) and the terms by which legitimized uproars against the established order were referred to, see Koselleck & al. 1984, 654. On the natural translation of gross economic inequality to new forms of political seclusion and ultimate abolition of democracy, see Stiglitz 2014a, 147.

Debate of Book III in Thucydides is the proper place to start. The Thucydidean debate, as I will show, allows a view of the functioning of Classical Athenian autonomous political thinking – the political thought, not to mince words, of “the one political civilization among all the others the world has known”.<sup>194</sup>

### **The Mytilenean Debate and the working of autonomous political thinking**

The background to the discussion, depicted by Thucydides as taking place in the assembly of the Athenians in 427 B.C, is roughly the following. The Mytilenians, who belonged to the (first) Delian League set up by Athens in the aftermath of the Persian Wars, had been agitated by Spartans and began to plan a revolt against the Athenians.<sup>195</sup> The Athenians, in turn, having been informed of the expected mutiny by a faction of the Mytilenians, were able to dispatch forces against Mytilene before the Mytileneans had time to equip themselves for an armed encounter. After having been surrounded by Athenian forces, the Mytilenians soon ran out of food and were consequently forced to surrender and try to negotiate for a truce. The Mytilenians were then allowed to send an envoy to Athens, while the Athenian forces held the rest of the city-state captive. Nevertheless, when the Mytilenians arrived in Athens, they were all – nearly a thousand men in total – executed, and a “Tamerlanean” decision was reached in the assembly of the Athenians, concluding that the whole male population of Mytilene would be annihilated and all the women and children sold into slavery.<sup>196</sup>

In order to execute this decision, the Athenians sent a trireme to Mytilene, but the next day they resolved to try the case one more time. The ensuing debate is one of only two Thucydidean representations of clashing political positions presented as taking place in the assembly of the Athenians – the other being the debate between Nicias and Alcibiades in Book VI.<sup>197</sup> In the Mytilenean debate, the head political leader of the “post-Periclean” democracy of the Athenians, Cleon, is portrayed as speaking first. It is the opposing speech by Diodotus, however, which allows the clearest view of the working of autonomous political thinking in Athens at this time.<sup>198</sup>

In his speech, Cleon had based the main bulk of his – as he claimed – dispassionate and present-oriented line of reasoning on the necessity stemming

---

<sup>194</sup> See Meier 1990, 7.

<sup>195</sup> On the first Delian League (named after the Cycladic isle of Delos, where its founding oaths were sworn in 478 B.C.) and on the converting of it into an instrument of Athenian “external power-politics” see Cartledge 2016, 146-147. For more details, see Osborne 2000.

<sup>196</sup> For the account of the events forming the background to the debate, see Thuc. 3.2-6, 3.8-15, 3.27-28 and 3.35-36. For an overview and discussion of these, see Legon 1968, 200-207.

<sup>197</sup> See Thuc. 6.8ff. Cf. Wassermann 1956, 27.

<sup>198</sup> The speech of Diodotus: Thuc. 3.41-48. For a rehabilitation of Cleon from his denigrators (above all Thucydides and Aristophanes) and on demagoguery as an in fact essential feature of the working of ancient democracy, see Finley 1962.

from Athens rise to dominance among the Greek city-states.<sup>199</sup> More specifically, according to Cleon matters had simply evolved to the point where the Athenians had to choose between resolutely putting down any attempt at diminishing their power, or giving it up:

παρὰ τὸ εἰκὸς τοι καὶ τοῦσδε ξυμφόρως δεῖ κολάζεσθαι, ἢ παύεσθαι τῆς ἀρχῆς καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ἀκινδύνου ἀνδραγαθίζεσθαι.<sup>200</sup>

...against what may seem reasonable, what is expedient is that also these men would be punished, or else we must give up our dominion and, out of lack of danger, play the honest man.

Diodotus, as we shall see, likewise devotes himself to the detached promotion of expedience (το ζύμφορον) in accordance with the necessities prescribed by the situation at hand – but does so more firmly than Cleon, who had deviated from this principle by wrapping up his speech with a lofty plea to rightful punishment. Interestingly, the concluding plea of Cleon takes the form of an appeal to the Athenians’ former not-yet depleted selves:

μη οὖν προδοταί γένησθε ὑμῶν αὐτῶν, γενόμενοι δ’ ὅτι ἐγγύτατα τῇ γνώμῃ τοῦ πάσχειν καὶ ὡς πρὸ παντὸς ἂν ἐτιμήσασθε αὐτοὺς χειρώσασθαι, νῦν ἀνταπόδοτε μὴ μαλακισθέντες πρὸς τὸ παρὸν αὐτίκα μηδὲ τοῦ ἐπικρεμασθέντος ποτὲ δεινοῦ ἀμνημονοῦντες. κολάσατε δὲ ἀξίως τούτους τε καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ξυμμάχοις παράδειγμα σαφὲς καταστήσατε, ὃς ἂν ἀφιστῆται, θανάτῳ ζημιωσόμενον.<sup>201</sup>

Do not become betrayers of yourselves, but by bringing your judgment as close as could be to what you were about to suffer as well as to how above all else you valued to have them in your hands, now pay them back without softening in their presence or forgetting of the danger once hanging over you. Punish them as they deserve and set down a clear example for the other allies that were they to rebel, they would be punished with death.

Diodotus, as will be seen, does likewise not really share in Cleon’s conviction of duty that consists in punishing as hard as must be, but in the main argument

---

<sup>199</sup> Cf. Bodin, 1940, 40: “Pour Cléon, du point de vue d’*l’empire*, d’où s’ordonne tout son argumentation...”. For Cleon’s self-representation as dispassionate and present-oriented, see Thuc. 3.38.7.

<sup>200</sup> See Thuc. 3.40.4: On (the Thucydidean account of) the Athenian empire in the Periclean age as exercising “moderate imperialism” in not unconditionally paying heed to the “natural right of the stronger to excess”, see Wet 1963, 115-116. In picturing Cleon’s attitude here, Thucydides places before us his understanding of the beginnings of the undoing of this moderateness.

<sup>201</sup> See Thuc. 3.40.7.

put forward by him, the kernel is in fact the complete denial of Cleon’s conviction regarding the channel through which Athens’ power could be upheld and the principle of expediency maintained. By way of butchering the whole demos in Mytilene, and thus killing without regard to class, the very own “divide and conquer” tactics of the Athenians would be undermined. No longer could the masses be relied upon in the subdued city-states: Athens’ “only remaining ally” (ὁ μόνον ἔτι ζύμμαχόν) in her imperial dominion would be lost.<sup>202</sup> Through his speech, Diodotus manages to win a bare majority of the votes in the assembly, and hastily another trireme is dispatched to chase down the first. The second trireme arrives just in time to hinder the first decision, and so a whole society may be saved from extinction.<sup>203</sup>

In my opinion, Diodotus should be hailed as one of the greatest heroes of history – regardless of how accurate or inaccurate the Thucydidean rendering of his speech may be.<sup>204</sup> Although the core of Diodotus’ reasoning consists of his careful regard for the uncompromising principle of justice put forward by Cleon – the advisability always of a punishment “worthy of the crime” (κολάζειν ἀξίως, ‘to punish worthy’) – is received with full implicit disregard in the reasoning of Diodotus.<sup>205</sup>

ἐγὼ δὲ παρήλθον οὔτε ἀντερῶν περὶ Μυτιληναίων οὔτε κατηγορήσων.  
οὐ γὰρ περὶ τῆς ἐκείνων ἀδικίας ἡμῖν ὁ ἀγὼν, εἰ σωφρονοῦμεν, ἀλλὰ  
περὶ τῆς ἡμετέρας εὐβουλίας.

For my own part, I stood not forth with any purpose of contradiction in the business of the Mytilenaeans nor to accuse any man. For we contend not now, if we be wise, about the injury done by them but about the wisest counsel for ourselves.<sup>206</sup>

<sup>202</sup> See Thuc. 3.47.1-4. For a description of real-world Athenian imperial policy in relation to constitutions and classes, see Gillis 1971, 44: “if oligarchic Mytilene met her obligations, and if a democratic upheaval might cause trouble for Athens, it was in the Athenian interest to remain aloof. Rarely, as at Samos in 440 BC., did Athens set up a democracy.” Not at Samos either did the Athenians favour the cause of a foreign demos, however, or at least they did so only because they stood to gain thereby themselves. “Such was the strategic importance of Samos to the functioning of the Athenian alliance and to Athens’ naval control of the Aegean that its internal politics were never merely a local, domestic affair.” See Cartledge 2016, 148. The lower classes in Athens’ allied city-states were, in all likelihood, not pro-Athenian in any non-subsidary sense either. See Bradeen 1960, 264.

<sup>203</sup> See Thuc. 3.49.

<sup>204</sup> For the Thucydidean principle of remaining ἐγγύτατα τῆς ζυμπάσης γνώμης τῶν ἀληθῶς λεχθέντων (“as close as possible to the whole idea of what was truly said”), see Thuc. 1.22.1. For a discussion of the age-old chestnut of how to assess the truthfulness of the speeches of Thucydides, see Garrity 1998.

<sup>205</sup> *Contra* Hawthorn 2014, 91: “The difference between Cleon and Diodotus was merely that one was afraid of what might follow if Athens did not use extreme force, the other of what might follow if it did.” For Cleon’s insistence on a punishment worthy of the crime, see Thuc. 3.39.6.

<sup>206</sup> See Thuc. 3.44.1. Transl. Thomas Hobbes.

If it was considerations of expediency or attention to morals of any kind that finally secured the bare majority of the votes needed for Diodotus' proposal to prevail, probably no one ever knew.<sup>207</sup> Either way, the picture emerging from the narrative of Thucydides clearly shows that nothing that did not pertain directly to the considerations expressed and pondered over among the speakers and by the rest of the participants in the assembly, had any bearing on the decisions reached. One day, one choice was made, the next day the same people reached the opposite conclusion – just like that effectively reversing what was beyond the reach of anything or anyone else: their political decisions.

Here, in truth, there was no room for *potestates indirectae*: no impersonal forces were allowed the power to determine the one or the other outcome, nor to interfere “from the outside” and effectively disqualify the conclusions reached in and by the assembly. Neither may we witness here anything akin to the modern “state-centred view”, which conceives of the societal outcomes of pressures stemming from “movements from above” as social givens.<sup>208</sup> On the contrary, rising forth from the Thucydidean narrative is the picture of an erroneous community of human beings allowed to operate in full inner freedom.<sup>209</sup>

This, essentially, is what autonomous political thinking is about: politics ungoverned by outside authorial orderings and endowed with the potential to free itself within itself by decisively enforcing or disclaiming its own verdicts.<sup>210</sup> This was the politics developed and exercised by a people who were as supremacist, excluding and racist as any community has ever been.<sup>211</sup> Whatever value we may ascribe to the functioning of political thinking in this sense should be assessed against the background of this historical reality.

How positive can we be, then, that what Thucydides had in mind when he came up with his account of the Athenian speeches on the question of the

---

<sup>207</sup> Sungwoo Park concluded that Cleon's reluctance to please the demos was the decisive reason why the Athenians voted against his proposal, but this conclusion stands in lack of evidence. See Park 2008, 102.

<sup>208</sup> Cf. Cox & Nilsen 2014, 201-202.

<sup>209</sup> Cf. Hawthorn 2014, 92: “even if it was a change of mood rather than a force of argument [...] that had prevented the execution of all the men at Mytilene and the enslavement of the women and children there, the occasion of a second debate had at least allowed a change to prevail.”

<sup>210</sup> See, Thuc. 3.36.4, according to which it was the Athenians reckoning and repenting of the rawness of their decision to destroy all and everyone in Mytilene which led them to reassess the outcome of the first assembly meeting: τῇ ὑστεραία μετάνοιά τις εὐθὺς ἦν αὐτοῖς καὶ ἀναλογισμὸς ὁμῶν τὸ βούλευμα καὶ μέγα ἐγνώσθαι, πόλιν ὅλην διαφθεῖραι μᾶλλον ἢ οὐ τοὺς αἰτίους. (“The next day, reflection and reconsideration came to them and they thought of how truly raw their decision had been, to destroy a whole city rather than only the guilty ones”).

<sup>211</sup> According to the definition of racism given in a recent critically acclaimed book on the history of racist ideas, proper racism, in fact, did not exist in the premodern world, since the ancient world lacked “racial constructs”. Based on this, the radical exclusiveness relating to the social-political systems of the Classical Greek city-states (and particularly to the case of Athens) could be defined as “ethnic racism”. See Kendi 2016, 18 and 83.

extinction of the Mytileneans, was anything like providing a historically accurate picture of the political thought at work among an in-group of fully politicized male citizens? Perhaps it could be imagined that Thucydides used the characters of Cleon and Diodotus as his mouthpieces to investigate something like the “politics of deliberation”.<sup>212</sup> Assuming this line of thought, one could think of the way Thucydides plays out the principle of expediency against the ideal of justice as rightful punishment. One could then conclude that the argument of Diodotus wins the day at least partly because he seems better equipped to argue for the expedient value of his own proposal over and against any idea of justice, since he argues in a less inconsistent way than did Cleon. Another possible interpretation is the one that was put forward a long time ago by Louis Bodin, namely that the Mytilenean Debate in fact represents the Thucydidean take on one central philosophical question in 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. on the opposition between nature and law – the “*irréductible conflit entre φύσις et νόμος*”. In this view, the Mytilenean revolt would be “the given” of φύσις that would require a fitting νόμος to be countered and kept in check. The question of how to define this law would then be what forms the major theme of the debate between Cleon and Diodotus.<sup>213</sup>

However, even if at this point in his narrative Thucydides’ interests as a researcher had been as detached from the actual historical context he depicted as the above interpretations suggest, it remains a fact that his investigation takes as its object the political-philosophical deliberations of a very specific political system – namely that of the Athenian democracy sometime around 427 B.C. As I have shown, the evidence we have of the functioning of this political system at this moment in time points to male civic equality having been realized more or less completely, at least as far as formal political rights were concerned. This would mean nothing less than that every adult male citizen in the city-state enjoyed full freedom to actively take part in the political life, through which the political affairs of the community were directly governed. It should be remembered as well that Thucydides’ own statement of method with regard to the speeches depicted by him was to remain “as close as possible to the whole idea of what was truly said” (ἐγγύτατα τῆς ξυμπάσης γνώμης τῶν ἀληθῶς λεχθέντων).<sup>214</sup> If we are to trust this statement at all, we can only conclude that the Mytilenean debate, if it is not an accurate report, at least represents a set piece of the kind of speeches given in a political community, wherein the inner freedom to decide over communal matters had been extended to include the survival or extinction of other communities.

Although as in the case of the Mytilenean debate relating specifically to “foreign policy”, this type of “freedom to” must be preceded – causally as well

---

<sup>212</sup> See Hawthorn 2014, 88.

<sup>213</sup> See Bodin 1940, 42-44. On the question of the development of thinking in terms of the opposition between φύσις and νόμος In Ancient Greece, Felix Heinemann’s *Nomos und Physis* is the classic work. See Heinemann 1945.

<sup>214</sup> See Thuc. 1.22.1.

as logically – by a freedom relating to the inner affairs of the community.<sup>215</sup> What is required before all else, I would reason, is an acknowledgment of a certain arbitrariness pertaining to the political organization – an arbitrariness which the community as a collective force is able to master. This would amount to the claim that a *presupposition for autonomous political thinking is the recognition of the freedom of the political community to decide*, first of all, *over constitutional matters*.

In his writing, Thucydides attends to this presupposition. He makes Cleon call attention to it in the beginning of the Mytilenean Debate. Cleon, as Thucydides has him saying, had often seen δημοκρατία fail – that Athenian people’s power, which by the time of the narrative had been around for a few decades, and Cleon begins his plea by reminding us of its repeated failures.<sup>216</sup> Neither is this merely bitter resentment, since Cleon knew that democracy could in fact be replaced by something quite different.

As I bring forth in the next chapter, the paramount step towards the recognition of the arbitrary nature of constitutional alternatives can have been nothing else than a move away from the assurance of the “divine and supremely authoritative nature of the given order”.<sup>217</sup> In the following chapter, I then set forward a hypothesis of how, from these beginnings, the recognition of the artificial nature of all different constitutional alternatives finally came to be concluded. In the end, it is my goal, and my only motivation for finishing this project, that through it we may be assisted in our quest to find a way out of our present predicament, the

*“post-capitalist interregnum”* characterized by a neoliberal ethos of competitive self-improvement, of untiring cultivation of one’s marketable human capital, enthusiastic dedication to work, and cheerfully optimistic, playful acceptance of the risks inherent in a world that has outgrown government.<sup>218</sup>

As I said, my investigation is intended for all those who do not take too kindly to the natural end, as many of us now see it coming, of our moment in the process of history, which is leading towards a state where only those humans with the ability to live up to the neoliberal ethos are valued. In the sharpest contradistinction of being politically included, this would result in an order of things where “the rest” would be socio-politically degraded, and eventually

---

<sup>215</sup> For the political community “freedom to” presupposes “freedom from” authoritative ordering of any kind. Cf. Arendt 2006a, 105.

<sup>216</sup> See Thuc. 3.37.1: *πολλάκις μὲν ἤδη ἔγωγε καὶ ἄλλοτε ἔγνων δημοκρατίαν ὅτι ἀδύνατόν ἐστιν ἐτέρων ἄρχειν*. (“Often already have I, on other occasions, noticed in democracy its inability to rule over others”).

<sup>217</sup> See Meier 1990, 66: “The time was past when superior insight was required to pronounce on the just order and discern it in existing conditions – when it could be realized only by expert authorities through the modification of existing conditions.”

<sup>218</sup> Streeck 2016, 38.

fall to the status of non-humans, neo-slaves without any inherent value at all, except that of usefulness. Who wants to be like the Mytileneans at the mercy of decisions reached by a detached community of “full humans” who think of themselves as rightfully on top of the world?

Even today, it may be a tough lot to be a super-human. In the future, it may be the only way to be.

*Seht ihr ihn nicht, den Regenbogen und die Brücken des Übermenschen?*<sup>219</sup>

---

<sup>219</sup> Nietzsche 1964a, Z63.



## Chapter 2: The Greek Invention of Autonomous Political Thinking and the Deioeces-Episode in the Μηδικὸς λόγος. Kingship Desacralized

In the theoretical background initiating this chapter, I use Carl Schmitt's theory of the nature of the political and his parallel critique of liberalism as a gateway for the further explication of a Straussian conception of autonomous political thinking. Against this background, the "neutralizing" tendency inherent in the modern-day "defence of politics" stands out in stark contrast. In my understanding, a Straussian idea of political autonomy may be equally confused, however, as it fails to take into consideration the need – for political autonomy freed from social-hierarchical constraints to obtain – of a prior societal resettling, creating a sphere of egalitarian participation in, and control over, the process of political decision-making. I strive to shed light on the finalization of the creation of an autonomous sphere of political thought through a consideration of how in Ancient Greece, the democratized political community – in order to refuse its own re-crunching – came to construct foundational myths of a demythologizing character. Here, an essentially novel interpretation of the Deioeces-episode of Book I of the *Histories* of Herodotus serves the purpose.

With regard to Schmitt and Strauss – i.e., the two major theoreticians of the first part of this chapter – it should be noted that within the post-WWII world of academia, both have a history of being feared and despised. In relation to Carl Schmitt, however, the tides have certainly turned. Even in the English-speaking world, Schmitt may now be seen to have stepped out of the *terra incognita*, and in some places, his opposition to liberalism seems to be more alive than ever.<sup>220</sup> Leo Strauss, however, remains as controversial a figure as

---

<sup>220</sup> For a discussion of Schmitt's exit from the *terra incognita* and for an overview of the new acknowledgment of the immediate usefulness of Schmitt's ideas on such issues as the role of sovereignty, the concept of the political and of liberalism, see Arvidsson et al. 2016, 1 and 5-6. For the purpose of illustrating the bearing of Schmitt's repugnance regarding liberalism, the following lines, taken from the so-called Global Revolutionary Manifesto, may be extracted: "Liberals are the shell, under which the global oligarchy is hidden. Any strike on liberalism and liberals, has a big chance to affect sensitive parts of global oligarchy, its vital organs. Total fight against liberalism and liberals is the main ideological vector of global revolution.

ever. To Shadia B. Drury's, among others, fashioning of Strauss as the father of the "liberalism-distorting force of neo-conservatism", may be added the bleak vision, offered by Paul Gottfried, of Strauss and the Straussians as Nazi-like "enforcers of political dogmas".<sup>221</sup> This widespread "Straussophobia" has not prevented me from using some of the central insights of Strauss' theoretical constructs to my own benefit.<sup>222</sup>

Foremost among these, I would count what perhaps could be described in terms of an implicit assessment, rather than as an explicit view. In its most pronounced form, this is a judgment that I have encountered only among very few thinkers and theoreticians, all of whom may be seen to occupy central places in the chapters of this investigation. These are the scholars, who have best able to stress the idea of a "world-historical restart" (*Neubeginn*) emerging from the soil of the radical social and political breaks relating to the societies of Ancient Greece of the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.<sup>223</sup> The sources inform us of the actual transpiring of this radical resettling and the central evidence was presented by me in the previous chapter. It seems, then, that both the question of the origins of political philosophy as well as that of the trans-historical value of its awakening force may be enlightened by way of considering the central developments leading up to the shift assuming the form of a primeval politico-social resettling.

It is with this purpose in mind that I embark upon the retelling of the rise of the 20<sup>th</sup> century appreciation of the political autonomy of the Greeks. This is a concession, which first seems to have soared after the impact of Schmitt's criticism of the modern "movement of liberalism". In the spirit of Schmitt, the liberal movement may be defined as an ideologically tempered historical process embodying in itself the most important force lines of the modern age. Its core values would lie in a heightened respect for individuals and in an understanding of private property as sacred, in an underlining of equality of opportunity, in abolishment of all social authorities aiming to set down common

---

The revolution must be of rigidly anti-liberal character, because exactly liberalism is a concentrated knot of evil. Any other political ideology can be considered as a possible alternative, and there are no restrictions. The only exception is liberalism, which must be destroyed, crushed, overthrown...". It should not be forgotten, however, that Schmitt was a Nazi. In fact, we are (re)approaching a state, where some of his ideas are all too readily accepted. See Mishra 2017, 168: "Lynch mobs, assassins and mass shooters thrive in a climate where many people can think only in terms of the categories of friends and foes, sectarian loyalty or treason."

<sup>221</sup> For Strauss and the Straussians as Nazi officers, see Gottfried 2005, 28. For Strauss as the neo-conservative *par excellence*, see Drury 1997, 136. Cf. Ryn 2005, 34.

<sup>222</sup> The "Strauss-defender" Peter Minowitz offered the following criteria for being a true Straussian: "I would suggest, provisionally, that we should *not* designate people as Straussians unless at least the following conditions obtain. They have studied an assortment of Strauss's major books [...] They are impressed, and often dazzled, by the power of his reasoning. Having also scrutinized several of the texts he wrote about, they find him to be a dexterous if not virtuosic interpreter". Minowitz 2009, 22-23.

<sup>223</sup> The title of Christian Meier's most voluminous work is *Athen: ein Neubeginn der Weltgeschichte*. See Meier 1994.

truths from above, in separation of political powers and in a notion of rightful market dominance.<sup>224</sup> Thus, the proper way to begin the explication of this chapter would be an overview of Schmitt's original censure of the "force of liberalism", understood in this way.<sup>225</sup>

### **Carl Schmitt and the contradistinction between liberal democracy and autonomous politics**

Not only within works devoted to the political history and political thinking of Ancient Greece, but also within those committed to the analysis of contemporary political reality, autonomous political thought has repeatedly been singled out as a highly important and appealing, yet dreadfully ephemeral, innovation of the Greeks of the Classical Age.<sup>226</sup> Although perhaps not all of those historians and analysts who have taken part in the contemplation of the "wondrous but short-lived political autonomy of the Greeks" would be willing to admit to it, it was probably the German political theorist Carl Schmitt who contributed most to the modern-day longing for *Politik im eigentlichen Sinne*

---

<sup>224</sup> See Dugin 2012, 140-141. For an account of the rise of liberalism focused in the narrative of how slowly the notion of the individual and the conception of basic enforceable rights became the organizing social role in the modern West, see Siedentop 2014, esp. 2-3 and 333-334. Cf. Arendt 2006, 134-135. From its onset, however, the idea of the inalienable rights of the individual seems to have been opposed by ways of thinking perceiving humans as fully merged with their cultural community. Cf. Mishra 2017, 169-170.

<sup>225</sup> I have chosen to explicate the Schmittian understanding of liberalism with reference to Alexander Dugin's later characterization of the same ideology as Dugin's explications answer quite adequately to the conceptions, which remain more implicit in Schmitt's work. With regard to the idea of liberalism disdaining from establishing common truths, it could be argued that this characterization is in fact opposed to the doctrines of classical liberalism. See Locke. *Sec. Tr.* VII.87: "Man being born, as has been proved, with a title to perfect freedom, and uncontrolled enjoyment of all the rights and privileges of the law of nature, equally with any other man, or number of men in the world, hath by nature a power, not only to preserve his property, that is, his life, liberty and estate, against the injuries and attempts of other men; but to judge of and punish the breaches of that law in others, as he is persuaded the offence deserves, even with death itself, in crimes where the heinousness of the fact, in his opinion, requires it." In truth, the reaction of both Schmitt and Dugin seems to be directed against the liberal disqualification of social authorities aiming to set down common truths *even more* fundamental than those thought of by classical liberalism to have been transferred to the societal world from the equal rights pertaining to the "state of nature".

<sup>226</sup> 'Political thinking in the essential sense of the term' is a term borrowed from the English translation of Christian Meier's monumental *Die Entstehung des Politischen bei den Griechen* (Eng.: *The Greek Discovery of Politics*). See Meier 1990, 7. For archetypal admiration among Classical scholars of autonomous political thinking in Ancient Greece, see Finley 1965, 300: "The new impulse came from the classical polis, and in particular the Athenian polis, which for the first time, at least in western history, introduced politics as a human activity and then elevated it to the most fundamental social activity." Cf. Detienne 1996, 104-105. For admiration of the Classical Greek precedent in relation to the contemporary situation, see Lummis 1996, 15: "Democracy was once a word of the people, a critical word, a revolutionary word. It has been stolen by those who would rule over the people, to add legitimacy to their rule. It is time to take it back." Cf. Sitrin & Azzellini 2014.

*des Wortes*.<sup>227</sup> This is so, I believe, even though Schmitt never wrote any specific treatise on political theories and political thinking in the pre-modern world. Instead, he devoted a significant part of his political theorization to the analysis and criticism of the modern “movement of liberalism” – a historical process, which by the time Schmitt was writing, had been unfolding over the course of some three hundred years.<sup>228</sup>

According to Schmitt’s 1932 treatise, *The Concept of the Political*, this liberalism had “changed all political conceptions in a peculiar and systematic fashion.”<sup>229</sup> The peculiarity of this change consisted in what Schmitt described as “neutralizations”, “depoliticalizations” and “negations” of the political, or of political thinking.<sup>230</sup> The reasoning behind this description of the “age of liberalism” as an undermining of politics is quite straightforward, but to be validated it requires acceptance of Schmitt’s criteria of what autonomous political thinking consists of – namely a state-power allowed to operate in disregard of the liberal ideal.

Liberalism is, as Schmitt rightly notes, individualistic in its core, and as such, it always aims to restrain the power of anything over and above the individual subjects.<sup>231</sup> Above all, this applies to the power of the state. With regard to politics, however, the disempowering of state-power in itself is a highly threatening state of affairs, since politics operates through the state, or, the state presupposes politics: the state is the tool through which politics works. Schmitt thought this to be so, because the state remains in control of the ultimate joining together of the community in a “fighting collectivity of people”, thus presiding over the potentiality of starting a war. Hence, it would be within the power of the state to provide the means for the fulfilment of Schmitt’s very own criteria for autonomous political thought: the distinction between friend and foe.

In this way of thinking, the state functions as a guarantor for the proper working of politics, or so it would have been, had liberalism not entered the stage. In fact, due to its crucial imperative of the inviolability of the rights of the individual, the state was, in Schmitt’s view, soon made the main antagonist in the striving of liberalism to protect the individual person. This would be so since, after all, the state could, and would, demand that its subjects must always abide by its authority, even when obedience endangered their lives. Thus, as Schmitt would have it, the triumph of liberalism had resulted in a

---

<sup>227</sup> Cf. Keedus 2011, 196.

<sup>228</sup> See McCormick 2011, 177: “For Schmitt, Enlightenment rationality’s failure to ground itself philosophically revealed modern political thought’s parasitic reliance on premodern, transcendental forms of authority. Because the Enlightenment did not, as promised, deliver rationally verifiable universal truths on which peaceful agreement could be based, mankind in the twentieth century was once again, after a brief hiatus of three or four centuries, searching for the substantive, alternatively rational, or extrarational, or prerational, foundations of political life.”

<sup>229</sup> See Schmitt 2007, 69.

<sup>230</sup> See Schmitt 2007, 69-70

<sup>231</sup> Cf. Siedentop 2014, 347-348.

situation in which the conclusive authority of the state to decide over relations of friendship and enmity was seriously undermined. Given the intimate connection between the state and politics, the unavoidable outcome would have been the decline – or, so to speak, the fettering – of politics.<sup>232</sup>

As it seems, Schmitt conducted his criticism of the “liberal movement” against the hypocrisy inherent in the state of affairs, where the exclusive authority to conclude the most pressing political questions, such as those of peace and war, had been dispersed.<sup>233</sup> The state, of course, will continue leading its subjects in war against the subjects of other states, and will keep setting them against various other alignments as well. However, with the victory march of liberalism, Schmitt thought the plain and decisive fixing of the enemy had become unattainable. In the age of liberalism, the enemy could no longer simply be stipulated as an alien adversary. Somehow, he now had to be dehumanized, and this, according to Schmitt, could be accomplished by way of appealing to some higher ideal, such as freedom or justice, or even overtly, through economic calculation. Either way, what Schmitt believed to be the case was that it was exactly because of liberalism that war no longer could be conducted in a fashion which would allow the clear perception of “spirit” struggling “with spirit, life with life”. What would have been proclaimed instead was that it was “spirit and life” which stood against “death and mechanism”.

Schmitt was assured, however, that already in his own time would liberalism – with its false promise of a community based on more rational (economically as well as morally) social relations – be moving towards its own upheaval: the “process of continuous neutralizations of various domains of cultural life has reached its end”. The “century of technology”, Schmitt thought, would bring an intensification of the ever-present conflict between human groups. At the same time, the obtaining of the liberal chimera would become unfeasible – and, finally, politics would break itself free.<sup>234</sup>

With the benefit of hindsight, it is easy to conclude that Schmitt’s prediction was incorrect. In truth, it seems to have been liberalism, which emerged victoriously from the great battles of ideologies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – at least if one accepts the picture of the history of this century as boiling down to an opposition between liberalism, fascism and communism, which with the fall of the USSR ended in the collapse of the latter.<sup>235</sup> For some taken in by this view of history, victorious liberalism has now truly ceased to be one ideology among others. In this account, the above-listed core values of liberalism present themselves as having transformed into a “panorama of post-liberal grotesques”. Post-liberalism entails a worldwide state, where “dividuals” (“post-

---

<sup>232</sup> See Schmitt 2007, 68-72, 26-28 and 43-44.

<sup>233</sup> Cf. Locke. *Sec. Tr.* VII.87.

<sup>234</sup> See Schmitt 2007, 72-73 and 94-96. Cf. Strauss 2007, 99-100.

<sup>235</sup> See Huntington 1993, 22-23.

individuals”, “ironic combinations of parts of people”) begin to replace individuals, private property moves from being sacred to becoming idolized, a state of post-truth emerges, constant like-based electronic referenda start to replace the separation of powers and a nearly total virtualization of the market transpires. Presented here is a picture – very much akin to the spirit of Schmitt – of liberalism conceived as the core of world evil, as that which must be fought and beaten to the ground before anything else may be undertaken.<sup>236</sup>

To return to Schmitt, it seems that he himself had begun the groundwork for his account of the preconditions for liberalism-freed autonomous political thinking before the first publication of *The Concept of the Political*. In his 1922 treatise on the concept of sovereignty, *Politische Theologie*, Schmitt identified the essence of the sovereign in the ability to lay down the normative order. Thus, the quintessential role of the sovereign would pertain to his capability to authorize order without himself being bound by any pre-given normative rules whatsoever: the sovereign is the one, who through his own will, and his own will alone, puts down the measures by which all norms are assigned and made valid.<sup>237</sup>

It is this idea of autonomous political thinking made possible by the capability to form a ‘decisive decision’ (Germ.; *Dezision*) that Leo Strauss latched onto when he interpreted the argument of *The Concept of the Political*. Strauss interpreted the argument of Schmitt as proceeding from the affirmation of “politics as such”, where politics as such is understood as a way of thinking, wherein “the primacy of the political over the moral” rules.<sup>238</sup> My claim would be that it was when Strauss transferred the Schmittian conception of autonomous politics – grounded in the moral-disregarding *Dezisions*-capability of the sovereign – to the study of ancient political thought that the admiration of the autonomous political life of the Greek Classical Age truly began.

### **Leo Strauss and the beginnings of the possibility of politics in the essential meaning of the term**

Strauss’ application of Schmitt’s idea of political autonomy may be detected in Strauss’ 1959 treatise *What is Political Philosophy* – a work dedicated to the study of nothing less than the birth of Classical Political Philosophy. However, the gravity of the influence of Schmitt is certainly even more noticeable in Strauss’ earlier works, such as *Natural Right and History*, which was first published in 1949.<sup>239</sup> In the latter, Strauss’ focus is on the development of ‘natural right thinking’ – the origins of which he affixes in early Greek philosophy,

---

<sup>236</sup> See Dugin 2012, esp. 150-151.

<sup>237</sup> See Schmitt 2015, 18-19 and 38.

<sup>238</sup> Strauss 2007, 120.

<sup>239</sup> Cf. McCormick 2011, 176: “The success of Strauss and his devotees at portraying him as a ‘friendly critic’ of liberalism during his postwar career has prevented scholars of all sorts from appreciating how radical was his Weimar philosophical and political assault on the Enlightenment.”

and conceives of as being the consequence of the inauguration of the “quest for imperishable presence”.

The turning of imperishable presence into natural right, Strauss explains in the following way. What happened first was that nature began to be conceptualized as a term of distinction. This means that things that were of nature – such as ‘the first things’ of the earliest natural philosophers – could now for the first time be clearly separated from those that were not of nature: in the understanding of the early philosophers, anything which did not come first.<sup>240</sup> This, in turn, paved the way for a pristine distinction between conventional morality and absolute moral goodness: “the primeval identification of the good with the ancestral is replaced by the fundamental distinction between the good and the ancestral”.<sup>241</sup>

In truth, it is Strauss’ reading of the famous Socratic profession of ignorance which so conspicuously reveals the influence of Schmitt on the content of *Natural Right and History*.

...philosophy is knowledge that one does not know; that is to say, it is knowledge of what one does not know, or awareness of the fundamental problems and, therewith, of the fundamental alternatives regarding their solution that are coeval with human thought.<sup>242</sup>

When in the aftermath of the birth of philosophy natural right thinking superseded conventional morality, a decision had to be made. As Strauss thought, it was in fact the task of the first true political and moral philosophers to disclose the alternatives at hand. Because what the people responsible for the decision had to be made to realize was that there were no ready-made choices to cling to any longer. Not even nature could replace custom, since when applied to the human sphere nature was nothing more than the reference point needed for reason to be able to proclaim that the most fundamental ‘What is?’ questions – those regarding specifically ‘human things’ – had not yet been answered; no one knew what justice was.<sup>243</sup> What would have been needed in

---

<sup>240</sup> See Aristot. *Phys.* 4.203b.7-15: ἀγένητον καὶ ἄφθαρτον ὡς ἀρχὴ τις οὐσα: τὸ τε γὰρ γενόμενον ἀνάγκη τέλος λαβεῖν, καὶ τελευτὴ πάσης ἐστὶν φθοράς, διὸ, καθάπερ λέγομεν, οὐ ταύτης ἀρχή, ἀλλ’ αὕτη τῶν ἄλλων εἶναι δοκεῖ καὶ περιέχειν ἅπαντα καὶ πάντα κυβερνᾶν, ὡς φασιν ὅσοι μὴ ποιῶσι παρὰ τὸ ἄπειρον ἄλλας αἰτίας [...] καὶ τοῦτ’ εἶναι τὸ θεῖον: ἄθανατον γὰρ καὶ ἀνώλεθρον, ὅσπερ φησὶν Ἀναξίμανδρος καὶ οἱ πλείστοι τῶν φυσιολόγων. (“it is unborn and indestructible in that it is a first thing: whatever has been born must have an end, and the end of everything is destruction. Therefore, just as we say, there is no thing before it, but it is the thing before others, and it surrounds everything and governs everything – as they say who do not make for another cause besides the infinite [...] and that is the divine: immortal and indestructible, as Anaximandros says, as well as most of the natural philosophers”).

<sup>241</sup> See Strauss 1953, 82-86.

<sup>242</sup> Strauss 1953, 32.

<sup>243</sup> See Strauss 1953, 92. Cf. Meier 1995, 42: “Strauss places the critique that allies him with Schmitt, the critique of the exclusion of what is most important, onto a ground that is not at all Schmitt’s ground. When Strauss characterizes the seriousness of the *question* of what is right

order to reach truly new ground, one may reckon Strauss having in mind, was a “decisive decision”, a *Dezision* – i.e., a response of a true sovereign in order to lay down the principles of “the order of the human things”.<sup>244</sup>

It was in his *What is Political Philosophy* that Strauss transported the idea of a potentiality of a primeval deciding over human things – understood to have embarked from a total disregard of conventional morality – to the question of the development of political thinking towards political philosophy proper. In this work, Strauss conceived of the birth of political philosophy as having taken place in a society where the “fundamental political controversy” had not yet been settled – not even indecisively. Thus, Strauss placed the locus of the birth of political philosophy in the city-states of Ancient Greece of the Classical Epoch. It was here that the fundamental conflict first arose, and it was here that its solution could still be attempted without mediation:

Classical political philosophy is non-traditional, because it belongs to the fertile moment when all political traditions were shaken, and there was not yet in existence a tradition of political philosophy. In all later epochs, the philosophers’ study of political things was mediated by a tradition of political philosophy, which acted like a screen between the philosopher and political things, regardless of whether the individual philosopher cherished or rejected that tradition.<sup>245</sup>

The central unsettled controversy – arising from the earliest concussion of the established order – was the quarrel relating to the question of which men, or which type of men, should rule the community.<sup>246</sup> Of course, in practice this controversy would always have been settled in one way or another, but never conclusively – never with the right amount of *Dezision*? Thus, it would remain disputed also in theory. According to Strauss, it was precisely this that was also the life-blood of Classical Political Philosophy, since it was in this way that it could persist in direct relation to the political life from which it had arisen.<sup>247</sup>

Moreover, as Strauss saw it, it was not altogether true that the Classical philosophers were unable to solve the question regarding the best regime. One

---

as the *legitimation* of the political, what is meant is first that the question of what is right *has to be asked*; and what is further implied is that basically, in the *most fundamental* respect, that question can be answered by means of human reason. Schmitt, however, believes that the one thing needful can only be believed in because it *is* faith”.

<sup>244</sup> See Strauss 2007, 121. Cf. Meier 1995, 86.

<sup>245</sup> Strauss 1959, 27.

<sup>246</sup> Cf. Aristot. *Pol.* 3.1279b-1280a: τοὺς μὲν εὐπόρους ὀλίγους, πολλοὺς δ’ εἶναι τοὺς ἀπόρους πανταχοῦ [...] ᾧ δὲ διαφέρουσιν ἢ τε δημοκρατία καὶ ἢ ὀλιγαρχία ἀλλήλων πενία καὶ πλοῦτός ἐστιν. (“The wealthy are few, while the poor are many everywhere [...] what distinguishes between democracy and oligarchy is poverty and wealth”). Still today, rule by wealth is the defining feature of oligarchy.

<sup>247</sup> See Strauss 1959, 15.



essential claim of Strauss' text is that the Classical Greek solutions to the problem of political philosophy rested unanimously on the assumption that the goal of political life is virtue – and not, e.g., freedom. Consequently, inherent in the Classical solutions would be the presupposition that the best type of regime must always be the one with the highest potential to realize virtue – whereas, as Strauss would have it, later on this consensus was completely lost. In the thinking of Strauss, the great thief in this locale was “modernity”, understood as a movement with Machiavelli as its figurehead. According to Strauss, it was with Machiavelli that “the substantial view of virtue” was first seriously challenged – i.e., actually disproved within political philosophy itself. No longer would morality have been conceived of as the Classical Philosophers always had approached it, as a force in the soul of man. The dominant idea that Strauss thought would have materialized instead was the conception that it is only within society that virtue may manifest itself and that morality rises from immorality.<sup>248</sup>

However, as I called attention to in the previous chapter, the idea of morality as rooted in immorality and in “social constraints” enforced by lawgivers was clearly put forward already in some of the more condescending and sarcastic expressions of political thought found in the extant literature from 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Greece.<sup>249</sup> Looking more closely at the work of the canonic Classical Political Philosophers themselves, e.g. Book VII of Aristotle's *Politics*, one may also note that the Greek philosophers in fact reckoned with resilient opposition to the idea that the goal of political life should be nothing but virtue. This can be seen when first considering how Aristotle gives expression to the substantial view of virtue:

ἀνδρεία δὲ πόλεως καὶ δικαιοσύνη καὶ φρόνησις τὴν αὐτὴν ἔχει δύναμιν καὶ μορφήν ὧν μετασχὼν ἕκαστος τῶν ἀνθρώπων λέγεται δίκαιος καὶ φρόνιμος καὶ σώφρων.<sup>250</sup>

The courage of the city-state as well as its righteousness and wisdom have the same substance and form, based on which each man is called righteous, wise and moderate if and when he has a share in them.

Here δύναμις, ‘ability’, bears the meaning of a life-force, or substance – i.e., a substance that endows the subjects carrying it with the potential to realize the end, which is determined by the specific ‘form’ (μορφή) of the ability in question. The question of the exact metaphysical nature of δύναμις and μορφή need not occupy us here.<sup>251</sup> What Aristotle clearly states is that the end realized

---

<sup>248</sup> See Strauss 1959, 40-43.

<sup>249</sup> See Crit. *Sis. Sat.* 25.12-14 and 37-40 (DK).

<sup>250</sup> Aristot. *Pol.* 7.1323b34-37.

<sup>251</sup> For a discussion of the issue, see Anagnostopoulos 2011.

by the holding of virtue is supposed to be of such a kind that it ensures the well-being of the city-state seen as a whole and guarantees the happiness of its individual members. It is because of this dual ability to realize welfare that Aristotle assumes the goal of political life to be virtue. That most people in Aristotle's surroundings did not share this reassurance regarding the connection between the engineering of societal life towards virtue and the happy ordering of society is suggested by the abstaining from objections that follows afterwards in the same passage. As may be seen here, Aristotle was well aware that a successful defence of the substantial view of virtue would require such an effort that it could be taken to form an investigation in its own right:

νῦν δὲ ὑποκείσθω τοσοῦτον, ὅτι βίος μὲν ἄριστος, καὶ χωρὶς ἐκάστῳ καὶ κοινῇ ταῖς πόλεσιν ὁ μετ' ἀρετῆς κεχορηγημένης ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον ὥστε μετέχειν τῶν κατ' ἀρετὴν πράξεων, πρὸς δὲ τοὺς ἀμφισβητοῦντας, ἔασαντας ἐπὶ τῆς νῦν μεθόδου, διασκεπτέον ὕστερον, εἴ τις τοῖς εἰρημένοις τυγχάνει μὴ πειθόμενος.<sup>252</sup>

May this suffice for now, to say that the best life, both the life of each person individually and the public life of each city, is the life governed (κεχορηγημένης) so that it leads towards partaking in virtuous actions. For those who might disagree with this may it suffice to ask them to let us pursue this inquiry (μέθοδος), while admitting that at some later point in time any remaining objections must be examined (διασκεπτέον).

Indeed, if there ever was a consensus regarding the conception that the goal of political life is to be virtue – which would have followed from the idea that virtue was “the same in substance and in form” (τὴν αὐτὴν ἔχει δύναμιν καὶ μορφήν) in city as in man – then that consensus may never have reached beyond the circles of initiates.<sup>253</sup>

All the same, Strauss' idea seems to have been that for society in general the attainability of a political thinking of a “decisively autonomous” character was doomed to as short a life as Classical Political Philosophy itself had had. Following Strauss, one could say that the hope for attainment of autonomous political thinking was bound to wither away along with the fizzling out of that “fertile moment” when – for the first time in the history of man – the political tradition had just been turned on its head, and the short window for decisive decisions had been opened. If Classical Political Philosophy remained only for as long as it prevailed in its direct relation to the political life of the democratized city-state, then as soon as the life-blood of δημοκρατία drained out of the city, so too did the hope of attaining political autonomy.

---

<sup>252</sup> See Aristot. *Pol.* 7.1323b40-7.1323a2.

<sup>253</sup> Cf. Aristot. *Nic. Eth.* I.iv.1-4.

## **The question of the value of modern-day politics and the extreme conception of autonomous political thinking**

Censures of attachments of exceptional value to conceptions of autonomous political thought may certainly be easily sympathized with. These kinds of allergic reactions are especially understandable when such value-claims in search of “true politics” have been taken up again right at the end of a century in which influential political theories expressing a deep longing for such thinking have been accompanied by two World Wars. To best avoid conflict, one should better stay sober.

Politics is not religion, ethics, law, science, history or economics; it neither solves everything, nor is it present everywhere; and it is not any one political doctrine, such as conservatism, liberalism, socialism, communism, or nationalism, though it can contain elements of most of these things. Politics is politics, to be valued as itself, not because it is ‘like’ or ‘really is’ something else more respectable or peculiar. Politics is politics...<sup>254</sup>

What takes place in the lines above is that the longing for an original and decisive form of true politics is countered with the advocating of politics as an unavoidable evil, while the quality of evil is, in the terms of Schmitt, neutralized. Encountered here is, in other words, a way of reasoning consisting in a surrender to what I in the previous chapter singled out as the additional nature of the modern-day notion of the political: politics potentially encompasses everything, and therefore we have to live with it, although in truth we might wish just to avoid it. Nevertheless, on this issue the tables may be turned and one may ask why politics, if it really merely amounts to unavoidable additionality, should be valued at all?

In truth, there is no reason why we should have to accept politics devoid of deeper meaning. We are even free to look for the exact opposite, namely for politics rising through a vacuum of values in order to establish values. In the following, I intend to begin the scanning of, to borrow a term from Paul Cartledge, “politics in the strong sense” – i.e., politics understood as a “de-neutralizing” faculty, or politics as providing the basis for both action and values.<sup>255</sup> How I aim to illuminate politics in this sense is through a theory of the birth of autonomous political thinking in Ancient Greece. Leading the way is a reconsideration of Strauss’ ideas concerning the origins of political philosophy.

---

<sup>254</sup> See Crick 2000, 15-16. Cf. Strauss 2007, 122.

<sup>255</sup> “...politics in the strong sense – that is, communal decision-making in the public sphere on the basis of substantive discussion about issues of principle as well as purely operational matters.” See Cartledge 2009, 14.

According to Strauss, it was a certain “substantial view of virtue” that characterized all Classical solutions to the central questions of political philosophy. Virtue as an inherent part of the soul of man required from the best form of government that it was to be the one best able to promote virtue in its subjects. The “deep cut” in the history of political thinking befell when by the likes of Machiavelli this substantial view of virtue was disclaimed by political philosophy itself. Henceforth, morality – from being reckoned with as a living force inside of man – began to be conceived of more and more in terms of a forced agreement, a settlement based on the persuasive power of the “educator of men”, and nourished by his “passion for glory”.<sup>256</sup>

Amidst this gloomy view of modernity – and with this dark vision of the preconditions of modern political thinking in the back of his mind – it is fully understandable that Strauss could do nothing but cast his longing glance on the heart of Antiquity, namely on the Classical Age of Ancient Greece. Here – in the paramount disclosing of real political alternatives, or within the “fundamental political controversy” rising forth from the first “shaking of the political traditions” – he saw that the ground had been prepared for a decisive decision to resolve “the order of the human things”.<sup>257</sup> For such an effect to be accomplished – and for the philosophers carrying out the decision not to commit the error of “blurring the distinction between reason and authority” – all that may have been required was the potential agreement of all those entitled to partake in the choosing between the fundamental alternatives at hand.<sup>258</sup> In the moment of the decisiveness of this decision, politics would rise to a level of true autonomy.

The above lines contain what I would refer to as the extreme conception of autonomous political thinking. It is a view according to which political autonomy consists of the decisive verdict on and concomitant resettling of the totality of human society and its arrangements. Following Strauss, one could say that if there ever was a moment in history when such a decisiveness was possible then that window closed almost as soon as it had been opened, and today the screen consisting of the whole tradition of political philosophy stands in our way so that we are hindered from ever opening that window again.<sup>259</sup>

---

<sup>256</sup> See Strauss 1959, 40-43.

<sup>257</sup> See Strauss 2007, 121.

<sup>258</sup> See Strauss 1953, 92, 121 and 125.

<sup>259</sup> The fact that it is unfeasible to disregard the whole tradition of political thinking and political philosophy, which have shaped the nature of societal arrangements through the ages, does not mean that disregarding acts of total re-settling have not been attempted. Such was the ideology behind the Islamic Revolution of 1979 in Iran, for example, although here a blurring of the distinction between reason and authority certainly occurred, or faith was elevated above reason. “The necessity for the implementation of divine law, the need for an executive power, and the importance of that power in fulfilling the goals of the prophetic mission and establishing a just order that would result in the happiness of all mankind – all of this made the appointment of a successor synonymous with the completion of the prophetic mission. In the time of the Prophet, laws were not merely expounded and promulgated; they were also implemented. The Messenger of God was an executor of the law. For example, he implemented the penal provisions of

Such an extreme conception presupposes, however, an alignment of the notion of political autonomy and modern conceptions of political sovereignty, a coupling that, mildly speaking, seems somewhat forced. Actually, bearing in mind the antecedent of the Classical Greek democracies, how could one even begin to conceive of autonomous political thought without proceeding from the contrary assumption that *the autonomy of the political is made feasible only through a prior resettling of the societal order* – namely *through the inauguration of egalitarian κράτος*. In the latter view, autonomous political thought would be viable only when a space for the deciding over the affairs of the political community has been disclosed, within which matters are being resolved freely by the members of the community themselves, among themselves. This occurs, when – within the in-group of fully enfranchised community-members, with regard to the communal decision-making process – political equality overrides the social hierarchies.<sup>260</sup>

What complemented the pristine turning on its head of the inherited order – occurring in Classical Greece and resulting in the first realization of an alternative to elite rule: the materialization of egalitarian κράτος – was, as I will bring out more clearly in the next chapter, the recognition of the arbitrary nature of the prevailing societal order and its alternatives. It was because of this acknowledgment that the notion of control of constitutional matters could transfer into the sphere of political thinking, making politics a consciously free sphere of thought and action – and it was thus that the autonomy of politics was finalized.

An overt sign of this “constitutionalization” of Greek political thinking is the evidence of the introduction of the ‘writ alleging an unconstitutional proposal’ (γραφή παρανόμων). This writ is first attested in Athens in 415 B.C. in connection with the twin causes of public uproar on the eve of the Sicilian expedition – the mutilation of the herms and the profanation of the mysteries.<sup>261</sup> The γραφή παρανόμων was probably introduced much earlier, however, perhaps already in the aftermath of the reforms of Ephialtes – when the waning of the possibility to appeal to cosmically naturalizing authorizations of the

---

Islam: he cut off the hand of the thief and administered lashings and stonings. The successor of the Prophet must do the same; his task is not legislation, but the implementation of the divine laws that the Prophet has promulgated. It is for this reason that the formation of a government and the establishment of executive organs are necessary.” See Khomeini 2010, 37.

<sup>260</sup> Cf. Farenga 2006, 85: “a moral space for the moral and political autonomy of the Greek citizen in city-states and ethnos-states, a space that begins to insist on the three basic criteria for citizenship and selfhood [...] an individual *timê* deserving recognition from others sufficient to maintain a positive public image; a qualified personal autonomy permitting one to exercise his will in individual and family interest without endangering community welfare; and deliberative freedoms that include participation with peers in assembling, speaking, and in the exchange of reason giving.”

<sup>261</sup> See Thuc. 6.27 and Andoc. 1.11. For an indication of the importance attached to γραφή παρανόμων by “the ruling hand of the people”, see Hansen 1975, 10-11.

constitution may have first found its counterpart in the originating of a requirement for humanly authorized laws to safeguard it.<sup>262</sup> As the Athenian democracy, in 411 and 404 B.C., was overthrown – and autonomous political thinking with it – these measures to secure the constitution were also cancelled, until the restoration of democracy brought them back.<sup>263</sup> Thus, Aeschines could distinguish democracy from oligarchy and tyranny on the grounds that the former was ruled by laws, while the latter two were ruled by the arbitrary will of their rulers, or literally “by the manner of their establishers” (τοῖς τρόποις τῶν ἐφεστηκότων):

διοικοῦνται δ’ αἱ μὲν τυραννίδες καὶ ὀλιγαρχίαι τοῖς τρόποις τῶν ἐφεστηκότων, αἱ δὲ πόλεις αἱ δημοκρατούμεναι τοῖς νόμοις τοῖς κειμένοις.<sup>264</sup>

The tyrannies and the oligarchies are governed by the arbitrary will of their rulers, while the democratic city-states are governed by their own authorized laws (τοῖς νόμοις τοῖς κειμένοις).

Here, the *dativus instrumenti* τοῖς νόμοις τοῖς κειμένοις gives expression to the fact that, according to Aeschines, it is by means of their laws that the democratized city-states remain at a remove from the other two classical constitutional alternatives. However, whether or not a city-state is governed by democracy and laws, or by tyranny and arbitrary will, is considered a matter of contingent action. The question of which constitutional alternative will apply to which city-state may thus be determined by a range of things – e.g., by proceedings relating to societal strife or by individuals striving to grab hold of political power – but the determinant factors will in any case always consist of matters exclusively bound to the human sphere. The latter idea does not occur *expressis verbis* in Aeschines’ text, but it is certainly implied when in the same passage Aeschines writes of ‘the first lawgiver’ (ὁ νομοθέτης πρῶτον) that “he knew well that if the laws of the state are maintained, democracy will prevail as well” (ἐκεῖνό γε εἶδώς, ὅτι ἂν διατηρηθῶσιν οἱ νόμοι τῆ πόλει, σφύζεται καὶ ἡ δημοκρατία).<sup>265</sup> It was a human being, it is said here, who first put the laws of the humans in place, and this he did in order to keep watchful eye on his fellows and make sure that they maintain the right (democratic) form of government.

---

<sup>262</sup> See Andoc. 1.36. Cf. Aristot. *Ath. Pol.* 29.4 and Hansen 1974, 28 and 55. For an indication of the importance attached to γραφή παρανόμων by “the ruling hand of the people”, see Hansen 1975, 10-11.

<sup>263</sup> See Thuc. 8.67 and Aristot. *Ath. Pol.* 35.2. Cf. Hansen 1974, 55-56 and Cartledge 2016, 221-222.

<sup>264</sup> See Aeschin. 3.6.

<sup>265</sup> See, *ibid.*

This kind of constitutionalized political thought, or political thinking acknowledging the humanly applicable nature of constitutional alternatives – i.e., the range of alternatives among which the radically new people’s rule assumed its place as one option among others – could never have been reached, however, had not a distancing from the assurance of the divine sanctioning of the given order occurred.<sup>266</sup> Now, most early civilizations seem to have evolved under the guiding light of the notion of ‘sacred kingship’ – a conception according to which the person at the highest top of the social, political and religious hierarchy was somehow one with the gods, or at least allocated to his place by them in order to fulfil their mission.<sup>267</sup> By the time of the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C., however, political thinking, at least in some parts of Greece, had reached a phase wherein the notion of kingship had been effectively “desacralized”. The Deioeces episode in the Μηδικός λόγος of the first book of Herodotus bears witness to the undoing of the divine nature of the king. It also offers an insight into the climate of thought, which made autonomous political thinking a living possibility.<sup>268</sup>

### **Kingship desacralized; the Deioeces episode and the finalizing of autonomous political thinking**

The *communis opinio* until the 1980s, namely that the Deioeces of the Herodotean narrative refers to the Mannaeen provincial governor Daiaukku (Elamite: *D-a-a-hi-uk-ka*), should now be disqualified. Instead, Herodotus’ choice of the name Deioeces for the founder of the Median dynasty may be explained by the simple fact that its oriental model, Dahyuka – to use a morphologically simplified form – seems to have been a common name in Persia

---

<sup>266</sup> It is difficult, of course, to deny religion – or what we, while glaring at some prehistorical remains, think of as religion – the status of a sort of “prime mover” in the more advanced societal organization of man. This idea has also gained in credibility during the last two decades – as excavations of the Neolithic constructs in Göbeklitepe in Turkey, where the earliest layers have been dated to 9000 B.C., seem to show that organized “religion” predates the adopting of a sedentary life. Nevertheless, the prime mover with regard to autonomous political thinking may have been nothing less than a step away from a religiously determined vision of societal arrangements. Cf. Meier 1990, 104-105 and Gernet 1917, 336: “l’homme se détache de la nature où l’engageaient et le retenaient les δαίμονες.” For a critical discussion of the “temple theory” pertaining to the Neolithic constructs at Göbeklitepe, see Yeşilyurt 2014, 28-31.

<sup>267</sup> Cf. Heusch 1997: “Sacred kingship is thus a fundamental factor in history, a history in which the political and the magico-religious are intimately intertwined. It is the ritual function, not the political, which is at the core of the institution for it appears already in small, stateless societies where a man, or even a child, is torn from the everyday kinship order to take on the heavy responsibility of guaranteeing the equilibrium of the universe. The prosperity which ensues from this reflects in turn upon the affairs of humankind. Though it appears in diverse historical forms, sacred kingship always has a common theme: the body-fetish of the chief or king articulates the natural and social order”.

<sup>268</sup> The episode: Hdt. 1.96-1.100. The full λόγος: 1.95-106.

during the Achaemenid Empire.<sup>269</sup> Based on the absence of archaeological evidence for a Median empire, as well as Mesopotamian documentary sources for any kind of “state-construct” pertaining to the Medes, the historicity of the whole Μηδικός λόγος may in fact be doubted.<sup>270</sup> The Herodotean assumption of a Median empire was probably made plausible by what the Greeks knew of the destruction of Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian empire, at the hands of united Median tribes under the leadership of Cyaxares in 612 B.C., and by their knowledge of the subsequent victory of Cyrus over Astyages in 550 B.C. In fact, the idea of a “transition of empire” (*translatio imperii*) finds its first expression with the Herodotean story: “Empires, being by their very nature ‘universal’, had to follow one another in time. And since the Medes were known to have destroyed the Assyrian empire, and to have been vanquished by Cyrus the founder of the Persian empire, the choice was apparently obvious”.<sup>271</sup>

In truth, if historicity relating to the actual setting of the Deioeces episode is to be found in the details of the story itself, it is likely that it relates to the first part of the episode.<sup>272</sup> Here, Deioeces is portrayed as a notable ‘wise man’ (ἀνὴρ σοφός), who worked hard in order to obtain rightfulness. Because of his rightfulness, he was soon chosen to be the “judge” (δικαστής) of his own village and in the end for all the Medes, who at this point in time are depicted by Herodotus as living in scattered village-communities (κατοικημένων κατὰ κώμας).<sup>273</sup> With regard to the depiction of this kind of societal setting, it is of course impossible to say anything certain of Herodotus’ authorial intentions. Nevertheless, even if the reminiscence inherent in the setting of the episode were directed mainly at the early Greek Archaic Age and the judicial-religious rule of the βασιλεῖς, the picture rising forth from the narrative would still suit any sedentary society still in lack of a judicial system adhering to written

---

<sup>269</sup> See Weisshöfer 2004, 16-17 and 22. It was George Smith who, in the wake of the decipherment of Neo-Assyrian cuneiform texts, first connected Deioeces with the name of Daiuakku, a name found in the annals of Sargon II and referring to a rebel governor of Mannea. See, Smith 1869, 98. The hypothesis that the Herodotean Deioeces might have had his historical counterpart in this very same person, as well as the corresponding identification of Deioeces’ successor Phraortes with the name of another rebelling chief, Kashtaritu (*khshāyathiya* being the Median term for ‘king’), was conclusively overruled by Stuart Brown. See Brown 1988, 75-78.

<sup>270</sup> See Weisshöfer 2004, 19-20 and Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1988, 211-212. For the contrasting view, assigning plausibility to the Herodotean account despite lacking evidence, see Brown 1988, 84-86.

<sup>271</sup> See Liverani 2003, 2.

<sup>272</sup> See Hdt. 1.96-98.

<sup>273</sup> See Hdt. 1.96.2-3.



laws.<sup>274</sup> Therefore, we have no reason to suppose that the story would not provide us with reliable historical information on the early communities of the Medes as well.

Like so, Deioces begins his career as a wise arbiter in a manner, which may well have amounted to a contemporary Greek conception of a properly functioning βασιλεύς: he is a man endowed with the rare ability to “give straight judgments” (κατὰ τὸ ὀρθὸν δικάζων).<sup>275</sup> However, at the end of the first part of the story, Deioces cleverly refuses to continue his work as the sole fair judge. In the meantime, his friends go about convincing the other Medes that they should choose a king for themselves.<sup>276</sup> Who might this be?

The latter part of the story deals with the new societal arrangements and laws enforced on the Medes by Deioces the king.<sup>277</sup> It is at this point that most, or all, traces of historicity disappear from the details of the tale. Through the dictates of Deioces, we may witness the build-up to a monarchic regime, in which some traits bear a distinct Achaemenidean characteristic: the summer-residency of the Achaemenidean rulers, Ecbatana, is made the capital of the new kingdom and the Persian holy number seven is represented in the seven walls painted in seven different colours surrounding the capital.<sup>278</sup> On the other hand, it is noteworthy that Deioces is said to have been granted spear bearing bodyguards (δορυφόροι), while the Athenian 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. tyrant Peisistratus – whose rise to power is retold by Herodotus only some 30 chapters earlier – is claimed by Herodotus to have been denied the spear-bearers, while being granted club-bearers (κορυνηφόροι) instead.<sup>279</sup>

In truth, right at the beginning of the Deioces-episode, Herodotus writes that Deioces did everything he did because he was “in love with tyranny”.<sup>280</sup> Consequently, the common scholarly assumption regards the whole episode as the outcome of a draft “from the spirit of Greek constitutional theory” – or more specifically, as a social critique typical in the late Archaic Age of Ancient Greece aimed directly at the recollection of the type of rule of one man, or one family – namely at tyranny.<sup>281</sup> In this vein, the Deioces-episode has been read as a

---

<sup>274</sup> Cf. Patzek 2004, 68: “Die Erzählung von einem Richter, der in seinem Stamm Recht sprach und das so gut tat, daß er auch bei den anderen Stämmen berühmt wurde und deren Stammesangehörige ratsuchend zu ihm gingen, paßt in eine Gesellschaft, die sich in einer frühen Phase der Selbsthaftwerdung befand und noch über kein schriftlich fixiertes Recht verfügte.“

<sup>275</sup> See Hdt. 1.96.3. Cf. Hes. *WD*. 263-264: βασιλῆς [...] δωροφάγοι, σκολιέων δὲ δικέων ἐπὶ πάγχυ λάθεσθε (“gift-devouring kings, keep steadfastly away from crooked judgments”).

<sup>276</sup> See Hdt. 1.97.3: στήσωμεν ἡμέων αὐτῶν βασιλέα (“let us put in place a king for ourselves”).

<sup>277</sup> See Hdt. 1.96-100.

<sup>278</sup> See Hdt. 1.98.3-5. Cf. Patzer 2004, 68.

<sup>279</sup> See Hdt. 1.59.5 and 1.98.2. Cf. Walter 2004, 90.

<sup>280</sup> See Hdt. 1.96.2: ἐρασθεὶς τυραννίδος ἐποίηε τοιάδε (“because he was in love with tyranny he did the following”).

<sup>281</sup> For “...aus dem Geist der griechischen Staatstheorie...”, see Bichler 2000, 235.

critique of tyranny in the sense of a prefiguration of constitutional philosophy,<sup>282</sup>

Deioces himself has been seen as ruler whose “goal-orientedness” and “techniques of conquest”

clearly single him out as a tyrant<sup>283</sup>

and the whole episode has been approached as a Herodotean attempt at defining

the nature of tyranny or despotism as such.<sup>284</sup>

As already noted, it is in fact obvious that reminiscences of the rule of Greek tyrants are echoed in the Deioces-episode. To this may be added that the story seems to mirror a contemporary Greek theoretical preoccupation that identifies the origins of tyrannical forms of government specifically in a lack of lawful government. In the beginning of the Herodotean story, Deioces’ abilities as a provider of rightful judgments are contrasted against the general state assumed to have characterized the Medes in the early stages of his career. Indeed, according to the story, Deioces’ rightfulness as a judge was all the more remarkable given the great amount of lawlessness witnessed in the land of the Medes at the time he became their judicial leader (καὶ ταῦτα μέντοι εὐούσης ἀνομίης πολλῆς ἀνὰ πᾶσαν τὴν Μηδικὴν ἐποίηε).<sup>285</sup> In the same vein, another theoretical account dealing with the question of the origins of tyrannical rule states that “tyranny rises from nothing else than lawlessness” (γίνεται δὲ καὶ ἡ τυραννίς [...] οὐκ ἐξ ἄλλου τινὸς ἢ ἀνομίας).<sup>286</sup> The case seems thus to be well made for a reading that approaches the character of Deioces – despite the oriental setting of the episode retelling his story – as a Greek tyrant *par excellence*. At the very least, the choice to discuss the story primarily in terms assuming a close relationship between its content and some specific Greek theoretical fixations relating to tyrannical forms of despotic rule may seem reasonable.

Nevertheless, there is a problem with approaching the Deioces-episode as a reflection of a Greek foundational story, connecting to despotic regimes in general and boiling down to a criticism of tyrannic government in particular. If the episode is approached as *Gründungsgeschichte* drawing its motivation,

---

<sup>282</sup> “...Kritik der Tyrannis im Sinne einer Vorform der griechischen Staatsphilosophie”. See Patzek 2004, 69.

<sup>283</sup> “...die Zielstrebigkeit und die Techniken der Machteroberung [...] kennzeichnen Deiokes eindeutig als Tyrannen.” See Walter 2004, 87.

<sup>284</sup> See Raaflaub 2002, 173.

<sup>285</sup> See Hdt.

<sup>286</sup> See Anon. Iambli. 7.12 (DK). Cf. Thomas 2012, 250-251.

on the one hand, from the fading memories of the tyrannical regimes of the Archaic Age, and on the other hand, from the ongoing polarization between the Greek “citizen-state” and despotic regimes in the east and elsewhere, we lose sight of the exceptionality of the story.<sup>287</sup>

In truth, the Deioces episode may not even primarily mirror a Greek/Herodotean understanding of the origins and characteristics of tyranny. Instead, it may be understood to echo a primeval deconstruction by human thought of a much more foundational notion. That this could be so may be seen if we begin by looking at the full text of a longer passage forming the core of the later part of the episode, and then proceed to look at a part of the passage in more detail. The passage in question deals with the measures taken and the laws established by Deioces after he had advanced in his career from wise judge to king:

κόσμον τόνδε Δηϊόκης πρῶτος ἐστὶ ὁ καταστησάμενος, μήτε ἐσιέναι παρὰ βασιλέα μηδένα, δι’ ἀγγέλων δὲ πάντα χρᾶσθαι, ὁρᾶσθαι τε βασιλέα ὑπὸ μηδενός πρὸς τε τούτοισι ἔτι γελᾶν τε † καὶ ἀντίον πτύειν καὶ ἅπανσι εἶναι τοῦτό γε αἰσχρόν†, ταῦτα δὲ περὶ ἐωυτὸν ἐσέμνυνε τῶνδε εἶνεκεν, ὅκως ἂν μὴ ὀρῶντες οἱ ὀμήλικες, ἐόντες σύντροφοί τε ἐκείνῳ καὶ οἰκίῃς οὐ φλαυροτέρης οὐδὲ ἐς ἀνδραγαθὴν λειπόμενοι, λυπεοῖατο καὶ ἐπιβουλεύοιεν, ἀλλ’ ἑτεροῖός σφι δοκέοι εἶναι μὴ ὀρῶσι.<sup>288</sup>

Deioces was the first to establish the following rules: no one was to enter into the king’s presence, but all business was to be conducted through messengers; the king was to be seen by no one; and furthermore absolutely no one was to commit the offence of laughing or spitting in the king’s presence. The reason he instituted this grandiose system of how to behave in relation to himself was to prevent any of his peers seeing him. They had brought up with him, their lineage was no worse than his, and they were just as brave as he was, so he was worried that if they saw him they might get irritated and conspire against him; on the other hand, if they could not see him, they might think that he had changed.

Of the many writers who have aimed at brightening our understanding of the course of the history of political thought, I think it is difficult to conceive of Hannah Arendt as not being one of the foremost.<sup>289</sup> Yet I could not agree less

---

<sup>287</sup> Cf. Walter 2004, 86-88. For ‘citizen-state’ as the preferred translation of πόλις, see Cartledge 2016, 15.

<sup>288</sup> See Hdt. 1.99.1-2. Transl. Waterfield.

<sup>289</sup> Of the eight exercises in the history of political thought contained in her *Between Past and Future*, there is not one essay, which I would not highly recommend to any thinking person. See Arendt 2006a.

with her when she states that there may never have been any Ancient Greek counterpart to the Roman notion of authoritarian rule – i.e., to the power pertaining to some societal organs, such as the Roman senate, to coerce without resort to violence or persuasion.<sup>290</sup> On the contrary, I would claim that what “did not always exist in the Greek world” – and what in fact only existed for a short while anywhere – was the peculiar freedom relating to the body politics in some of the Greek societies of the Classical Age. These were the only city-states within which a citizen could leave the dominion of his household “altogether and to move among his equals, free men”.<sup>291</sup>

However, before the fulfillment of the process of politicization – i.e., before the turn to direct democracy in some city-states of the Greek world in and around 460 B.C. – there would always be societal authority of the highest degree, namely the authority inherent in the reified, naturalized and divinely sanctified societal order itself. Only when the most radical political alternative had been realized could this authority be disregarded. Only after the materialization of δημοκρατία could it be acknowledged that even the most ancient forms, according to which the rule of the society had been ordered, were nothing more than orders created by humans for humans.

κόσμον τόνδε Δηϊόκης πρώτος ἐστὶ ὁ καταστησάμενος, μήτε ἐσιέναι παρὰ βασιλέα μηδένα, δι’ ἀγγέλων δὲ πάντα χρᾶσθαι, ὄρασθαι τε βασιλέα ὑπὸ μηδενός πρὸς τε τούτοισι ἔτι γελᾶν τε καὶ ἀντίον πτύειν καὶ ἅπασιν εἶναι τοῦτό γε αἰσχρὸν, ταῦτα δὲ περὶ ἐωυτὸν ἐσέμνυε τῶνδε εἵνεκεν, ὅκως ἂν μὴ ὀρῶντες οἱ ὀμήλικες...

Deioces was the first to establish the order, according to which no one was to enter into the king’s presence, so everything was to be taken care of through messengers, and moreover the king was to be seen by no one and to laugh in his presence and to spit in front of him should be considered a shame for everyone, and this he ordered in relation to himself so that his peers would be unable to see him...

In his edition of the *Histories*, Enoch Powell regarded the whole passage from πρὸς τὸ αἰσχρὸν as an interpolation and deleted it. Others have proposed supplements in its place, but I think the suggestion of Powell makes most sense.<sup>292</sup>

---

<sup>290</sup> See Arendt 2006a, 104: “Authority as the one, if not the decisive, factor in human communities did not always exist, though it can look back on a long history, and the experiences on which this concept is based are not necessarily present in all bodies politic. The word and the concept are Roman in origin. Neither the Greek language nor the varied political experiences of Greek history shows any knowledge of authority and the kind of rule it implies. This is expressed most clearly in the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, who, in quite different ways but from the same political experiences, tried to introduce something akin to authority into the public life of the Greek polis.”

<sup>291</sup> Cf. Arendt 2006a, 104-105.

<sup>292</sup> See Wilson 2015, 13-14

The sentence *πρὸς τε τούτοισι ἔτι γελᾶν τε καὶ ἀντίον πύειν καὶ ἅπασι εἶναι τοῦτό γε αἰσχρόν* may have been interpolated by a commentator, who interpreted the whole passage as pointing specifically to Persian court etiquette and who wanted to underline the Achaemenidean reference in the Herodotean text.<sup>293</sup> As noted, such Achaemenidean echoes are certainly present in the Deioces-episode, but the sentence deleted by Powell does nevertheless seem additional. In truth, we get a more clearly expressed idea if we follow Powell's suggestion:

κόσμον τόνδε Δηϊόκης πρῶτος ἐστὶ ὁ καταστησάμενος, μήτε ἐσιέναι παρὰ βασιλέα μηδένα, δι' ἀγγέλων δὲ πάντα χρᾶσθαι, ὀρᾶσθαι τε βασιλέα ὑπὸ μηδενός. ταῦτα δὲ περὶ ἑωυτὸν ἐσέμνυνε τῶνδε εἵνεκεν, ὅκως ἂν μὴ ὀρῶντες οἱ ὀμήλικες...

Deioces was the first to establish the order, according to which no one was to enter into the king's presence, so everything was to be taken care of through messengers. This he ordered in relation to himself so that his peers would be unable to see him...

These lines, I would claim, do not at all reflect the “main problem” of Archaic Greek tyranny: its relation to aristocracy.<sup>294</sup> In societies where sacred kingship was the dominant religious-political notion, it was all-important that the king was thought of as standing outside and above the human world – since only thus could the illusion be maintained that his body stood in direct relation to the divine sphere – and this was the reason as well why he had to be concealed. This concealing was of course realized in the physical world – e.g., through the columns shading the Persian king and separating him from the people granted their audience with him – but it was certainly also given a cosmically mystifying legitimation. Thus in the ancient Indian *Laws of Manu* (ca. 1500 B.C.), the claim is made that the body of a sacred king (Sanskrit: *kshatriya*) is so shining that it is impossible for anyone on earth to even gaze at him without burning the eyes.<sup>295</sup> What I would claim, therefore, is that what the lines cited above really reveal is the de-deification of sacred kingship as the basic principle for the ordering of the society, and the demystification monarchy as the primeval form of cosmically-naturally sanctioned high rule.

This does not mean that the demystification evidenced in the Herodotean legend of the first sacred king of the Medes would not strike at attempted religious legitimations of specifically Greek forms of despotic rule as well. In fact, it may have been that in the minds of the Greeks, the notions of tyranny and that of sacred kingship had blended into each other all along. Indeed, even

---

<sup>293</sup> Cf. Asheri & al. 2007, 150-151.

<sup>294</sup> *Contra* Walter 2004, 88.

<sup>295</sup> See Manu, 7.6. Cf. Gonda 1956, 60.

the term by which the ruling men of the former type of regimes were denoted – τύραννος, with its unspecifiable Middle Eastern origin – suggests that already early on in the Archaic Age had the Greeks made the connection between the despotic rule of one man witnessed among them and their notions of Eastern types of societal orders.<sup>296</sup>

However, by looking at how Herodotus presents the relationships between various Greek tyrants and their peers and subordinates in other passages of the Histories, it becomes clear that in his understanding the divine legitimation the Greek tyrants strived to achieve consisted not at all in attempts to hide away, but rather to make themselves as visible as possible. Hence, in the Herodotean rendering, Peisistratus achieves his “second term” as the tyrant of Athens by dressing up a “well-shaped” (εὐειδής) woman as the goddess Athena and letting her drive him in a chariot into the center of the city, so that all with their own eyes could behold how the gods had chosen him specifically to rule.

ἐν τῷ δήμῳ τῷ Παιανίῃ ἦν γυνὴ τῆ οὔνομα ἦν Φύη, μέγαθος ἀπὸ τεσσέρων πηγέων ἀπολείπουσα τρεῖς δακτύλους καὶ ἄλλως εὐειδής. ταύτην τὴν γυναῖκα σκεύασαντες πανοπλίη, ἐς ἄρμα ἐσβιβάσαντες καὶ προδέξαντες σχῆμα οἷόν τι ἔμελλε εὐπρεπέστατον φανέεσθαι ἔχουσα, ἤλαυνον ἐς τὸ ἄστυ, προδρόμους κήρυκας προπέμψαντες, οἱ τὰ ἐντεταλμένα ἠγόρευον ἀπικόμενοι ἐς τὸ ἄστυ, λέγοντες τοιάδε · ὦ Ἀθηναῖοι, δέκεσθε ἀγαθῶ νόῳ Πεισίστρατον, τὸν αὐτὴ ἡ Ἀθηναίη τιμήσασα ἀνθρώπων μάλιστα κατάγει ἐς τὴν ἐαυτῆς ἀκρόπολιν. οἱ μὲν δὴ ταῦτα διαφοιτέοντες ἔλεγον, αὐτίκα δὲ ἐξ τε τοὺς δήμους φάτις ἀπύκετο ὡς Ἀθηναίη Πεισίστρατον κατάγει, καὶ <οἱ> ἐν τῷ ἄστει πειθόμενοι τὴν γυναῖκα εἶναι αὐτὴν τὴν θεὸν προσεύχοντό τε τὴν ἄνθρωπον καὶ ἐδέκοντο Πεισίστρατον.<sup>297</sup>

In the deme of Paianie there was a woman with the name Phye, who was three fingers short of being four feet tall and who was otherwise well-shaped. This woman they dressed up in armour and put her into a chariot as well as devised for her a plan how to appear most comely (σχῆμα οἷόν τι ἔμελλε εὐπρεπέστατον φανέεσθαι), and then they drove into the city after having first sent heralds in advance. When arriving in the city these heralds reported what they had been ordered, saying the following: “ο, Athenians, accept with good courage (δέκεσθε ἀγαθῶ νόῳ) Peisistratus, whom holding in honour more than any other man Athena leads to her acropolis.” Saying this the heralds roamed around.

<sup>296</sup> Cf. Anderson 2005, 183-184 and Parker 1998, 145-149.

<sup>297</sup> See Hdt. 1.60.4-5. Elsewhere in the Histories, we encounter evidence of various Greek tyrants having mishandled endogenous systems of cults and shrines to make their own presence more visible in territories they had conquered, or otherwise wished to control. See Hdt. 5.67. Cf. Hdt. 1.64.2.

Immediately the saying reached the people that Athena was escorting Peisistratus, and those in the city having been persuaded to believe that the woman was the goddess herself, worshipped the human (προσεύχοντό τε τὴν ἄνθρωπον) and accepted Peisistratus.

In the passage above, the soon-to-be tyrant Peisistratus is depicted as aiming to achieve legitimation for his rule by securing a kind of divinely sanctioned authorization, which would allow him to elevate himself above the rest of the community. Indeed, the tyrants of the Greek Archaic Age, for all that we know and according to everything Herodotus tells us about them, aimed at drastically raising their status by underscoring their richness and splendour (μεγαλοπρέπεια), thus lifting themselves over the rest of the societal elite, but never tried to sanctify their rule by concealing themselves from the view of others.<sup>298</sup> In truth, until the redeified Hellenistic and Roman rulers we know of no evidence from the post-Mycenaean age, that would point to Greek societies having adhered to the kinds of ritual body fetish in which connected notions of cosmic-societal justice and a form of divine rule were crystallized in the isolating of one individual from the rest of the society.<sup>299</sup>

Therefore, I conclude that in the Deioces episode of the *Histories* of Herodotus, it is the notion of divinely sanctioned one man's rule as such, the sacred monarchy represented by Cyrus and Darius, as well as of Sargon the Great and Assurbanipal, King Menes and Akhenaten, that is revealed to be just another human artefact.<sup>300</sup> The stripping of the godly legitimation of the rule of the Greek tyrants is just a side issue.

---

<sup>298</sup> See Parker 1998, 150-154. Cf. Gammie 1986, 190-195. Elsewhere in the *Histories*, we encounter evidence of various Greek tyrants having mishandled endogenous systems of cults and shrines to make their own presence more visible in territories they had conquered, or otherwise wished to control. See Hdt. 5.67 and 1.64.2. Cf. Xen. *Hier.* 11.7, where it is stated that the tyrant has to compete against other heads of city-states (πρὸς ἄλλους προστάτας πόλεων τὸν ἀγῶνα εἶναι) and that the height of μεγαλοπρέπεια (νικῶν τῷ καλλίστῳ καὶ μεγαλοπρεπεστάτῳ) is reached when the tyrant causes his own city-state, rather than his own person, to prosper beyond other cities (ἐὰν εὐδαιμονεστάτην τὴν πόλιν ἢς προστατεύεις παρέχης)

<sup>299</sup> The question that has generated much controversy is whether or not the Mycenaean ἀναξ and even the early Archaic βασιλεῖς should be reckoned with as sacred kings in the sense that they would have been thought of as standing in direct relation to the divine sphere. For a discussion of the issue, see Mondy 1980.

<sup>300</sup> With regard to sacred kingship in Ancient Mesopotamia, Philip Jones has distinguished between the Old Babylonian period (2004-1595 B.C.), which he connects with de facto divine status ascribed to the kings, and the first millennium B.C., which he conceives as a period of lessened attribution of divinity in relation to kingship. His assumption is that the former period represented the beginning of a dual process of territorial integration and elite differentiation, while the latter stood at its end, and that these developments corresponded to a heightened, vis-à-vis a diminished, notion of kingship conceived of as in fact crucial to maintaining the cosmic order. However, as Jones duly notes: "Throughout Mesopotamian history, the legitimacy of kings was conceptualized in terms of their closeness to the divine world through divine descent, divine favour, marriage to a goddess, or superhuman stature." See Jones 2005, 331-332. This corresponds to the history of Ancient Egypt, throughout the course of which the kings of The Two Lands were conceived of as divine in nature: "the whole universe was a

What if an apology of the modern “movement of liberalism” – understood both as a historical process and an amalgamation of ideals and doctrines – were to be written from the point of view of the Classical Age of Ancient Greece? I take it that the main objective of this apology – except perhaps if Plato or Aristotle were to be involved in its writing – would not be the “revolution of the individual” brought about by liberal ideas, but rather to praise the reawakening within liberalism of the understanding that the way we choose to arrange our societies is in our hands. At the very least, we should realize that we have some alternatives to choose from – that the “order of the human things” have never, and can never, be conclusively settled. I for one hope that this is an awareness that our species is able to transfer to whatever state we may arrive at after the post-capitalistic interregnum has finally been overcome. Saying this, I realize, though, that strong forces will continue to aim at regaining divine, or semi-divine, authority for the societal status quo, however harmful our present state may have become for the great majority of people – even in our Western societies.

Perhaps there is plausibility in the conception of liberalism having transformed into a state of post-liberal grotesque. From the inner parts of Mongolia, we now hear of “Bitcoin mines”. Filled with computers, and overlooked by a few lucky caretakers soon to be replaced by robots, these mines consist of huge buildings where the computers are constantly at work solving highly complex math equations. The math is designed by other computers for the sole purpose of expanding the marketplace of an already completely artificial – in the sense of being dehumanized – financial undertaking. With the arrival of the virtual age, the idolization of the market has reached new heights of absurdity.<sup>301</sup>

On the contrary, in 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Greece, with the recognition of the artificial – in the sense of being humanly created – nature of different constitutional alternatives, autonomous political thinking was finalized. The next chapter tells the story of how this awareness arose in the first place.

---

monarchy, and the king of the world had been the first king of Egypt. This function had devolved upon his son and successor, Pharaoh. But it had lost nothing of its nature in the transmission. The rule of Pharaoh still contained an element of creativity; it was an inspired rule which drew its certainties from sources beyond human control. Hence the texts abound in expressions which exalt Pharaoh by describing his acts as reflections, equivalents, and repetitions of those of Re.” See Frankfort 1948, 53. Thus, for “almost three thousand years, Egypt and Mesopotamia shared the concept of ultimate legitimate authority being invested in the single sacred office of kingship”. See Hill & al. 2013, 3-4.

<sup>301</sup> Cf. Baron et al. 2015, 7-30.



## Chapter 3: The Constitutional Debate and the Beginnings of Political Theory in Ancient Greece: a Two-Folded Hypothesis

In this chapter, I propose that the quintessential testimony, provided by the Constitutional Debate with regard to the inauguration of political theory, consists of the combination of two elements first attested in the argumentation of the different sides in the Herodotean debate. These are, on the one hand, internally critical arguments, and on the other hand, a new state of constitutional political thought attained after a turn to cratistic political thinking had taken place. Internal critique – as we may define it provisionally – consists of arguments purporting to refute normative statements from within by showing how these statements lead to inconsistencies. That which I label as the transition to cratistic thinking, in its turn, coincides with the earliest recognition of the fact that a number of different main principles for the arrangement of the societal order are humanly realizable, as well as that these alternative orders exclude each other. So stated, the hypothesis of this chapter ascribes paramount importance to the combination of these elements in the development of political thinking into political theory proper. In fact, I shall go as far as to assume that the Constitutional Debate, by putting these two components together for the first attested time, provides us with a glimpse behind the curtains of the penultimate step leading to the origins of Classical Political Philosophy.

In the previous chapter, I put forward a reading of the Deioeces-episode of Book I of Herodotus, wherein I interpreted the episode as a sign of the finalizing of the constitutionalization of political thinking – i.e., of the birth of the notion of constitutions as humanly applicable entities. In this chapter, the completely new element entering the discussion is the argumentative technique, which Johan Tralau has labelled internal critique.<sup>302</sup> With regard to the penetration of these kinds of arguments into the discussion on societal and moral issues, my understanding is that this was a move causally preceded by a break in early Greek philosophy. The latter was a shift, which in its locale may have been no less comprehensive than the one which may be seen to have occurred with the arrival of the ability to put the prevailing order seriously into question, and which resulted in the transition to a constitutionalized form of political thinking.

---

<sup>302</sup> See Tralau 2012.

The essence of the break occurring within early Greek philosophy could be described in terms of a change in the conception of what should be conceived of as the main object of philosophical study. In this process, the philosophical argument itself evolved into the central object of its own investigation. This is a tendency first explicated within Greek philosophy itself in and around 500 B.C. – as evidenced by a fragment of the writings of Parmenides from Elea.

οὐ γὰρ μῆποτε τοῦτο δαμῆ εἶναι μὴ ἔοντα, ἀλλὰ σὺ τῆσδ' ἀφ' ὁδοῦ  
διζήσιος εἶργε νόημα, μηδέ σ' ἔθος πολύπειρον ὁδὸν κατὰ τήνδε  
βιάσθω, νομᾶν ἄσκοπον ὄμμα καὶ ἠχῆεσαν ἀκουήν, καὶ γλῶσσαν,  
κρῖναι δὲ λόγῳ πολύδηριν ἔλεγγον, ἐξ ἐμέθεν ῥηθέντα.<sup>303</sup>

For never at all could you master this: that things that are not are. But as for you, keep your thought away from this road of investigation. And do not let much-experiencing habit force you down onto this road. To wield an aimless eye and an echoing ear and tongue—no, *by the argument decide* (κρῖναι λόγῳ) *the much-disputed refutation* spoken by me. (My emphasis).

With the Parmenidean reckoning of the need to tend to λόγος alone in order to determine validity, the presupposition of argumentative consistency first moves to the foreground in extant Greek thought. It was, as I would conjure, when the evolving preoccupation of early Greek philosophy with argumentative consistency began to reflect more and more strongly on theoretical, or proto-theoretical, discussions surrounding questions of normative character, that the other major building block of Classical Political Theory, internal critique, became fit to be employed in the service of political theory.

Also with regard to the first major presupposition for political theory – the inauguration of constitutionalized political thought, presented here as effected by the so-called cratistic turn – this chapter brings forth a new central theoretician, namely the German ancient historian Christian Meier. Although perhaps not directly influenced by him, Meier can be seen to join Strauss in starkly underlining the character of a world-historical restart pertaining to the central societal breaks witnessed during the Classical Age in Ancient Greece.<sup>304</sup> What makes Meier's work stand out is his acknowledgment of the processual nature and the thorough fashion of these changes, which Meier conceives of as having effected the whole of the “nomological knowledge” – i.e., the whole understanding of the superior normative ordering of the society

---

<sup>303</sup> See Parmenid. fr. D8 (Laks & Most). Transl. Laks & Most.

<sup>304</sup> Meier's strongest direct influence with regard to his work on Ancient Greece may be the writings of Louis Gernet, such as Gernet's dissertation *Recherches sur le développement de la pensée juridique et morale en Grèce* (Gernet 1917), to be discussed in the next chapter. I base this assumption on my discussions with Meier during a conference in Uppsala in the autumn of 2016.

which connected to the mental infrastructure of the members of the affected communities.<sup>305</sup>

It is my conviction as well that such a radical break in the collective mentalities may be postulated, and that by way of explicating the nature of this break the resulting intellectual and societal progressions that gave rise to Classical Political Theory and to Classical Political Philosophy may be better understood. I believe, however, that the width of the impact affecting the mental infrastructure is best explained if it is presented in its connection with the new emphasis brought to the formal structure of normative reasoning. This kind of more comprehensive and, as of yet, unobtained understanding is what I strive to achieve with the dual hypothesis defended in this chapter.

The chapter begins with a presentation of the Constitutional Debate with regard to questions of its theoretical novelty, its historicity, its place in the Herodotean corpus, its possible theoretical predecessors and its connection to the historical hypothesis of this chapter. In the segment that follows upon that, the hypothesis of the chapter is then substantiated by way of a construal moving, on the one hand, from the historical theory of Christian Meier, and on the other hand, from an overview of the history of the argumentative development leading up to the radical increase in importance of internal critique. The last part of the chapter contains a reading of the argumentative content of the Constitutional Debate, allowing for a view of the paramount interaction of internal critique with cratistic thinking.

### **Connecting the debate with the hypothesis and determining the real context of interest**

The Constitutional Debate of Book III in Herodotus is a dispute involving three noble Persians, who, after having lead a successful coup against the so called Magi usurpation – with the “false Smerdis” posing as the brother of the deceased king Cambyses – consider whether to change the constitution in one of two ways, or to leave the political order unaltered.<sup>306</sup> The societal alternatives under discussion are the three which would remain familiar in human thought, and which would come to dominate subsequent Greek political thinking: democracy, oligarchy and monarchy.<sup>307</sup> The three participants are Otanes pleading the case for democracy, Megabyzus for oligarchy and the future king Darius for the prevailing monarchy.<sup>308</sup> The story of their debate has been

---

<sup>305</sup> See Meier 1988, 44 and 242. Cf. Kauffmann 1995, 436. For an explication of the concept of nomological knowledge (Germ. *nomologische Wissen*), see Weber 1988, 276ff.

<sup>306</sup> For the immediate background to the debate, the death of Cambyses, the casting of suspicion upon Smerdis, Prexaspes' suicide and the conspiracy of the seven against the Magi, see Hdt. 3.61-3.79. For the debate, see Hdt. 30-82.

<sup>307</sup> See Aeschin. 3.6: εὖ γὰρ ἴστε, ὃ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, ὅτι τρεῖς εἰσὶ πολιτεῖαι παρὰ πᾶσιν ἄνθρωποις, τυραννὶς καὶ ὀλιγαρχία καὶ δημοκρατία. (“You know well, men of Athens, that three are the constitutions among all men, tyranny, oligarchy and democracy”).

<sup>308</sup> The Otanes, son of Pharnaspes, who takes part in the debate is not to be confused with another Otanes in the Herodotean corpus, namely with Otanes, son of Sisamnes. During the

placed strikingly at the center of the Herodotean account of the history of Persia in its phase of transition from the reign of Cambyses to that of Darius and the ensuing Persian Wars, and has thus naturally become one of the most famous and most written about separate stories (λόγοι) retold by Herodotus.<sup>309</sup>

In the frame of reference of this investigation, The Constitutional Debate emerges from the full content of the *Histories* as the single most significant passage: it provides us with the earliest extant example of a theoretical discussion centred on the question of which is the best form of government.<sup>310</sup> What should come as no surprise is that scholars before me have been eager to reserve a place for the debate as marking the very juncture at which political theory proper first emerged.

Fifth-century tragedy, epinician poetry, epideictic oratory, and history all in some sense ‘do’ political thought, just as the epic and lyric genres of the Archaic period had done before them. The Persian Debate, though, informed as it is by Sophistic discourse, moves qualitatively onto a different and higher plane of political thinking from anything visible previously, in terms both of abstraction and of sophistication: onto the plane of theory proper.<sup>311</sup>

As of yet, however, no systematic explication of the progressions leading up to the allegedly first true representative of political theory has been presented. By looking more closely at the major piece of evidence provided by the Constitutional Debate, we may begin to confront the two-folded theory of the decisive stages in the process of the development of political thinking into political theory, which this chapter proposes. What we ought to realize first is that although there seems to be a major gap between Herodotus’ retelling of the debate and whatever may have occurred at the Persian court at the time of

---

rule of Cambyses, the other Otanes inherited his position as a judge from his father, Sisamnes. This happened after Cambyses first had flayed Sisamnes for taking a bribe, and then stretched the skin of the father on the judicial bench on which he then placed the son, ἐντειλάμενός οἱ μὲμνησθαι ἐν τῷ κατιζῶν θρόνῳ δικάζει (“ordering him to remember the throne, sitting on which he judged”). See Hdt. 5.25. Cf. Hdt. 3.68. Megabyzus, in his turn, has a famous namesake in an alleged friend of Cyrus the Great. See Xen.Cyr. 8.6.7. After the debate has been settled, Otanes steps aside from the ensuing contest for the throne. This he admits to on condition of exemption from royal authority. See Hdt. 3.83. Megabyzus’ son, Zopyrus, pops up somewhat later in Herodotus’ narrative, but Megabyzus himself is largely neglected apart from the part played by him in defending oligarchy. Megabyzus’ invisibility in the larger narrative has been connected with the trifling part played by oligarchy in the debate. See Wüst 1935, 54.

<sup>309</sup> Cf. Lateiner 2013, 210: “The Constitutional Debate creates a benchmark, shapes expectations for the three theoretical forms of government in action, and one is not disappointed in the narrative.”

<sup>310</sup> See Ehrenberg 1950, 525. For a schematic overview of the full content of the *Histories*, see Jacoby 1913, 283-326.

<sup>311</sup> See Cartledge 2009, 73. Cf. Allen 2011, 78.

Darius' enthronement, this does not amount to a claim to the effect that historicity would be altogether absent in the Herodotean rendering. We should rather be inclined to look for the historical context somewhere else than in 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Susa.

Herodotus embarks upon his retelling of the debate by forcefully claiming historicity for its content, “it was really said!” (ἐλέχθησαν δ' ὄν), but this does not necessarily mean that he himself believed in the story as it was told. It could well be that Herodotus' insistence on the debate's historicity has “the ‘didactic’ aim of reminding his compatriots that ‘democracy’ is not a specifically Greek invention totally foreign to the world of the barbarians.”<sup>312</sup> In that case, however, Herodotus himself may have been nurturing a false conception.<sup>313</sup>

However that may be, when considering the place of the debate within the Herodotean storyline it seems obvious that at least its setting corresponds directly to a historical context. Indeed, we may safely assume that after the death of Cambyses, a time of unrest and rebellion in the Persian Empire followed, which came to a halt with the rise to power of Darius. For validating this assumption, we may turn to the evidence provided by three different sources: beside Herodotus, the trilingual Bisutun inscription and a fragment from the lost ΠΕΡΣΙΚΑ of Ctesias. All of these list seven conspirators against Gaumata posing as Bardiya – i.e., Herodotus' false Smerdis equaling Ctesias' counterfeit Tanyoxarces.<sup>314</sup> Importantly, in the Bisutun inscription, where his rise to power is glorified, Darius' enthronement is envisioned as following immediately upon the slaying of the impostor Gaumata. According to the inscription, Darius' kingship was in fact handed over to him by the main Persian deity Ahura Mazda (Akk.: *u-ri-mi-iz-da lu-u-tu ana-ku id-dan-u*). Obviously, this version of the event leaves no room for the debate and its radical questioning of the prevailing form of rule, which is imagined by Herodotus to have followed directly upon the coup – although perchance the Bisutun inscription's rendering is not the historically reliable one either.<sup>315</sup>

On the other hand, simply by looking at the constitutions weighed over and against each other in the Constitutional Debate, we can see that this very juxtaposition reflects the situation, rather, of the Greek city-states towards the

---

<sup>312</sup> See Asheri & al. 2007, 473.

<sup>313</sup> In this vein, J.A.S. Evans suggested that Herodotus, or the tradition Herodotus was building on in his narrative, may simply have misinterpreted an original account in which it might have been suggested that Otanes was pleading for ἴσος δασμός rather than ἰσονομία. See Evans 1981, 81-82 and Hdt. 3.83.1: ὁ Ὀτάνης Πέρσησι ἰσονομίην σπεύδων ποιῆσαι, ἔλεξε ἐς μέσον αὐτοῖσι τάδε [...] οὔτε γὰρ ἄρχειν οὔτε ἄρχεσθαι ἐθέλω” (“Otanēs, hurrying to create an isonomy for the Persians, spoke in their middle the following [...] I want neither to rule nor to be ruled”). Cf. Theognid. 675-679, where ἴσος δασμός is still lacking democratic overtones.

<sup>314</sup> See Hdt. 3.70. Cf. *Bis. Inscr.* §68 (Schmitt). In Ctesias' rendering, Σφενδαδάτης is the name given to the μάγος posing as the dead king's brother Ταννοξάρκης and the list of seven main conspirators is emended with two assistants. See *Fr.Gr.Hist.* 688 F 13 (11-15).

<sup>315</sup> See *Bis. Inscr.* § 12 (Schmitt).

middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. At this time, the internal division of the Greek world was just about to turn into that strife between proponents of rule by the full body of enfranchised people, δημοκρατία, and renarrowed elite rule, ὀλιγαρχία, which by the end of the century had turned into the ordinary state of affairs.<sup>316</sup> Working in the background of this ensuing conflict, there is a strong reminiscence, however, of an original clash between one man's rule, μοναρχία or τυραννίς, and broadened elite rule, ἰσονομία. In fact, the pervasiveness of this recollection may well be the reason why most of the argumentation in the Constitutional Debate is confined to the combat between monarchy and people's rule, a point I will return to later.<sup>317</sup>

At this juncture, the question may have awoken if not the existence of an original political opposition between one man's rule and broadened elite rule presuppose an original political theory dealing with this conflict as well. To answer this query, a short meander in the form of some remarks on the state of Greek constitutional terminology in the Archaic Age before the breakthrough of δημοκρατία is necessary. Here, the focus ought to be on the domain of terms expressing the notion of one man's rule or sole ruler, and on the juxtapositions of the principle of sole rule with other principles of rule.

As for μοναρχία, it first appears in a fragment ascribed to Alcaeus, i.e., in and around 600 B.C. Not enough has been preserved of the papyrus, however, to say much or anything of the immediate context, and it cannot be determined if it is political.<sup>318</sup> μόναρχος, again, has two early occurrences, one each in the elegies ascribed to Theognis and Solon respectively.<sup>319</sup> Here, in contrast, there is a clear political undertone in both cases. In the Solonian fragment, the “demos because of ignorance” (δῆμος ἀϊδρίη) is depicted as falling into the slavery of the μόναρχος.<sup>320</sup> In the Theognidean passage, μούναρχος is put on a par with ‘civil strife’ (στάσις) and ‘kindred murder’ (ἔμφυλος φόνος) as things that the city-state should never delight in.<sup>321</sup> However, in extant Archaic sources the latter two are in fact the only occurrences of the terms in question that may be directly connected to political thinking, and the possibility certainly remains that at least two of the three attestations above are interpolations.

---

<sup>316</sup> Cf. Simonton 2017, 25-34.

<sup>317</sup> See Ehrenberg 1950, 525-526. Cf. Simonton 2017, 25-34.

<sup>318</sup> Alc. fr. 12 (POxy 1789, Lobel & Page A 6, Loeb 6).

<sup>319</sup> Another possible occurrence may be detected in a papyrus fragment ascribed to Alcaeus. Extant here is ἰαρχον, which could perhaps stand for the last part of a name such as Ἰππαρχος in the accusative case, or could possibly even refer to an office-holder with a title constructed on the model of τριήραρχος or δήμαρχος, but could certainly also have been the accusative form of μόναρχος. Too little has been preserved of the papyrus, however, to determine any name, word or meaning contained in it with certainty. See Alc. POxy 2304.

<sup>320</sup> Sol. 9.3 (West). δῆμος ἀϊδρίη without iota subscript would imply that the masses are inherently ignorant. With the subscript, the word is marked as a dative, which in this case must be understood as causative: the masses thought of as having been misled, not the masses as characteristically easy to mislead.

<sup>321</sup> See Theognid. 52.

In the original text of the fragments of Solon and Alcaeus – if these are genuine fragments – the much more common βασιλεύς/τύραννος (Solon) or βασιλεία/τυραννίς (Alcaeus) may well have been used. This possibility is borne out by a survey of the extant verses of Alcaeus. Here, no further uses of μοναρχία or μόναρχος in a political context are found, while clear-cut examples of political vocabulary derived from βασιλεύς and τύραννος may be detected in at least two fragments.<sup>322</sup> Indeed, it seems that both βασιλεύς and τύραννος, but not μόναρχος, were terms widely in use for denoting what not yet could be counted as a distinct principle of rule in its own right, but rather as a kind of “unusually dominant style of leadership” that flourished among the elite rule in the Archaic Greek city-states.<sup>323</sup>

It could well be, then, that the metrically apt Theognidean μούναρχος should be reckoned with as the earliest occurrence in Greek of a compound political term, where the first part refers to the subject and the second part to the object of governance. Like with all words in the whole Theognidean corpus, however, it would in that case be impossible to put any more accurate date on μόναρχος, since the assumption must be that the terminology in every single of Theognis’ elegies has been altered in the century-long process of oral transmission of the poems. Thus, even if we knew for a fact that the original version of *Theognidea* 39-52 was composed in Megara and not later than the 630’s B.C., as Martin West has assumed, it would still be the case that the lines of the poem can be applied to a variety of political situations.<sup>324</sup> In the process of this application over the centuries of Greek political history, it may be that the verses that in our editions now incorporate μούναρχος were updated to mirror major changes in constitutional concepts. This possibility is borne out by a survey of the extant poems in the Theognidean corpus. Here, there are no more occurrences of μούναρχος or μόναρχος, while devaluation of the rule of the τύραννος finds expression in three passages and one passage presumes the existence of a mortal βασιλεύς.<sup>325</sup>

Nevertheless, the possibility certainly remains that the text at this point is not corrupt, and that in the Greek political vocabulary μόναρχος as one term in use to denote elite rule leaning towards the societal dominance of one man,

<sup>322</sup> See Alc. fr. 6 (POxy 1234, Lobel & Page D17, Loeb 75) and fr. 1 (POxy 2165, Lobel & Page G2, Loeb 130A).

<sup>323</sup> Cf. Anderson 2005, 177. The earliest example of devaluation of tyrannical rule is found in Archilochus. See fr. 19 (West): οὐδ’ ἀγαιομαι θεῶν ἔργα, μεγάλης δ’ οὐκ ἔρέω τυραννίδος (“neither do I envy the deeds of the gods, nor do I seek those of the ‘great’ tyrant”). Cf. Hdt. 5.92a.

<sup>324</sup> See West 1974, 68. Cf. Nagy 1983, 90-91.

<sup>325</sup> Theognid. 823 has μήτε τιν’ αὖξε τύραννον ἐπ’ ἐλπίσι, κέρδεσιν εἶκον (“Do not raise the tyrant giving into hopes for gain”), at 1181, the reference is to the tyrant who devours the people (δημοφάγος τύραννος) and in the verses 1203-1206 the story is on how utterly unworthy of mourning the occasion of the death of a τύραννος would be. At Theognid. 743 Zeus is addressed with the vocative ἀθανάτων βασιλεῦ (“king of the immortals”), implying that the writer knew of a θανάτων βασιλεύς who was not himself immortal.

may be traced as far back as the 7<sup>th</sup> century B.C. However, because of the reasons stated above – i.e., basically, because βασιλεύς and τύραννος as well as their derivations were widely in use in political contexts during the Archaic Age, whereas μόναρχος seems at least not to have been at all common – I do not think the latter alternative can be proven either.

In fact, I find it conceivable that just as βασιλεία and τυραννίς were not yet distinguished as distinct regime types, μοναρχία and μόναρχος were not even part of Greek political terminology before the turn to direct democracy first gave the impetus to the juxtaposing of different alternative orders conceived of as variant principles of societal rule in their own right. This possibility is borne out by the earliest evidence of a text opposing the principle of sole rule (μοναρχία) and rule of like forces (ισονομία) to be found in a fragment ascribed to the pre-Socratic thinker Alcmaeon from Croton (ca. 500 B.C.).

τῆς μὲν ὑγείας εἶναι συνεκτικὴν τὴν ἰσονομίαν τῶν δυνάμεων, ὑγροῦ, ξηροῦ, ψυχροῦ, θερμοῦ, πικροῦ, γλυκέος καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν, τὴν δ' ἐν αὐτοῖς μοναρχίαν νόσου ποιητικὴν· φθοροποιὸν γὰρ ἑκατέρου μοναρχίαν.<sup>326</sup>

Fitting for keeping health in place is like order of forces, of moisture, dryness, cold, heat, bitter, sweet and the rest, whereas monarchy among these is the maker of decease: the monarchy of any of these is the cause of destruction.

Here, the juxtaposing of μοναρχία and ἰσονομία takes place in a context dealing with questions of health and illness. If there are any political undertones to be noted in the clash of principles depicted, the intimate connection with a cosmically-naturalizing way of thinking at least makes it impossible to conceive of the principles as giving expression to variant alternative orders in the sense of them being admitted of as principles for societal rule in their own right. The possibility of juxtaposing alternative main principles specifically with regard to the societal rule seems to have presupposed a realized radical alternative to the prevailing rule. When Alcmaeon was writing, this turnover may not yet have materialized anywhere in the Greek world.

Nevertheless, the Alcmaeonidian fragment does borrow directly from real-world political vocabulary. In fact, it mirrors the constitutional reality of the closing 6<sup>th</sup> century: ἰσονομία is not a common term in Greek medical-philosophical texts, but probably was exactly the term by which the kind of broadened elite rule that was only a few steps away from turning into full-scale

---

<sup>326</sup> See Alc. Cro. B4 (DK). Interestingly, the latest Loeb-edition considers most of this fragment to be a paraphrase, but maintains both μοναρχία and ἰσονομία as the concepts belonging to the paraphrased original. See Alc. Cro. D 30 (Most & Laks).



direct democracies was denoted.<sup>327</sup> The singular use in the fragment of *ισονομία* in a medical context led Charlotte Triebel-Shubert to the conclusion that not only the political concept evidenced in the fragment but also the way it is juxtaposed against *μοναρχία*, must in fact be taken to reflect a “generally recognizable political content”.<sup>328</sup> It remains unclear, however, why the exceptionality of the use of *ισονομία* in a medical setting would rule out the possibility of a specific medically naturalizing content in the Alcmaeonidean fragment. In truth, the ensuing preference among medical writers for non-constitutional terms, such as *ισομοιρία*, to express a similar content may be taken as an indication of the fact that the kind of political theorizing dealing specifically with constitutional matters, and exactly with the weighing of constitutional alternatives against each other, was launched first at a later date.<sup>329</sup>

Nevertheless, with regard to the progression of Greek thought towards political theory proper, another aspect making the fragment especially noteworthy is the kind of opposing of fundamentally different principles of rule that it evidences. In the text of Alcmaeon, this opposing is applied exclusively to the sphere of cosmically naturalized forces determining bodily health, but after the breakthrough of *δημοκρατία* the juxtaposition of fundamentally different principles began finally to be employed in the service of a theory dealing explicitly with political matters as well. As will be seen, political theory in its proto-typical form even employs one of the same compound terms with regard to these principles: *μοναρχία* (‘rule of one’) for the principle of sole rule.<sup>330</sup>

It is time to recapitulate the main issues brought up in this section dealing with the connection between the historical hypothesis and the Constitutional Debate. What has emerged is that the Herodotean story of the debating Persian grandees, while being in a sense nearly fictional, still seems to have been designed to fit into the recollection of a historical situation, while all the time referring directly to a contemporary and perfectly real societal environment. The historical situation – the state of the Persian empire in the aftermath of

---

<sup>327</sup> See Vlastos 1964, 2-6. Cf. Lévy 2003, 120.

<sup>328</sup> See Triebel-Schubert 1984, 41-42.

<sup>329</sup> For the later preference of *ισομοιρία* with regard to similar contents as those found in the Alcmaeonidian fragment, see e.g. Galen, *De temp.* 1.534 (Kühn): ἀλλ’ ἡ τῆς τῶν τεττάρων κράσεων ἰσομοιρία τῆς εὐκρασίας αὐτοῦ καὶ τῆς ὑγείας, αἰτία. “Whereas the equability of the four temperaments is the cause of both its mildness and of its health”.

<sup>330</sup> With regard to the question of the origin of compound constitutional terms such as *μοναρχία* and *δημοκρατία* – where the first part refers to the subject and the second part to the object of government, and where the object of rule is understood to be strictly societal – two opposed explanatory models have been proposed. According to the first of these, *δημοκρατία* was first realized and terminologically determined before similarly constructed compound constitutional terms, such as *μοναρχία*, *ὀλιγαρχία* und *ἀριστοκρατία*, were coined. See Aalders 1968, 9. According to the opposite view, the other compound constitutional terms were in fact constructed on the model provided by *μοναρχία*. See Debrunner 1947, 16-20. The latter would also explain how *μοναρχία* could be transferred from theorizing of a cosmically naturalizing kind and directly become one of the terms denoting a main principle of societal rule in its own right, while the other compound terms referring to ordering principles for strictly societal rule do not appear before the democratic breakthrough and the concomitant beginnings of political theory proper.

usurpation or civil war – is of course worthy of interest. In connection with the investigation conducted here, however, it is the other reference point that must be prioritized. With a view to the Constitutional Debate, there can be no doubt about it: the main context of interest is the progression of political thinking and political theorizing in the Greek world before and after the breakthrough of democracy.

What we still ought to form a clearer picture of before turning to the actual reading of the Constitutional Debate, are the developments effectively enabling the first realized juxtaposing of different principles of distinct societal rules. These are the developments giving the impetus to the opposing of the alternative orders in just the way that still is recognized as the prototypically Western form of political theory.

### **Forming the hypothesis: cratistic thinking, internal critique and the heuristic assumption**

The two pillars in my explication of the progressions leading up to the Constitutional Debate are:

1. general argumentative development crystallizing in the enhanced application of internal critique within the sphere of political thought.
2. the emergence of a new type of political thought, “cratistic thinking”, by way of which it had become feasible to grasp and confront mutually exclusive orders, or principles for societal rules.

In the following, I would like to provide some background to these developments, which I conceive of as endowed with diachronic parallelism, and therewith proceed towards a more fully articulated version of the hypothesis, which forms the heuristic assumption of this chapter.

#### *Cratistic thinking*

Here, we can start by contrasting two major explanatory models with regard to the progression of political thinking through the ages, namely that of Quentin Skinner, dealing with early modernity, and that of Christian Meier, touching on the Classical Epoch of Ancient Greece.

As I understand it, Skinner’s *Foundations of Modern Political Thought* culminates in the equating of the rise of modernity in political thinking with the beginnings of a political theory determined by an abstract object of its own creation. This is the concept of the “state as an omnipotent yet impersonal power”.<sup>331</sup> Once this concept had been acquired it could no longer be the case that “political life itself sets the main problems for the political theorist” – unless in fact political life itself began to be decided by the concept of the

---

<sup>331</sup> See Skinner 1978a, 358.

State.<sup>332</sup> In Meier's main work, *The Greek Discovery of Politics*, we find a contrasting view of the political thinking of Classical Greece, understood to have operated on such a low a level of abstraction that the possibility of concepts being endowed with the power of determining either world or theory could not even be conceived of.

...the Greeks were unable, in their shaping of concepts, to extrapolate from the actions of individuals and communities. They could not, for instance, "subjectivize" concepts and view them as active entities generating their own effects (as we do when we speak of, say, "power" or "history," "democracy" or "capitalism").<sup>333</sup>

The above lines cannot be taken to imply that the Greeks of the Classical Age were unable to conceive of impersonal forces, such as "forces of necessity", as in fact giving shape to the world, or that they would not have personalized even their central political concepts, e.g., δημοκρατία – since it is quite clear that they did just these things.<sup>334</sup> Rather, Meier is here building directly on theories put forward by Reinhart Koselleck in the field of conceptual history (Germ.: *Begriffsgeschichte*) regarding an absence of "temporalization" – i.e., a horizon of dynamic future-oriented expectations – in the sphere of central politico-social concepts before the so-called *Sattelzeit* of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In Meier's understanding, the conceptual world of the Greeks was – in contrast to the post-*Sattelzeit* modern world, within which central socio-political concepts (e.g. 'communism') may in fact become factors of change themselves – "lagging behind events".<sup>335</sup> This would be tantamount to a notion of a climate

---

<sup>332</sup> See Skinner 1978, x. According to the *FMPT*, this step towards self-determination in the development of political theory occurred with Jean Bodin's analysis of "the state as an omnipotent yet impersonal power". See Skinner 1978a, 358. Later on, Skinner thought that it was Thomas Hobbes, "who first speaks systematically in the abstract and unmodulated tones of the modern theorist of the sovereign state". See Skinner 2002, 235.

<sup>333</sup> See Meier 1990, 178.

<sup>334</sup> For the conception of impersonal necessity, see Xen. *Mem.* 1.1.11: οὐδείς δὲ πώποτε Σωκράτους [...] λέγοντος ἤκουσεν [...] περὶ τῆς τῶν πάντων φύσεως [...] σκοπῶν ὅπως ὁ [...] κόσμος ἔχει καὶ τίσιν ἀνάγκαις ἕκαστα γίνεταί τῶν οὐρανίων. ("No one ever heard Socrates [...] speak [...] of the nature of everything [...] overlooking how the cosmic order has been established and by force of which necessities each thing in the heavens occurs"). For evidence of a cult dedicated to personalized δημοκρατία in 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Athens, see *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 1496, 131-2, 140-1. The cult may have been established after the restoration of democracy in 403 B.C.

<sup>335</sup> See Meier 1990, 185. Reinhart Koselleck's *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* is a lexicon dealing with central terms, denoting key German political and social concepts (*Leitbegriffe*). In it, a number of hypotheses are set forth concerning the transformation of social and political vocabularies during the "Saddle Period" (*Sattelzeit*) (1750-1850). According to the heuristic assumption of the lexicon, this transformation was so radical that many concepts acquired a completely new meaning – a meaning which then quite rapidly brought the concepts so close to our present understanding of the terms denoting them that we no longer require any translation of them: "Begrifflichkeit und Begreiflichkeit fallen seitdem für uns zusammen." See Koselleck 1972, XV. 'Temporalization' expresses one key aspect of this radical transformation of the world of the politico-social concepts. In essence, temporalization means that in

of collective ideas, within which societally relevant autonomous processes (e.g. ‘progress’) are generally not conceived of. As far as the political world is concerned, the other side of the coin becomes an exaggerated trust in “human capability to affect change”, and a sense of being in full control of political matters.<sup>336</sup>

Here, human power to affect change means nothing more or less than a power assumed by the political community to decide upon political matters in an effective way. The notion of exaggerated trust in oneself and in one’s community does not include a misconception with regard to human omnipotence: incontrollable forces may still obstruct the execution of any decision reached by the political community. Luckily, the execution of the second decision that the Athenians reached in their Mytilenian Debate of 427 B.C. was not prevented by such forces.<sup>337</sup>

All the same, according to Meier, this “de-temporalized” consciousness of ability was not always present in the Greek world. Rather it is supposed to have been first introduced into human societies with the “fulfilment of the process of politicization”. The fulfilment of this process, in turn, would have fallen into place by the beginning of the Classical Age, simultaneously with the creation of the first direct democracies in Ancient Greece. In Meier’s view, it was now that the idea of “one just order” – authoritative in an absolute sense and beyond the control of the people – was abandoned for the first time in history. The result was, as Meier thought, the creation of a new understanding of politics as transcending anything conceived of as superseding the human order.<sup>338</sup> A political thought, relying on a preconceived idea of a right order, would have been replaced, then, with a political thinking centred on the question “Who should rule?”, a question allowing for fundamentally different answers.<sup>339</sup> The completion of this separation of the political sphere – and the

---

an escalating scale the politico-social concepts become more dynamic than before. In other words, they begin in an ever-increasing extent to involve more of expectations than mere observations or experience. Thus, the *Sattelzeit* introduced many new concepts, and the meanings of quite a few of the old ones would be redressed. See Koselleck 1972, XVI-XVII. As a consequence of temporalization, then – at least to a much larger extent than before – the politico-social concepts switched roles: from being indicators of change, they became factors of change themselves.

<sup>336</sup> See Meier 1990, 178-179.

<sup>337</sup> See Thuc. 3.49.4: κατὰ τύχην δὲ πνεύματος οὐδενὸς ἐναντιωθέντος καὶ τῆς μὲν προτέρας νεῶς οὐ σπουδῆ πλεούσης ἐπὶ πρᾶγμα ἀλλόκοτον, ταύτης δὲ τοιοῦτω τρόπῳ ἐπειγομένης, ἡ μὲν ἔφθασε τοσοῦτον ὅσον Πάχητα ἀνεγνώκεναι τὸ νήφισμα καὶ μέλλειν δράσειν τὰ δεδογμένα, ἡ δ’ ὕστερα αὐτῆς ἐπικατάγεται καὶ διεκώλυσε μὴ διαφθεῖραι. παρὰ τοσοῦτον μὲν ἡ Μυτιλήνη ἦλθε κινδύνου. (“Fortunately, as there was no adverse wind and the first boat was in no hurry to sail against the unwelcome decision, although proceeding thus it still arrived first so that Paches had had time to read aloud the decision and was just about to execute it, when the second trireme followed on and could prevent the destruction. So close to danger came Mytilene).”

<sup>338</sup> See Meier 1983, 427-428.

<sup>339</sup> Cf. Meier 1983, 428: “Herrschaft meint dabei nicht die Führung und Leitung innerhalb einer Verfassung, sondern deren durchgreifende Prägung von einem Verfassungsträger her. In der Tatsache dieser Prägung besteht die Neuigkeit der Epoche.”

concomitant substitution of the question of the right order with a pondering over alternative rules – is described by Meier in terms of a “transition from the nomistic to the cratistic epoch of Greece”.<sup>340</sup>

When positing the way Meier does, a change in the political thought of Ancient Greece amounting to a more or less suddenly realized constitutionalization, one ought to be careful, though, not to be misinterpreted. It does seem reasonable to admit with Meier that in the Archaic Age of Ancient Greek, the elite-led political thought was typically set on the preconceived idea of a godly sanctioned, law-abiding, rightly distributed and, in general, good order – given expression to with such concepts as εὐνομία.<sup>341</sup> In truth, there must always have been some concepts – such as θέμις and θεσμός, ‘laid down ordinance’, or γέρας, ‘privilege’ – which the varying elite-rulers of the Greek Archaic Age could rely on so that the inherited order, the societal status quo, could be continuously reconsolidated.<sup>342</sup> At the same time, it may be surmised that already very early on in the history of the Greek world, or in the history of humanity in general, it had been widely recognized that there were different ways for human societies to answer to such godly sanctioned “horizons of legitimation”. In fact, the reliance on εὐνομία, or on similar concepts designed to maintain and/or modify the status quo, may never have corresponded to a view of the societal order as ideally ordered in one way rather than in another.<sup>343</sup> An

---

<sup>340</sup> “...Umbruch von der nomistischen zu der kratistischen Epoche Griechenlands.” See Meier 1983, 427.

<sup>341</sup> The first occurrence of εὐνομία is in Homer. See Hom. *Od.* 17.487. The noun and adjective forms probably derive from the verbal stem -νεμ- (*to distribute or to assign*) and not from νόμος, as the latter is not attested in Homer. In its intimate connection with societal (godly sanctioned) good order and tending to laws (written or unwritten), εὐνομία finds its first use in Solon. See esp. Sol. fr. 4 (26-38) (West). H. J. Erasmus wrote the definitive article on εὐνομία, wherein he concluded the following: “In Homer the verbal significance of the word is still prominent and it means something like ‘right distribution’ or ‘right apportionment’. In Solon... the derivation from the verbal stem is maintained, but after the passing of his laws and the establishment of ‘right distribution’ at Athens by the intervention of law, the word probably acquired the meaning of ‘right distribution by law’. In Herodotus the verbal significance of the word recedes into the background and the condition of good order resulting from ‘right distribution’ becomes more prominent. When Herodotus and Thucydides use the term in reference to Sparta, they use it in the sense of ‘good order by law’”. See Erasmus 1960, 63. Cf. Ostwald 1969: “in Solon [...] εὐνομία will also establish law-and-order in the administration of justice by straightening crooked judgments; as a social force, it will put an end to the works of arrogance, and as a political force, it will quell the works of faction and strife.” The use of εὐνομία as the ultimate legitimizing horizon for the maintaining and rectifying of the societal order is most evident in Solon fr. 4, (West). For the latter development after the cratistic turn of εὐνομία into a party-concept used by oligarchically minded groups, see Simonton 2017, 71.

<sup>342</sup> On godly sanctioned legitimation with reference to θέμις, see Hammer 2002, 117-121. On legitimation with reference to θεσμός, see Ostwald 1969, 12-19. With reference to γέρας, see Mondy 1980, 205.

<sup>343</sup> During a conference in Uppsala set in the autumn of 2016, I discussed the issue of the Archaic notion of one just order with Christian Meier himself. At that time, 87-year-old Meier was well aware of the necessity of conceiving of the archaic “one just order” as being realizable in very different ways.

example from Book I of the Histories of Herodotus dealing with recollections from the past Archaic Age may serve to illuminate this possibility.

The relevant passage deals with the Spartan foundational legend telling of how the first Lacedaemonian lawgiver, Lycurgus, showed the Spartans the way to εὐνομία – despite the fact that previously the Lacedaemonians had been “almost the ones worst ordered of all the Hellenes” (κακονομώτατοι ἦσαν σχεδὸν πάντων Ἑλλήνων).<sup>344</sup> There follows a report of what preceded Lycurgus’ introduction of his great set of laws, namely his visit to Delphi, where Pythia welcomed him as a fellow god: “I deem you a god, Lycurgus (σε θεὸν [...] ἔλπομαι, ὃ Λυκόοργε).<sup>345</sup> The passage singled out here for lengthier quotation is what follows immediately upon the retelling of the Pythian reaction at the sight of Lycurgus, namely Herodotus’ reasoning with regard to the question whether it would be likelier that Pythia also dictated the bulk of the Spartan constitution (κόσμον Σπαρτιήτησι) to Lycurgus, or if he perhaps established the laws himself:

οἱ μὲν δὴ τινες πρὸς τούτοισι λέγουσι καὶ φράσαι αὐτῷ τὴν Πυθίην τὸν νῦν κατεστεῶτα κόσμον Σπαρτιήτησι, ὡς δ’ αὐτοὶ Λακεδαιμόνιοι λέγουσι, Λυκοῦργον ἐπιτροπέυσαντα Λεωβώτῳ, ἀδελφιδέου μὲν ἐωυτοῦ, βασιλεύοντος δὲ Σπαρτιητέων, ἐκ Κρήτης ἀγαγέσθαι ταῦτα.<sup>346</sup>

Some say as well that Pythia dictated to him the order that the Spartans now obey (τὸν νῦν κατεστεῶτα κόσμον Σπαρτιήτησι), but as the Lacedaemonians themselves claim (ὡς δ’ αὐτοὶ Λακεδαιμόνιοι λέγουσι), it was rather the case that while Lycurgus was the trustee of Leobetos, the nephew of his and the king of Sparta, he had taken with him the laws (ἀγαγέσθαι ταῦτα) from Crete.

The above passage informs us that Herodotus and the Spartans who told him about their foundational story had agreed that in fact it was Lycurgus the man, and not the god he was greeted as, who dictated the laws that the Spartans came to obey – and which granted them εὐνομία instead of κακονομία.

The legend of Lycurgus as it is retold by Herodotus forms a retrospective anecdote relating a folktale, and as such the story cannot be employed as evidence neither for the constitutional history of Sparta nor for any other city-state. However, the fact that Herodotus retold the story the way he did should keep our eyes open to the possibility that, in the Greek world and beyond, the notion of the human origins of the laws with which the human order was kept in check had itself originated much earlier than the Greek Classical Age. At least it was the insight that humans had for quite some time known how to

---

<sup>344</sup> See Hdt. 1.65.2.

<sup>345</sup> See Hdt. 1.65.3.

<sup>346</sup> See Hdt. 1.65.4.

detail their order for themselves without assistance from a divine sphere that Herodotus seemed to be eager to transfer to his audience at this point in his narrative.

In truth, in Ancient Greece it may have been just the ultimate justification of the prevailing order, which throughout the Archaic Age and before was generally conceived of as resting in a sphere beyond the human. By means of such an effective authorization, however, any more revolutionary alteration of the societal status quo could certainly have been prevented:

τρέφονται γὰρ πάντες οἱ ἀνθρώπειοι νόμοι ὑπὸ ἑνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ.<sup>347</sup>

all laws of men are nourished by one of god.

If Meier is right, the traditional elite rule had to be turned on its head before theorizing reckoning with a variety of different realizable rules could begin. What was required, in other words, was a fulfilled turnover in the very principle of the societal order: the transition to people's rule had to be completed before it could even be imagined. In truth, *we should allow for the possibility that with the beginning of the Classical Age, something radically new did see the light of day in the political thinking of humankind*. It may have been now for the first time that different orders began to be conceived of as abstract, transferrable and, in a heightened sense, arbitrary.<sup>348</sup> This would be tantamount to *the earliest arising of the awareness that there are fundamentally different constitutional alternatives, and that these are essentially manmade and nothing beyond that*. Further, it means *the first occurrence of recognition that would make these alternatives mutually exclusive*.

This assumption has the merit of explaining how it could be first in the time of Herodotus – and precisely in the city-states of Ancient Greece, rather than in some resembling non-Greek city-states of e.g. Ancient Phoenicia – that a political theory was developed, within which the merits and disadvantages of different constitutional alternatives were weighted against each other.<sup>349</sup> What

---

<sup>347</sup> See Heraclit. 114 B (DK).

<sup>348</sup> Cf. Meier 1990, 11, Raaflaub 1993, 383-384, Allen 2011, 77 and Bleicken 1979, 164-165.

<sup>349</sup> Aristotle famously compared the πολιτεία of Carthage with those of Sparta and Cretan city-states, thereby praising the former highly: πολλὰ τῶν τεταγμένων ἔχει παρ' αὐτοῖς καλῶς ("many of their arrangements are good"). See Aristot. *Pol.* 2.1272b.24ff. However, the picture Aristotle thereafter draws of the working of the political system of Carthage is one, in which the great mass of citizens are held firmly in their place. In fact, Aristotle claims that they were effectively disenfranchised by oligarchic/aristocratic measures to safeguard control over the communal decision-making process. Nevertheless, Aristotle would maintain that elements of people's power were mixed into the constitution: τὰ μὲν εἰς δῆμον ἐκκλίνει ("some (arrangements) lean towards the people"). See *Pol.* 2.1273a. One may wonder, however, whether that real-world discussion regarding radically different alternative orders, which I have postulated as an enabling *sine qua non* for political theory proper, really had its counterpart in the Phoenician world, or anywhere else in the ancient world. See Meier 2009, 91. Cf. Gschnitzer 1993, 187.

finally effected the inauguration of Classical Political Theory may have been the conjoining of the “cratistic turn” with another decisive societal-intellectual tendency.

### *Internal critique*

For political theory proper to evolve, what may have been required was, in the first place, a certain discontinuity in political thought – the result of fulfilled democratization and the concomitant fresh consciousness of real-world political alternatives. As far as we know, this precondition was fulfilled for the first time in history in some city-states of Ancient Greece. What else was new in the newly formed Classical democracies, and without which a theory like the one reflected in Herodotus’ story about the debating Persian noblemen could not have sprung up?

Certainly, a higher number of necessary conditions for what G. E. R. Lloyd called “certain kinds of inquiry in philosophy and science, and the attack on certain traditional assumption” may be enumerated – and all of these same preconditions may also be assumed to have been necessary for political theory to evolve. Some of these the Ancient Greek world seems to have shared with neighbouring cultures in the Near East and Egypt, such as relative urbanization and wealth, heightened trade and colonization, and concomitant knowledge of differing cultures and customs, as well as a non-scribal-elite-exclusive literacy. Others, such as a range of societies forming small independent political entities, and a developing consciousness of law and constitutional matters, may have been specific characteristics of the Greek-speaking world.<sup>350</sup> To these preconditions enumerated by Lloyd may be added the introduction of a money economy, as far as this contributed to the undermining of the societal domination of the old nobility by means of a widening of the sphere of *commercium* – a process that resulted in constitutional arrangements based in landed property rather than in hereditary rights.<sup>351</sup>

What I aim at here, however, is an explanatory model seeking to transcend these necessary preconditions thus gaining a view of what I call an enabling *sine qua non*: something which may be seen to have worked on top of the other prerequisites and effectively given birth to the phenomena in question. The hypothesis of this chapter states that heightened impact of internal critique may be viewed as the second, albeit perchance temporally prior, decisive step in the development of political thinking towards political theory proper. The two decisive sequences in the effecting of political theory proper enumerated here are thus the cratistic turn in political thought and the acceleration of internal critique.

The rise of internal critique forms part of a larger picture of a general increase in the importance of persuasion in the Ancient Greek world. Thus, to

---

<sup>350</sup> Cf. Lloyd 1979, 234-246.

<sup>351</sup> See Gernet 1938, 286-287.



obtain a fuller understanding of the progressions leading to Classical Political Theory, we need to form at least a tentative picture of the argumentative development relating to the democratizing city-states of Greece of the late Archaic and early Classical Ages.

In truth, it does not take much of a historian to notice that in Greece the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. was not only a time of political upheaval, but also of general increase in the argumentative capabilities of the inhabitants of the Greek societies. These processes are often thought of as having worked together in tandem: if democracy is direct, then anything should be possible to put directly into question, and so persuasive argumentation was bound to grow more important in city-states affected by democratization.<sup>352</sup>

The above inference may rest on a somewhat exaggerated view of ancient democratic freedom, but it is true that Herodotus does not record any restrictions concerning the Greek citizens' freedom to think and speak freely (*παρησία/ισηγορία*).<sup>353</sup> This only holds true, though, for the sections where his story is on democracies, and where the fully politicized male citizens' "freedom to speak" is backed up by democratic institutions – whereas the Histories seem to imply that the exact opposite may have been the case, for example, in Ancient Persia.<sup>354</sup> With regard to the political institutions in the democracies of Ancient Greece, Herodotus actually stresses the power of persuasive argument, as he notices how easily the assemblies may be "deceived" (*διαβάλλειν*):

πολλοὺς γὰρ οἶκε εἶναι εὐπετέστερον διαβάλλειν ἢ ἓνα, εἰ Κλεομένηα μὲν τὸν Λακεδαιμόνιον μούνον οὐκ οἶός τε ἐγένετο διαβάλλειν, τρεῖς δὲ μυριάδας Ἀθηναίων ἐποίησε τοῦτο.<sup>355</sup>

Thus, it seems so much easier to deceive many than one (*πολλοὺς γὰρ οἶκε εἶναι εὐπετέστερον διαβάλλειν ἢ ἓνα*), as he (Aristagoras) proved

---

<sup>352</sup> See Netz 1999, 292. Cf. Lloyd 1979, 246ff.

<sup>353</sup> It is important to remember that like modern political freedoms, the ancient counterpart to freedom of speech, *παρησία* alternatively *ισηγορία*, must always have had its limits. During certain times, these limits may have been circumscribed more restrictively. "Freedom of speech" may even have vanished completely, then, since in any case *παρησία* is likely to have worked more like a citizen attribute than a negative right in any modern sense. See Carter 2004. In his magisterial *The Greeks and the Irrational*, E. R. Dodds located a conservative reaction against the anti-traditionalism of the "Greek Enlightenment" in Athens of the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. The result he conceived of as an "anti-intellectual witch-hunt", culminating in the trial against Socrates in 399 B.C. See Dodds 1951, 189. The anti-intellectualism of late 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Athens remains a disputed issue, however. See Hansen 1995, 20: "The trial of Socrates is, in fact, the only attested case of an Athenian having been put on trial for what he thought and said." Cf. Linderborg 2013, 82-86.

<sup>354</sup> See Hdt. 7.46.1. Cf. Hohti 1974, 19-20. In Xenophon's *Cyropaideia*, *ισηγορία* is pictured to have been obtained at the court of Cyrus' grandfather, Astyages, only when the king and his companions were so drunk that no one could remember his place. See *Xen.Cyr.* 1.3.10.

<sup>355</sup> See Hdt. 5.97.2.

unable to deceive Kleomenes the Spartan even though he was alone, whereas 30,000 Athenians he did deceive (τρεῖς δὲ μυριάδας Ἀθηναίων ἐποίησε τοῦτο).

Here, the deception is conducted by means of promises – i.e., by the promises of the Milesian leader Aristagoras to the assembly of the Athenians in and around 490 B.C.: “all the things they most urgently needed he promised them” (οὐδὲν ὃ τι οὐκ ὑπίσχετο οἷα κάρτα δεόμενος).<sup>356</sup> That in the vision of Herodotus, the deceiving could as easily have been effected by means of falsely re-assuring judgments, is implied elsewhere in the *Histories*:

ἄνδρὸς γὰρ ἑνὸς τοῦ ἀρίστου οὐδὲν ἄμεινον ἂν φανεῖη· γνώμη γὰρ τοιαύτη χρεώμενος ἐπιτροπεύει ἂν ἀμωμήτως τοῦ πλήθους.<sup>357</sup>

Nothing can be better than the one best man: by using the best judgment he tends blamelessly to the populace.

The masses may always be deceived, which is why they require a good leader.<sup>358</sup> The latter is what the Persian king Darius argues for, who in this section of the *Histories* is pleading the case for sole rule. However, with specific reference to the Athenian case, Herodotus, in his own voice, also praises ἰσηγορία as a universal prosperous condition – which, when realized among “free men”, allows weak societies to grow strong and rise to dominion.

δηλοῖ δὲ οὐ κατ’ ἐν μόνον ἀλλὰ πανταχῇ ἡ ἰσηγορία ὡς ἔστι χρῆμα σπουδαῖον, εἰ καὶ Ἀθηναῖοι τυραννευόμενοι μὲν οὐδαμῶν τῶν σφέας περιοικεόντων ἦσαν τὰ πολέμια ἀμείνους, ἀπαλλαχθέντες δὲ τυράννων μακρῶ πρώτοι ἐγένοντο.<sup>359</sup>

It is thus clear that not only in one respect but in all ways ‘freedom of speech’ is to be strived for (ἡ ἰσηγορία ὡς ἔστι χρῆμα σπουδαῖον), if the Athenians under tyranny could not defeat any of their neighbouring people in war, but after having been released from the tyrants they became by far the best (ἀπαλλαχθέντες δὲ τυράννων μακρῶ πρώτοι ἐγένοντο).

We do not know to what extent Herodotus can be trusted on these issues, but it does seem certain that major influences in the development and sophistication of argumentative techniques did stem from the speeches and pleas in the

---

<sup>356</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>357</sup> See Hdt. 3.82.2.

<sup>358</sup> Cf. Forsdyke 2006, 234-235.

<sup>359</sup> See Hdt. 5.78.

public courts and at the councils and assemblies.<sup>360</sup> What is likely as well is that this was an influence beginning to be noticed already long before the breakthrough of direct democracy took place anywhere in the Greek world, as there is evidence of public courts from at least a century earlier.<sup>361</sup>

However, the persuasive turn in the governing bodies and within judicial litigation may have been preceded, or at least spurred on, by what Lloyd referred to as the evolvement of “reasoned argument to a main line of inquiry” in Greek philosophy. This could have been the order of appearance, at least if we admit that it may have been the indirect proofs, or reductive arguments – i.e., arguments moving deductively from the assumption of the inconsequence of the contrary case – of the 6<sup>th</sup> century Greek philosophers that set in motion the more technical argumentative development in judicial litigation as well.<sup>362</sup> Let us have a look at an example from one of the pre-Socratic thinkers to gain a view of how their indirect proofs were constructed. The following fragment ascribed to Heraclitus gives evidence of a kind of argumentation that may be recast as an implicit *modus tollens* (A, because if not A then B, but not B, therefore A). This forms the most common type of indirect deductive reasoning in early Greek literature.<sup>363</sup>

πολυμαθίη νόον <ἔχειν> οὐ διδάσκει· Ἡσίοδον γὰρ ἂν ἐδίδαξε καὶ Πυθαγόρην αὐτίς τε Ξενοφάνεα καὶ Ἑκαταῖον.

Much-learning does not teach comprehension. Otherwise, it would have taught Pythagoras as well as Xenophanes and Hecataeus.

---

<sup>360</sup> A representative of a bolder generation of scholars even dared to claim that speech as a mean to argue a case had its origins in early attic oratory. See Solmsen 1931, 48ff. A more likely scenario is that certain types of technical arguments, for instance argumentation from likeness or probability, or εἰκός, originated here. See Hoffmann 2008. Cf. Lloyd 1966, 424. The origins of direct arguments proceeding from contra-factual suppositions have been linked with speeches delivered in the debates of the councils and assemblies. See Haible 1963, 235.

<sup>361</sup> See Aristot. *Ath. Pol.* 9.1.

<sup>362</sup> For the view that the rise of reasoned argument in philosophy was accomplished by the impact of the reductive arguments of the Eleatics – i.e., by Parmenides and his pupils Zeno and Melissus, see Lloyd 1979, 68-73. Cf. Szabó 1978, 245-250. For the view that the beginnings of “applied dialectics” in forensic rhetoric was made possible by the fundamental opposition between sensual experience and reasoned argument first established in early Greek philosophy, see Powell 2007, 2-4. For views tracing strict proof based on indirect reasoning further back in early Greek philosophy, see Kapp 1958, 19ff. and Waszkiewicz and Wojciechowska 1990, 92.

<sup>363</sup> Implicit reductive arguments, although not very strict ones, may be found already in Homer. See Hom. *Od.* 16.196-198. In fact, implicit reductive arguments of the *modus tollens* type (A, because if not A then B, but not B, therefore A) abound in early Greek literature. See Heraclit. B 40, 91, 110 and 127 and Xenophan. B 11,14, 15 and 23-26 (DK). Several scholars have also called attention to Herodotus’ employment of reductive argumentation: Haible 1963, Shimron 1988 and Thomas 2000. For an attempt at tracing the origins of *modus tollens* back to the so-called *chiasma*-type of epic narrative structure, present already in early Mesopotamian epic poetry, see Doxiadis 2010.

Keeping in mind the scheme for *modus tollens*, A, because if not A then B, but not B, therefore A, the implicit reductive argument of the fragment above can be made explicit in the following “chiasmic” way:

A: Much learning does not teach comprehension,

because if not A: Much learning teaches comprehension

then B: Pythagoras and Xenophanes and Hecataeus were taught,

but not B: Pythagoras and Xenophanes and Hecataeus were not taught,

wherefore A: Much learning does not teach comprehension.

The grammatical function that allows for the construction of the implicit *modus tollens* is in this case the coupling of two specific types of sentence syntaxes. The first of these expresses a simple negated statement through the negating word οὐ+statement, while the second sentence takes the form of an apodosis of a counterfactual conditional sentence, following from ἄν and the augmented indicative form ἐδίδαξε.

Now, when centred on normative judgments, reductive arguments may be regarded as a subdivision of a more general kind of argumentation. These kind of arguments are labelled ‘internal critique’ by Johan Tralau. A basic definition of internally critical arguments, in which their connection to reductive arguments is made evident, is as follows:

*Internal critique consists of arguments designed to refute statements by means of drawing out the conclusion of the statements, as well as showing that these consequences lead to inconsistencies in terms, which some actual or hypothetical interlocutors themselves can agree to. Moreover, since it is an argumentative technique of normative theory, that is, of theory dealing with value-laden questions concerning the ideal norms for society, laws and morals, internal critique typically takes as its object some normative principle or view.*

As educated persons usually note, this technique is a typical trait in the works of Plato. In fact, these kinds of arguments have featured in normative theory ever since and normative theories generally employ several different forms of internal critique.<sup>364</sup> For illuminating how already in pre-Platonic Greece, internal critique was widely in use in connection with regular, or more or less regular, argumentation with politico-ethical content I have singled out three passages from the *Histories* of Herodotus.

---

<sup>364</sup> Cf. Tralau 2012, 37-63.

In the first of these is depicted a discussion between the Samian tyrant Maeandrius and his imprisoned brother Charilaus. The discussion takes place in Book III of Herodotus. The internal critique in the passage is of a type, which can be recast as detection of an inconsistency between an implicit normative principle and an explicit normative view.

Μαιανδρίῳ δὲ τῷ τυράννῳ ἦν ἀδελφεὸς ὑπομαργότερος, τῷ οὖνομα ἦν Χαρίλεως· οὗτος ὃ τι δὴ ἐξαμαρτῶν ἐν γοργύρῃ ἐδέδετο· καὶ δὴ τότε ἐπακούσας τε τὰ πρησόμενα καὶ διακύψας διὰ τῆς γοργύρης, ὡς εἶδε τοὺς Πέρσας εἰρηνάϊως κατημένους, ἐβόα τε καὶ ἔφη λέγων Μαιανδρίῳ θέλεις ἐλθεῖν ἐς λόγους. ἐπακούσας δὲ ὁ Μαιάνδριος λύσαντας αὐτὸν ἐκέλευε ἄγειν παρ' ἐωυτόν. ὡς δὲ ἄχθη τάχιστα, λοιδορέων τε καὶ κακίζων μιν ἀνέπειθε ἐπιθέσθαι τοῖσι Πέρσησι, λέγων τοιάδε· ἐμὲ μὲν, ὃ κάκιστε ἀνδρῶν, ἐόντα σεαυτοῦ ἀδελφεὸν καὶ ἀδικήσαντα οὐδὲν ἄξιον δεσμοῦ δήσας γοργύρης ἠξίωσας, ὀρέων δὲ τοὺς Πέρσας ἐκβάλλοντάς τέ σε καὶ ἄνοικον ποιέοντας οὐ τολμᾶς τίσασθαι, οὕτω δὴ τι ἐόντας εὐπετέας χειρωθῆναι· ἀλλ' εἴ τοι σὺ σφέας καταρρώδηκας, ἐμοὶ δὸς τοὺς ἐπικούρους, καὶ σφεας ἐγὼ τιμωρήσομαι τῆς ἐνθάδε ἀπίξιος· αὐτὸν δὲ σε ἐκπέμψαι ἐκ τῆς νήσου ἔτοιμος εἰμί. ταῦτα δὲ ἔλεξε ὁ Χαρίλεως.

Maeandrius the tyrant had a brother called Charilaus who was half-insane and who had been imprisoned in a dungeon for some offence or other. Now, on the occasion in question he heard the activity and he leaned out of his dungeon to see what was going on. When he caught sight of the Persians peaceably sitting there, he yelled out that he wanted to have a word with Maeandrius. Maeandrius heard his cries and gave instructions for him to be released and brought to him. As soon as Charilaus was brought in, he laid into his brother and called him names, in an attempt to persuade him to attack the Persians. ‘You complete and utter coward! he said. ‘You have me, your own brother thrown into a dungeon for some trivial misdemeanour which does not warrant imprisonment, while you let the Persians get away with expelling you from your home and country without having the guts to make them pay for it. It’s not as if it would be at all difficult to overcome them. If you’re so afraid of them, give me your mercenaries, and I will make them regret ever having come here. And I’d be happy to get you safely off the island.’ This is what he said.

The background to this dispute, involving the Samian tyrant Maeandrius and his brother Charilaus, is Maeandrius’ willingness to surrender Samos without resistance to the invading Persians, if only they allow him to escape. This lethargy, the imprisoned Charilaus regards as such an outrage that he chooses to

address Maeandrius in the gravest of manners: ὦ κάκιστε ἀνδρῶν (“you worst of men”). It is after this outburst that he begins scrutinizing his brother’s reasoning, using in this connection what may be identified as a kind of internal critique taking the form of an uncovering of an inconsistency between an implicit normative principle and an explicit normative view.<sup>365</sup> The principle in question pertains to Maeandrius’ approval of physical force, assumed by Charilaus to be implicit in the enforced act of imprisonment he has faced at the hands of his brother.

ἐμὲ μὲν, ὦ κάκιστε ἀνδρῶν, ἐόντα σεωυτοῦ ἀδελφεὸν καὶ ἀδικήσαντα οὐδὲν ἄξιον δεσμοῦ δῆσας γοργύρης ἠξίωσας...<sup>366</sup>

Me, you worst of men, being your own brother and having committed no crime worthy of imprisonment you deem worthy of being cast in a dungeon.

The explicit normative view, in its turn, may be traced to Maeandrius’ unwillingness to take up arms against the Persians. How can Maeandrius keep his own brother in prison, him who has not even done any harm, while remaining passive in relation to the Persians – even though the latter threaten to throw Maeandrius out of his own country, and could moreover be easily beaten?

ὄρέων δὲ τοὺς Πέρσας ἐκβάλλοντάς τέ σε καὶ ἄνοικον ποιέοντας οὐ τολμᾶς τίσασθαι, οὕτω δὴ τι ἐόντας εὐπετέας χειρωθῆναι.<sup>367</sup>

Although seeing the Persians throwing you out from your own country and making you homeless you do not dare to pay them back, even though they are so easily subdued.

This was the internal critique Charilaus applied in the argument he used against his brother, the no-good heir to the tyranny of Polycrates.

The second passage exemplifying internal critique is found in Book IV of Herodotus at the place where the Ionian leaders in and around 495 B.C. are discussing the prospect of a revolt against their Persian master, king Darius. In the passage, internal critique of a kind that may be recast as a kind of “questioning of empirical premises” can be detected.<sup>368</sup>

Μιλτιάδεω μὲν τοῦ Ἀθηναίου, στρατηγέοντος καὶ τυραννεύοντος Χερσονησιτέων τῶν ἐν Ἑλλησπόντῳ, ἦν γνώμη πείθεσθαι Σκύθησι καὶ

<sup>365</sup> See Tralau 2012, 46-48.

<sup>366</sup> See Hdt. 3.145.2.

<sup>367</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>368</sup> Cf. Tralau 2012, 48-52.

ἐλευθεροῦν Ἰωνίην, Ἰστιαίου δὲ τοῦ Μιλησίου ἐναντίη ταύτη, λέγοντος ὡς νῦν μὲν διὰ Δαρεῖον ἕκαστος αὐτῶν τυραννεύει πόλιος, τῆς Δαρείου δὲ δυνάμιος κατααιρεθείσης οὔτε αὐτὸς Μιλησίον οἶος τε ἔσσεσθαι ἄρχειν οὔτε ἄλλον οὐδένα οὐδαμῶν· βουλήσεσθαι γὰρ ἐκάστην τῶν πολίων δημοκρατέεσθαι μᾶλλον ἢ τυραννεύεσθαι.<sup>369</sup>

Miltiades of Athens, the tyrant of the Hellespontine Chersonese, who was one of the military commanders, was of the opinion that they should do as the Scythians were suggesting and free Ionia from Persian rule. Histiaeus of Miletus, however, took the opposite line; he argued that every one of them owed his position as tyrant of his community to Darius, and that if Darius were to fall, he would not be able to rule Miletus and none of them would remain in power either, because there was not one of their communities which would not prefer democracy to tyranny.

In this politico-ethical argument, Histiaeus may be understood to grant Miltiades of Athens the justification of the principle of freedom the latter adheres to:

Μιλτιάδεω μὲν τοῦ Ἀθηναίου [...] ἦν γνώμη [...] ἐλευθεροῦν Ἰωνίην...<sup>370</sup>

Miltiades the Athenian had the opinion that Ionia should be set free.

Interestingly, the way Histiaeus then opposes the proposal of Miltiades is by way of an internal critique showing how the “empirical premise” of his proposal, namely that revolt from Persia would enhance freedom, does not stand a chance in the real world. However, this questioning of the empirical premise of Histiaeus’ proposal does not proceed from the expected failure of the revolt, but rather from the assumption that the freedom from outside despotic rule that the revolt would effect would lead to lessened prospects for the autocratic freedom of the Ionian tyrants: for Miltiades ‘freedom’ represents the tyrant’s “freedom to rule”:

Ἰστιαίου δὲ τοῦ Μιλησίου ἐναντίη ταύτη, λέγοντος [...] οὔτε αὐτὸς Μιλησίον οἶος τε ἔσσεσθαι ἄρχειν οὔτε ἄλλον οὐδένα οὐδαμῶν...

Histiaeus of Miletus opposed this, saying that neither would he himself then be able to rule Miletos nor anyone else anywhere else...

<sup>369</sup> See Hdt. 4.137.1-2. Transl. Waterfield.

<sup>370</sup> See Hdt. 4.137.1.

The final type of Herodotean internal critique explicated here comes in the form of another example taken from Book III in Herodotus. Here, the internal critique assumes a shape where a lacking clarity with regard to the criticized subject's application of principles is displayed.<sup>371</sup> In the passage, the tyrant of Corinth, Periander, reproaches his son, Lycophron, for staying loyal to his mother, whom Periander had slain. The quote takes up the story in the aftermath of Periander's proposal of an edict that no one was to be allowed to offer his runaway son housing.

τετάρτη δὲ ἡμέρη ἰδὼν μιν ὁ Περίανδρος ἀλουσίησι τε καὶ ἀσιτίησι συμπεπτωκότα οἰκτεῖρε· ὑπεῖς δὲ τῆς ὀργῆς ἤε ἄσσον καὶ ἔλεγε· ὦ παῖ, κότερα τούτων αἰρετώτερα ἐστί, ταῦτα τὸ νῦν ἔχων πρήσσεις, ἢ τὴν τυραννίδα καὶ <τὰ> ἀγαθὰ τὰ νῦν ἐγὼ ἔχω, ταῦτα ἐόντα τῷ πατρὶ ἐπιτήδεον παραλαμβάνειν; ὃς ἐὼν ἐμός τε παῖς καὶ Κορίνθου τῆς εὐδαίμονος βασιλεὺς ἀλήτην βίον εἴλεω, ἀντιστατέων τε καὶ ὀργῆς χρεώμενος ἐς τὸν σε ἥκιστα ἐχρῆν.<sup>372</sup>

Three days after the edict, Periander saw him in his unwashed, starving state and felt sorry for him. Letting his anger go, he went over to his son and said, 'Son, what would you rather do? You can either carry on with what you're doing now or become reconciled with me, your father, and inherit my kingdom and all the advantages of my position. You are my son and a member of the prosperous city of Corinth, but you have chosen to live like a tramp, because you are feeling hostility and anger towards me, when I am the last person in the world you ought to treat this way.

As David Asheri has noted, the main conflict in this passage is that between equity and purely formal justice.<sup>373</sup> Essentially, Periander is confronting his son with the charge that if the principle of justice he is adhering to is causing him as much pain as it does now, he should cease from trying to apply it completely. There is, according to Periander, no such principle as can justify the inequity of the son of a tyrant choosing the life of a vagabond, since this is simply outrageous:

ἐὼν ἐμός τε παῖς καὶ Κορίνθου τῆς εὐδαίμονος βασιλεὺς ἀλήτην βίον εἴλεω.

Being my son and the king of fortunate Corinth, you have chosen the life of a wanderer.

---

<sup>371</sup> See Tralau 2012, 53-55.

<sup>372</sup> See Hdt. 3.52.3-4. Transl. Waterfield.

<sup>373</sup> See Asheri & al. 2007, 449.



As may be seen, examples of argumentative techniques that may be plausibly recast as different types of internal critique are not difficult to find in the Herodotean corpus – parts of which at least may have been composed as early as the 450s B.C.<sup>374</sup> It would be tempting, then, to assume that this kind of ability to put normative principles and views into question, as well as weigh them against each other and against the subjects adhering to them, forms a kind of human universal. Certainly, we ourselves take the possibility of applying this kind of rationale to normative questions for granted, and often employ similar types of reasoning, albeit in differing circumstances, in our own lives.

However, the truth of the matter is that the idea that internal critique would form an anthropological constant stands against evidence. The Uppsala Project led by Johan Tralau, of which the present investigation forms a part, aims at an improved understanding of the development of internally critical arguments and their impact on progressions in normative theory and political philosophy. So far, the systematic inquiries into Archaic Greek sources conducted by the project members have not been able to detect clear-cut examples of internal critique earlier than in some of the earliest tragedies. Johan Tralau has worked, e.g., with Sophocles' *Antigone* (440s B.C.) and has been able to show convincingly that the play evidences a meticulously executed questioning of the self-contradictory way *Antigone* applies the “same womb principle” – on which is based her decision to bury her brother Polynices in defiance of the edict of Creon – in relation to her sister Ismene.<sup>375</sup> In fact, as Tralau has shown, clear-cut examples of internal critique can be detected already in Aeschylus' *Oresteia* (ca. 460 B.C.) – and particularly towards the end of the *Eumenides* when the goddesses of revenge, the Erinyes, begin to confront Apollo. Here, the Erinyes ascribe an inconsistency between a normative principle defended by Apollo with reference to the will of Zeus, namely that one should honour one's noble father higher than one's mother, and the normative view instantiated earlier in the mythical universe and consisting in Zeus murdering his own father.<sup>376</sup> In truth, the inconsistency between the normative principle proclaimed by Apollo and the normative view instantiated in the act of Zeus is brought out by the Erinyes in what amounts to the earliest explicit ascription of moral self-opposition in extant Greek literature:

πῶς ταῦτα τούτοις οὐκ ἐναντίως λέγεις;<sup>377</sup>

<sup>374</sup> Herodotus was born sometime between 490 and 480 B.C. See Dion. Hal. *Thuc.* 5.

<sup>375</sup> See Tralau 2005, esp. 392-396. At the basis of the self-destruction of the Antigonean friendship/enmity principle in her dealings with Ismene may lie a sororal conspiracy. See Honig 2013, 169-170.

<sup>376</sup> See Tralau 2018. Cf. Aesch. *Eum.* 607-643.

<sup>377</sup> See Aesch. *Eum.* 642. Transl. Tralau. This does not amount to an explicit principle of non-contradiction, and the latter is attested first in the works of Aristotle. See e.g. Aristot. *Met.* 1005b.19-20: τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ ἅμα ὑπάρχειν τε καὶ μὴ ὑπάρχειν ἀδύνατον τῷ αὐτῷ καὶ κατὰ τὸ αὐτό (“...the same thing cannot be the case and not be the case at the same time with regard to the same thing and in the same respect...”). Interestingly, the principle of non-contradiction

How could you not contradict this in [saying] that?

Now, these kinds of definitive confrontations and refutations with regard to subjects' adhering to and applying of normative principles and views do not seem to occur in any of the Archaic Greek sources. Perhaps the closest thing to Homeric internal critique may be detected in one of the final scenes of the *Iliad* – namely when Priam confronts Achilles in order to receive from him for burial the body of his dead son Hector. What characterizes Priam's moral plea here, however, appears not to be so much internal critique of the principles and views underlying Achilles' actions – e.g., the molesting of Hector's dead body – but rather the holding out in front of Achilles of the possibility of fundamentally changing his moral point of view. What if Achilles would stop thinking about Priam as the father of his most hated enemy and would instead recognize in him the mourning father of a son that could, and would, be Achilles' own father? This seems to form the kernel in Priam's request. However, the inner moral consistency of the views and principles adhered to by Achilles is never put directly into question by Priam.<sup>378</sup> In truth, nothing of the sort transpires in Hesiod either, not even in his famous dictum to the gift-devouring kings that they should keep steadfastly away from crooked judgments. Here, the societally and morally privileged position of the βασιλεῖς is in fact presupposed, since the judicial-religious rulers are depicted as being liable merely to the norms applying particularly to their position in the social hierarchy – although Hesiod of course reproaches them for not living up to the ideal of rightful kings.<sup>379</sup> Similarly with Archaic poetry apart from the epics: here as well any types of argument that could plausibly be recast as internal critique seem

---

may have been prefigured specifically in that part of the Greek thought of the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C., which was occupied with exploring questions of contrariety and contradiction, and which for some reason was centered particularly on the supposed incommensurability between madness and wisdom. The possibility of this prefiguring is borne out when considering the parallels between passages expounding on this contradistinction in Gorgias' *Palamedes* on the one hand, and in the *δισσοὶ λόγοι* on the other hand. See Gorg. *Pal.* 25-26 and DL 5. The prefiguring of the law of non-contradiction in the rhetorical treatises of the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. has been expounded on by Dimitrios Iordanoglou in one of his contributions to the Uppsala Project. See Iordanoglou & Lindqvist 2018, 11-21. Further evidence of the centrality of the opposition between wisdom and madness for the ensuing pronouncement of the law of non-contradiction may be gathered from a passage in Herodotus in which the archetypically insane king Cambyses accuses his fellow Persians of having uttered something untrue. This would be so, according to the Cambysean logic, since the Persians had just claimed that he was “mad and not in his senses” (παραφρονέειν καὶ οὐκ εἶναι νοήμονα), although previously they had claimed that he was a better man than his father, the notoriously wise Cyrus the Great. See Hdt. 3.34.2-3. Who is the joke on here?

<sup>378</sup> See Hom. *Il.* 24.485-494. Cf. Hom. *Il.* 16.444-447, for a similar request of an admitting of an alternative moral perspective.

<sup>379</sup> See Hes. *WD.* 263-264. Cf. *WD.* 225-227: οἱ δὲ δίκας ξείνοισι καὶ ἐνδήμοισι διδοῦσιν, ἰθείας καὶ μὴ τι παρεκβαίνουσι δικαίου, τοῖσι τέθηλε πόλις, λαοὶ δ' ἀνθεῦσιν ἐν αὐτῇ (“those (kings) who give straight judgments (δίκας ἰθείας) in like manner to strangers and to local people, and do not go beyond justice, their city will grow and the people will flourish”).

to be markedly absent, and they are difficult to come by in the bulk of pre-Socratic philosophy as well – notwithstanding the work of Herodotus.<sup>380</sup>

As the systematic inquiry conducted by the Uppsala project into the preserved Greek literature from the Archaic and early Classical Ages only just begins to be completed, the history of the origins of internal critique has not yet been written. Based on what has been revealed so far, however, the following starting point seems reasonable. *Normative argumentation of an internally critical kind presupposes a realized notion of moral equality applying to an in-group in a way, which makes everyone belonging to that group not only liable to be judged on account of some shared moral conception, but in fact directly accountable with regard to the same moral principles and views.*<sup>381</sup> Because the Archaic sources bear witness to such a conspicuous lack of internal critique, it can only be assumed that for most of that age and before, the moral enclosure of the Greek world was generally fixed in ways that did not allow for the creation of a space for conditional (in-group-specific) moral equality and accountability.

Reconsidering the examples from the Herodotean corpus cited above, we may note that the establishment of such a space is exactly what takes place in the text of the passages. Charilaus – although thought of as insane and therefore kept in prison – belongs to the same tyrant family as his tyrant brother Maeandrius, and thus enjoys the freedom to confront his brother as his equal. In the assembly of the Ionian tyrants, a similar equality is naturally supposed to have applied and the creation in the Herodotean text of the same type of equality in the context of the reproachments directed by Periander against his son Lycophron is underlined by the fact that Periander – himself a tyrant – gives Lycophron the title ‘king’ (βασιλεύς).

Thus, the earliest examples of normative arguments of an internally critical kind may be detected in the texts of Classical Greek literature (in the early tragedies and the *Histories* of Herodotus) that may be dated to the decades just after the breakthrough of δημοκρατία (an event, which I have argued took place in Athens in and around 462 B.C.). It would certainly be tempting, then, to fix the *terminus post quem* for the origins of internal critique in the real-world setting of the political life of the democratized Ancient Greek city-states – i.e., to see these origins as affected by the creation of broadest possible male civic equality realized with the turn to direct democracy. However, this would be pushing the evidence, or lack of evidence, too far, since there may be no way we can determine that the broad instances of elite rule, the isonomies that preceded the full-scale direct democracies, did not already possess the necessary societal setting in the form of equal politico-moral accountability within a closed in-group of fully enfranchised male citizens. In fact, I think that we

---

<sup>380</sup> For the characterization of Herodotus as “the only Pre-Socratic writer preserved in full”, see Myres 1953, 43.

<sup>381</sup> Cf. Tralau 2018a.

may assume with full certainty only that in the historical context of the early Archaic Age, namely under the highly exclusive judicial-religious rule of the βασιλεῖς, such a conditional political and moral equality can never have been obtained. It may be, though, that we will never be able to determine more accurately when in the Greek cultural sphere the desacralization of societal hierarchies and the process of politicization of broader and broader sections of the citizen-body had brought to life the necessary precondition of conditional in-group equality and moral accountability.

Therefore, I conclude merely that the fulfilled democratization witnessed in some of the Greek city-states may be assumed to form a threshold for intensified application of internal critique. The breakthrough of δημοκρατία brought to life the “strong principle of equality” within the civic community as it made all enfranchised male citizens liable to be directly accountable with regard to the same moral standards, or the same normative views and principles, regardless of societal status.<sup>382</sup> In the above-presented Herodotean passages, we may actually witness how this citizen equality and accountability is projected onto the representation of the in-groups formed by tyrants and their peers – i.e., onto the Greek recollection of their Archaic past. The next object is to determine what the impact of the accumulation of internal critique, arguably made possible by the earliest realization of full-scale direct democracy, may have been as to the question of the beginnings of political theory.

#### *Heuristic assumption*

The second leg of the heuristic assumption that forms the working hypothesis of this chapter is that internal critique, from being occasionally used in everyday politico-ethical discussions, became a dominant feature of political thinking and the political and moral debates in Greece towards the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. The presumption is that it is with the creation of full-scale direct democracies that internal critique moves to the very core of the new cratistic way of conceiving of politics. Thus, the theory concerning the development of political thinking towards political theory proper proposed in this chapter is of a double nature. On the one hand, it postulates a fulfilled politicization in the form of a cratistic turn in political thinking, leading to alternative – although still fixed (“de-temporalized”) – orders becoming for the first time relevantly opposed. On the other hand, it assumes that the political thinking surrounding these alternative principles for societal rules were launched by means of internal critique, thus mutating into political theory.

Now, if the Constitutional Debate – besides being the earliest preserved version of a debate arguing for and against different constitutional alternatives – would surface as the first extant example of a debate combining internal critique with cratistic thinking, then the Herodotean debate could certainly be

---

<sup>382</sup> For the notion of the “strong principle of equality” and how it was applied with regard to the in-group of male citizens in the Ancient Athenian democracy, see Morris 1996, 23-24.

equated with the beginnings of Classical Political Theory. This would only be a valid equation, however, if the conceptual assumption regarding what constitutes political theory proper, and what does not, is accepted. If someone were to deny that mutual acceptance and application of norms for reasoning, regarding a range of theoretically opposed, but respectively applicable, alternatives, is necessary for two people to be involved in a proper theoretical discussion surrounding these alternatives, then neither will that someone be persuaded by my way of conceiving of the beginnings of political theory.<sup>383</sup> Conversely, if shared, my understanding of what political theory is grows plausibly into an acceptance of the Constitutional Debate as its first real representative, as long as it is made evident that internal critique and cratistic political thinking indeed merged here.

The latter objective may be accomplished, however, only by way of separating oneself from the sphere of theoretical constructions, and by beginning an overview of the actual arguments contained in the debate. In order to do this, it will be convenient to look at the argumentation employed by each participant separately.

### **Otanes for democracy, Megabyzus for oligarchy and Darius for monarchy**

The Persian grandee instigating the debate is Otanes, who pleads for democracy.

#### *Otanes for democracy*

In Herodotus' narrative, Otanes is the one who first begins to suspect the new king, the "false Smerdis", of being a pretender and not truly the brother of the deceased king Cambyses. Thereafter Otanes' daughter Phaidyme, one of the new king's wives, manages to confirm the suspicion by feeling the ears of her husband and finding out that he is lacking them. In what follows, the seven

---

<sup>383</sup> One may ponder, e.g., on the political thinking over constitutional matters evidenced already in the surviving Greek law codes of the Archaic Age, such as that regarding the role of the κόσμος in the earliest surviving Greek inscriptional code. The code stems from Dreros on Crete and may be dated to approximately to 550 B.C. Here, it is stated, *inter alia*, that a man shall not be allowed to act as a κόσμος twice within a period of ten years (δέκα φετίον τὸν ἄφτὸν μὴ κόσμεν) and that this has been decided by the city-state (ἄδε ἔφαδε πόλι). We do not know much either of the duties of the κόσμος nor of the constitution of the citizen body in Dreros at the time, but the fact that such care was taken to ensure the circulation of the office indicates that the system of political and judicial institutions on Crete must have been quite elaborate in the Archaic Age. The roles of the governing bodies must also have been surrounded by much discussion among citizens with political rights. How can it be assumed, then, that political theory originated in the Greek-speaking world first some hundred years later? This assumption only makes sense if one presumes the necessity of experienced real-world antithetical alternatives, and a reasoned normative discussion surrounding these alternatives, as the starting ground for political theory proper. The old principle had to be turned on its head, only then could any given order be put into question. For the full text of the Dreros-code, discussion and further references, see Gagarin 1986, 81-82.

conspirators against the usurpation – one of whom is Otanes – manage to kill the false Smerdis. On the fifth day after the killing, the seven gather, and Otanes and two of his co-conspirators, Megabyzus and the future king Darius, embark upon the debate concerning the most suitable form of government.<sup>384</sup>

Although there are three participants to the debate, several scholars have identified the actual conflict of the discussion as being that between democracy and monarchy.<sup>385</sup> At the basis of the dominant parts played by democracy and monarchy in the debate, there may lie a reminiscence of an original conflict between tyranny and broadened elite rule.<sup>386</sup> It is unlikely, however, that that opposition was ever expounded on in political theorizing during the Archaic Age, since as I showed earlier in this chapter, the pre-Classical sources bear no traces of kingly or tyrannical rule as of yet being conceived of as a distinct principle of societal rule.

All the same, a closer look at the argumentation of Otanes reveals that in fact he is aiming his critique only at monarchy.

ἡμέων μούναρχον μηκέτι γενέσθαι.<sup>387</sup>

from us a king shall never come.

μόναρχος, ‘king’, with its literal meaning of ‘sole ruler’, may be the earliest of the three constitutional terms under discussion in the debate.<sup>388</sup> As such, it is also the first conglomerate term in which the first part refers to the subject instead of the object of government. Its use here as a principle of societal rule in its own right to be judged over against other principles indicates the cratic turn in political thinking.

οὔτε γὰρ ἡδὺ οὔτε ἀγαθόν. εἶδετε [...] Καμβύσεω ὕβριω [...] μετεσχήκατε δὲ καὶ τῆς τοῦ Μάγου ὕβριος.<sup>389</sup>

neither pleasant nor good [...] you know [...] the insolence of Camby-ses [...] and you have had your share also of the insolence of the Magi.

Otanes’ first argument against monarchy boils down to a simple reminder, based on the common experience of a recent past.

---

<sup>384</sup> See Hdt. 3.69-80.

<sup>385</sup> See Apffel 1958, 71-72. Cf. Pelling 2002, 39-42.

<sup>386</sup> See Ehrenberg 1950, 526.

<sup>387</sup> See Hdt. 3.80.2.

<sup>388</sup> See Theognid. 52 and Sol. 9.3 (West).

<sup>389</sup> See Hdt. 3.80.2.

καὶ γὰρ ἂν τὸν ἄριστον ἀνδρῶν πάντων [...] ἐγγίνεται μὲν γὰρ οἱ ὕβρις  
ὑπὸ τῶν παρεόντων ἀγαθῶν, φθόνος δὲ ἀρχῆθεν ἐμφύεται ἀνθρώπῳ.<sup>390</sup>

even if he (the sole ruler) were the best man of all [...] in him would  
come insolence from the goods in his surroundings, and malice has  
grown into man from the beginning.

In order to also cover the hypothetical situation of the rule of the best man, the  
preceding argument based on the experience of past factual rulers is general-  
ized. Whenever there is one man's rule, whether he would be the best or the  
worst of men, malice and insolence will always follow him in his rule, and  
therefore bad government.

ἀναρμοστότατον δὲ πάντων· ἦν τε γὰρ αὐτὸν μετρίως θωμάζης, ἄχθεται  
ὄτι οὐ κάρτα θεραπεύεται, ἦν τε θεραπεύῃ τις κάρτα, ἄχθεται ἅτε  
θωπί.<sup>391</sup>

He is the one least fitting of them all. If you admire him moderately, he  
will get angered because you do not admire him very much, whereas if  
someone admires him very much, he will get angered as if flattered.

To the inescapable malice and insolence of the sole ruler is added inevitable  
inconsequence. Here, it is unclear if the superlative form of ἀνάρμοστος ('not  
fitting') applies only to the judgments of the sole ruler, or whether the incon-  
sequence may be taken to consist in a more thorough "fault of character" –  
which would then be thought of by Otanes to have grown into the nature of  
whoever is king, like he thought ὕβρις had. All the same, it will soon become  
clear that what stands under attack in Otanes' speech are truly the worst sides  
of monarchy – a preoccupation that makes sense, though, in light of the dark  
view of the empire's recent past, which Otanes expressed earlier.<sup>392</sup>

νόμαιά τε κινέει πάτρια καὶ βιάται γυναῖκας κτείνει τε ἀκρίτους.<sup>393</sup>

the ancestral ways he upsets and he forces himself on women and he  
kills indiscriminately.

The worst sides of the sole man's rule concretize, and the argument against  
monarchy ends.

---

<sup>390</sup> See Hdt. 3.80.3.

<sup>391</sup> See Hdt. 3.80.5.

<sup>392</sup> Cf. Apffel 1958, 57.

<sup>393</sup> See Hdt. 3.80.5.

πλήθος δὲ ἄρχον [...] οὖνομα πάντων κάλλιστον ἔχει, ἰσονομίην.

people's rule [...] has the most beautiful name, isonomy.<sup>394</sup>

It is clear that ἰσονομία here does not carry its original political sense through direct reference to a constitutional order consisting in some type of broadened elite rule, but functions rather as a watchword designating the supposed fairness and equality of the democratic, or proto-democratic, regime.<sup>395</sup> It may be, or it may be not, that πλήθος ἄρχον functions as a stand-in for δημοκρατία, which has its earliest occurrence elsewhere in the *Histories*.<sup>396</sup> All the same, following the argumentation against monarchy, the rule of the many is thrown into the face of the reader as representing, plainly, the best choice for constitution – whether or not πλήθος ἄρχον can be connected to the fully democratized governmental system of post-462 B.C. Athens, to which at least the term δημοκρατία was applied.<sup>397</sup>

Thus, the overview of Otanes' speech in favour of democracy has ended. In terms of internal critique, we may detect a questioning of empirical premises in Otanes' pleading against one good man's rule. The shared experience of kingly insolence and malice provides Otanes with the opportunity of disclaiming the argument in favour of monarchy by denying the very possibility of a virtuous ruler.<sup>398</sup> Actually, the main effect of Otanes' speech rests on the effort of painting such an abominable picture of monarchy that it must be abhorred. By way of automatically assuming that democracy should take its place, Otanes fails, however, to take into account a third path, a τρίτος πλοῦς. Nevertheless, this alternative is presented directly afterwards, by Megabyzus.

---

<sup>394</sup> See Hdt. 3.80.6:

<sup>395</sup> Cf. Vlastos 1964, 2-6.

<sup>396</sup> For the earliest occurrence of δημοκρατία, see Hdt. 6.43. For the equation of πλήθος ἄρχον with δημοκρατία, see Asheri & al. 2007, 474. The contrary outlook would be that the Constitutional Debate belongs to an earlier layer of the *Histories* – one perhaps predating the coining of the term δημοκρατία. See Ehrenberg 1950, 526 and Evans 1981, 80. It is conceivable, as well, that Herodotus simply portrays Otanes as consciously avoiding δημοκρατία, because of the negative connotations pertaining to the term. These connotations were probably inherent in the concept of 'people's rule' right from the start – since then as now, 'people' could always be taken to equal the inferior 'many' or 'masses', οἱ πολλοί/ὁ ὄχλος. Cf. Cartledge 2009, 74-75.

<sup>397</sup> Cf. Hdt. 3.80.6: τούτων τῶν ὁ μούναρχος ποιέει οὐδέν· πάλω μὲν ἀρχὰς ἄρχει, ὑπεύθυνον δὲ ἀρχὴν ἔχει, βουλευματα δὲ πάντα ἐς τὸ κοινὸν ἀναφέρει. ("It does none of those things the monarch does: power it determines by lot, and it holds power responsible, as well as that it brings all proposals into the public room"). Here, at least, there may be a specific reference to the Athenian isonomy/democracy at some point after 487 B.C. See Bringmann 1976, 269. Cf. Robinson 2011, 199-200.

<sup>398</sup> Cf. Tralau 2012, 48-52.



### *Megabyzus for oligarchy*

Christopher Pelling has singled out the narrative rationale of Megabyzus' speech as being that of paving the way, by pointing out the obvious disadvantages of democracy, for the argumentation of Darius in favour of monarchy to follow.<sup>399</sup> A closer look at the arguments employed by Megabyzus reveals that Pelling's suggestion seems to be correct.

ὁμίλου γὰρ ἀχρηίου οὐδέν ἐστι ἀξυνετώτερον οὐδὲ ὕβριστότερον [...] ὠθέει τε ἐμπροσθὸν τὰ πρήγματα ἄνευ νόου, χειμάρρῳ ποταμῶ ἕκελος.<sup>400</sup>

Nothing is more void of understanding or more insolent than the no good crowd [...] it thrusts and bursts into matters without mind, a winter-flowing river alike.

Megabyzus turns Otanes' accusations away from monarchy and against democracy itself, thus painting a picture of the sovereign people as the most brutal tyrant imaginable: to the insolence and malice of the tyrant, Megabyzus adds the reckless stupidity of the demos.<sup>401</sup> Finally, the absolute heedlessness of the people's rule is emphasized by means of analogy in a way, which may be seen to contrast against a typical Herodotean use of analogy.<sup>402</sup>

In fact, in late 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. antidemocratic parlance, the ascription of heightened recklessness to the many because of their ignorance seems to have become a trope:

ἔστι δὲ πάση γῆ τὸ βέλτιστον ἐναντίον τῆ δημοκρατία· ἐν γὰρ τοῖς βελτίστοις ἐνὶ ἀκολασία τε ὀλιγίστη καὶ ἀδικία, ἀκρίβεια δὲ πλείστη εἰς τὰ χρηστά· ἐν δὲ τῷ δήμῳ ἀμαθία τε πλείστη καὶ ἀταξία καὶ πονηρία· ἢ τε γὰρ πενία αὐτοὺς μᾶλλον ἄγει ἐπὶ τὰ αἰσχρὰ καὶ ἡ ἀπαιδευσία καὶ ἡ ἀμαθία.<sup>403</sup>

On the whole earth the best men are against democracy: among the best intemperance and injustice are least present, while for the useful things there is most accurate knowledge, and among the people ignorance and disorder is mostly present, as is poverty: poverty is what mostly drives them towards shameful things, as well as does lack of culture and ignorance.

<sup>399</sup> See Pelling 2002, 142. Cf. Wüst 1935, 54.

<sup>400</sup> See Hdt. 3.81.1.

<sup>401</sup> Cf. Bringmann 1976, 271 and Xen. *Hell.* 1.7.12.

<sup>402</sup> Cf. Haible 1963, 210: "Herodot konstatiert einfach Ähnlichkeiten oder Verschiedenheiten, er informiert, er bringt das Wissenswerte; die Ähnlichkeiten ist ihm dabei ein genügendes Kompositionsprinzip."

<sup>403</sup> See Ps.Xen. *Ath. Pol.* 5.

Here, the so-called Old Oligarch argues for the obtaining with regard to the masses of the same kind of relationship between ‘shameful things’ (αἰσχρὰ) and ignorance (ἄμαθία) as Megabyzus’ argument assumes with regard to the people between ‘insolence’ (ὕβρις) and ‘lack of understanding’ (ἄξύνετος). In the Pseudo-Xenophontean argument, however, the negative characteristics inherent in the demos and in the realized rule of the people pile up.

ἀρίστων δὲ ἀνδρῶν οἰκὸς ἄριστα βουλευματα γίνεσθαι.<sup>404</sup>

but from the best men it is likely that the best councils come.

Megabyzus closes his speech by assuming what seems to him most reasonable – namely, that in place of the ignorance of the many, the astuteness of the few must be preferred. This is a simple argument from “likelihood” (εἰκός).

The overview of the speech of Megabyzus, certainly the shortest of the three, did not reveal any clear-cut cases of internal critique. With regard to the overall argumentative content, the speech actually turned out to be quite a meagre effort. In truth, Megabyzus holds forth oligarchy “as a mean between democracy and monarchy – avoiding the difficulties of both, uniting control over hybris with intelligent planning”.<sup>405</sup> What the speech seems to lack completely, however, is an argument for the superior justness and efficiency of the oligarchic regime. The closest we get to this in the argumentation delivered by Megabyzus is his closing plea for the likelihood that good councils derive from good men – but this, as has been pointed out by Richard Myers, is merely covert egoism.<sup>406</sup> That Myers observation is correct can be seen from the sentence directly preceding the final εἰκός argument relating the idea that the best councils derive from the best men:

ἐν γὰρ δὴ τούτοισι καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐνεσόμεθα.<sup>407</sup>

We ourselves also belong to those (supposedly best men).

Thus, Pelling’s suggestion regarding the complementing role of Megabyzus’ speech for the ensuing argumentation of Darius seems to be entirely adequate. Disregarding vested interests, the idea of the insightful few in command naturally leads to the supposal that the one man who knows best should decide everything by himself.

---

<sup>404</sup> See Hdt. 3.81.3:

<sup>405</sup> See Keith 1989, 301-302. Cf. Hdt. 3.81.2.

<sup>406</sup> See Myers 1991, 546: “Megabyze fait appel et au patriotisme des conjurés et à leur égoïsme, et son appel à leur égoïsme se trouve là où on s’attendait à un plaidoyer pour la justice supérieure de l’aristocratie.”

<sup>407</sup> See Hdt. 3.81.3.

### *Darius for monarchy*

As noted by many, the main point of the argumentation employed by Darius seems to lie not so much in pinpointing the disadvantages of the alternative constitutions, as in showing the inevitability of the monarchic regime.<sup>408</sup> However, by looking at the central passages in Darius' speech, it may be detected that therein the arguments combine neatly so that the preceding claims made by the opposing sides are refuted, while the positive argument in favour of monarchy builds upon this disavowal.

τριῶν γὰρ προκειμένων καὶ πάντων τῷ λόγῳ ἀρίστων ἐόντων [...] ἀνδρὸς γὰρ ἑνὸς τοῦ ἀρίστου οὐδὲν ἄμεινον ἂν φανεῖν.<sup>409</sup>

if the three were to be laid out against each other, and even if all, for the sake of argument, would be the best (of their kind) [...] none would show itself better than the rule of the one best man.

τῷ λόγῳ seems here actually to be used in the sense of 'for the sake of argument', namely in order to draw a general conclusion from a "hypothetical situation" – something the Greeks had known to do for quite a while when the Constitutional Debate may first have been conceived of.<sup>410</sup> Laid beside each other, monarchy will triumph *even* over the best form of democracy and oligarchy. This is what Darius claims to be able to prove, and *not* that the hypothetically best form of monarchy would prevail over its contenders– although the latter is precisely what translators and commentators commonly assume.<sup>411</sup>

---

<sup>408</sup> See Pelling 2002, 142. Cf. Allen 2011, 86. Since it seems to have been forgotten, it should be pointed out, however, that Darius' plea for the necessity of monarchy has a strong self-justifying undertone. See Appfel 1958, 30.

<sup>409</sup> See Hdt. 3.82.1: Actually τῷ λόγῳ is an emendation accepted by most editors based on Stobaeus (4.47.24). The MSS have τῶν λέγω in its place. The emendation, however, must be accepted, since τῶν λέγω fails to make sense with what goes before and after. See Wilson 2015, 60. Other passages in the *Histories* also bears out the likelihood of a Herodotean use of τῷ λόγῳ in the sense of 'for the sake of argument'. Cf. Hdt. 2.15.1-2, where Herodotus claims to be able to show τούτῳ τῷ λόγῳ – i.e., τῷ λόγῳ of the Egyptian, according to which all of Egypt can be reduced to the Delta – that in that case there was "before no land for the Egyptians" (Αἰγυπτίοισι οὐκ ἔοῦσαν πρότερον χώραν). Furthermore, according to Herodotus, it would never have been necessary for the Egyptians to try to verify their own conception of themselves as the oldest people on earth, since actually they had already falsified that hypothesis by harbouring contradictory beliefs (εἰ τοίνυν σφι χώρα γε μηδεμία ὑπῆρχε, τί περιεργάζοντο δοκέοντες πρῶτοι ἀνθρώπων γεγενῆσθαι; ("if there was no land for them, why did they waste so much effort on their idea that they had been the first humans?)). What we have here is of course a Herodotean example of a *reductio ad absurdum*.

<sup>410</sup> See Lloyd 1966, 421-423. For a *terminus post quem* for the debate in and around 470 B.C., see Ehrenberg 1950, 526. If it may be assumed that the debate refers specifically to the Athenian democracy, I would call for a dating *post* the reforms of Ephialtes in 462 B.C., and the *Umbruch* in the inherited order achieved thereby. This was what first enabled "the writing of the reader into the debate" on real-world political alternatives. Cf. Barker 2009, 190.

<sup>411</sup> For the common but mistaken understanding of Darius' assumption, see Keith 1989, 310 "He (Darius) says his argument will compare monarchy with the best possible king, oligarchy

The mistaken interpretation of Darius' assumption rests on a copulative reading of the particle *καί* in the passage cited above. However, *καί* seems here not to be used as a copula, but rather in an enhancing sense – i.e., the particle bears the meaning of ‘even (when)’. In truth, Darius' intention is to argue for the superiority of monarchy in all imaginable situations. How he accomplishes this is by picking on the pleas in favour of democracy and oligarchy respectively, and by showing how, through their own arguments, Otanes and Megabyzus actually defeat themselves. In effect, this means that he applies internal critique. Let us see how he manages it.

ἐν δὲ ὀλιγαρχίῃ [...] αὐτὸς γὰρ ἕκαστος βουλόμενος [...] γνώμησίν [...] νικᾶν ἐς ἔχθρα μεγάλα ἀλλήλοισι ἀπικνεύονται.<sup>412</sup>

in an oligarchy [...] everyone wants himself [...] with thoughts [...] to win, and so they arrive in great hatred among themselves.

We may recall that Megabyzus had made his plea for oligarchy on the basis that the best men give the best advice, and that therefore these men should rule. This argument is now opposed by Darius with a critique to the effect that while the potentiality to arrive at the best solutions may lie with the best men, these, if they were to be given the rule, would never co-operate, since they would all value only their own judgments. Therefore, not proper action, but mutual hatred would be the outcome.

ἐξ ὧν στάσιες ἐγγίνονται, ἐκ δὲ τῶν στασιῶν φόνος: ἐκ δὲ τοῦ φόνου ἀπέβη ἐς μουναρχίην.<sup>413</sup>

from these (hatred) follows dissent, from dissent slaughter, from slaughter follows monarchy.

This is Darius' first application of the “μεταβολή theory” (μεταβολή≈transition) – a scheme, with its roots deep in Ionian 6th century philosophy and formed of the suppositions of necessary passages between states of nature.<sup>414</sup>

---

with the best possible rulers, and democracy with the best possible people“. Cf. Lateiner 2013, 201: “Otanes and Darius present symmetrically opposite arguments. The former deliberately focuses on the reality of autocracy and the ideal democracy; the latter on the ideal autocracy and the reality of democracy.”

<sup>412</sup> See Hdt. 3.82.3.

<sup>413</sup> See Hdt. 3.82.3.

<sup>414</sup> Cf. Heraclit. B 36 (DK): ψυχῆσιν θάνατος ὕδωρ γενέσθαι, ὕδατι δὲ θάνατος γῆν γενέσθαι, ἐκ γῆς δὲ ὕδωρ γίνεται, ἐξ ὕδατος δὲ ψυχή. (“Water becomes death for spirit, for water earth means death, from earth becomes water, and from water spirit”).

Here, the theory is applied to show how, by the very nature of things, oligarchy ends up in monarchy.<sup>415</sup>

δήμου τε αὖ ἄρχοντος ἀδύνατα μὴ οὐ κακότητα ἐγγίνεσθαι [...] οἱ γὰρ κακοῦντες τὰ κοινὰ συγκύψαντες ποιεῦσι.

then again, when the people rule, it is impossible that wickedness would not enter [...] since the harm-doers conspire to do so.<sup>416</sup>

It cannot be the case, as Otanes had claimed, that in people's rule evil would be barred. Because evil will occur anyhow. In a democratic government, this would be the consequence of a problem quite the opposite of that, which faces the rule of the few good men – namely, too much co-operation between men who are not good.

προστάς τις τοῦ δήμου [...] θωμάζεται [...] ὑπὸ τοῦ δήμου, θωμαζόμενος δὲ ἀν' ὧν ἐφάνη μούναρχος ἐόν.

someone standing before the people [...] is admired [...] by the people, and in admiration is revealed to be a monarch.<sup>417</sup>

This is Darius' second application of the μεταβολή theory. According to it, the wicked will continue to conspire until they are stopped by a προστάτης (literally: 'one who stands before'). Obviously, this popular leader turns out to be nothing else than a king.

In the overview of Darius' argumentation, two very similar utilizations of internal critique, each leading up to one of Darius' two invocations of the μεταβολή theory, stand out. Both of these applications seem to represent a type of internal critique, where the argument aspires exposure of counter-productive principles.<sup>418</sup> Megabyzus supported his argumentation in defence of oligarchy with the principle that the judgments of the best men should be paid heed to. Darius counters this, claiming that what is actually the case is that the men with the best counsels fail to meet the standards of the best rule. Otanes, in turn, argued against monarchy and for democracy, basing his argumentation on the assumption that if the principle followed is that of many having a share in the rule, then all of the corruption of the rule of the sole man may be avoided. However, Darius also holds out this principle as being counter-productive. The basis for this assumption is that wickedness and arbitrariness

<sup>415</sup> Cf. Democrit. A 49 (DK): κατ' αὐτὴν τῶν πραγμάτων τὴν φύσιν. ("according to the very nature of things").

<sup>416</sup> See Hdt. 3.82.4.

<sup>417</sup> See Hdt. 3.82.4:

<sup>418</sup> Cf. Tralau 2012, 55-57.

risers among the people when they rule themselves as well. Thus, in the end monarchy will prevail, as it always has.<sup>419</sup>

### **Outcome: The internal critique of Darius and the beginnings of Classical Political Theory**

In his *Die Verfassungsdebatte bei Herodot*, the hitherto only monograph on the Constitutional Debate, Helmut Apffel concluded that the speeches of the debate bear witness to a

general-theoretical structure, in which rigorous proofs play no part,<sup>420</sup>

that they evidence

instead of logical rationales a sort of historical-genetical point of view<sup>421</sup>

and that the debate represents

pre-sophistic Homeric speech-pairs,<sup>422</sup>

since

what the previous speaker has said, is not really refuted, but mostly indirectly fought.<sup>423</sup>

What my readings of the speeches of Otanes, Megabyzus and Darius have revealed, however, is that the argumentation contained in the first two speeches may be perceived as a prequel to Darius' disapproval of them. To be sure, just like Apffel noted, Darius' refuting takes place indirectly, through his picking on the displeasing consequences of the principles supported by his interlocutors. Contrary to Apffel, I would claim, however, that this cannot be conceived of as a sign of lacking correspondence or incomplete logic in and between the arguments of the different sides of the debate. On the contrary, it

---

<sup>419</sup> ἔχω τοίνυν γνώμην ἡμέας ἐλευθερωθέντας διὰ ἓνα ἄνδρα τὸ τοιοῦτο περιστέλλειν, χωρὶς τε τούτου πατρίους νόμους μὴ λύειν ἔχοντας εὖ· οὐ γὰρ ἄμεινον (“My judgment is that, as we have been set free by one man, that is the rule we should maintain, besides that it is not good to loosen the ancestral laws when they are good: it is not for the better”). See Hdt. 3.82.5. “Das, was zum endlichen Siege der Monarchie führt, scheint also auch bei Herodot – in Wirklichkeit war das ja wohl keine Frage – nicht die Überzeugungskraft der Argumente, sondern der Hinweis auf die tatsächliche historische Entwicklung im Perserreich zu sein. Das zeigen die letzten Worte des Dareios deutlich” See Wüst 1935, 53. Cf. Barker 2009, 186.

<sup>420</sup> “einer allgemein-theoretischen Form, der es auf eine strenge Beweisführung nicht ankommt”.

<sup>421</sup> “statt logischer Begründungen eine Art von historisch-genetischer Sicht”.

<sup>422</sup> “vorsophistisch [...] homerische Redepaaren”.

<sup>423</sup> “was der Vorredner gesagt hat, wird nicht eigentlich widerlegt, sondern meistens indirekt bekämpft”. See Apffel 1958, 54-55.

seems to be by fostering logically prepared disapproval, namely by means of internal critique, that Darius moves forward in his speech.

Even though they need not be deductive in form – i.e., such as moving directly from the premises to the conclusion – there really is nothing illogical about arguments proceeding by means of internal critique. When the interlocutors themselves admit to the principles and views scrutinized and/or to the empirical propositions suggested in and by internally critical arguments, the conclusions reached by means of properly applied internal critique are as strictly logically binding as any correct application of indirect deductive argumentation.

It is by applying proper internal critique that Darius clears the ground for the closure of his speech – namely, for his historically grounded acknowledgment of the necessity of monarchical rule over and against its fundamentally different contender-regimes. Thus, the Constitutional Debate of Herodotus does contain the earliest evidence of the coming together of, on the one hand, the argumentative patterns, which consist of internal critique, and on the other hand, of the new kind of subject-oriented political thinking, which I have termed *cratic*. When this conflating first occurred, *when fundamentally different societal orders understood as transferrable and humanly applicable entities clashed for the first time, political theory proper, Classical Political Theory, at once had originated* – so the hypothesis of this chapter states. There was more to come, however. The fast-descending and perchance never-shining sun of Classical Political Philosophy was merely peeking over the horizon.

The concepts were as abstract as the opposing factions, contemporary controversy, and the resultant knowledge permitted and required them to be. To put it another way: there was as much scope for abstraction as was compatible with political disposal and the political alternative. The alternative was the most fundamental that could face a body of citizens acting together as citizens: namely whether the nobles or the people should rule [...]. The distances separating the different theoretical positions from one another — and from reality — were no greater than those separating the real political oppositions (which related at most to the constitution of the body politic). And so it remained until Socrates and Plato opened up new dimensions.<sup>424</sup>

It was after the turn to direct democracy that the “politico-social” concepts moved to a “level of abstraction”, on which it first became feasible to conceptualize and argumentatively oppose fundamentally different alternatives: those determining the main principle of rule regulating the societal order. At this point, however, two related questions may have awoken among those with prior knowledge of the political history of Ancient Greece.

---

<sup>424</sup> See Meier 1990, 178, 185.

The first question concerns the relationship between the societal elite and the larger citizen-group before and after the turn to democracy. Is it not likelier that the political life of the Greek world always was, or at least had been for a very long time before the turn to direct democracy, characterized by varying elite rulers' struggle to maintain their authoritative control over the masses? Therefore, would it not seem likely as well that the breakthrough of democracy merely gave rise to a new type of modification in this old elite-mass juxtaposition – i.e., to one in which the elite simply had to show a more thoroughgoing conformity to “mass ideology”?<sup>425</sup> How could the fulfilment of the process of politicization then have been so sharply felt that it gave rise to a wholly new constitutionalized way of conceiving of politics? The second question relates to the varying forms of societal orders with their varying principles of elite rule that certainly existed already long before the Classical Age. Does not the multiplicity of different types of regimes already in the Archaic Age and before make it likely that there had been notions around of a plethora of variant constitutions as well as of “mixed constitutions” already before the breakthrough of democracy?

To begin with the first question, it is true that at least as far back in time as there have been democratically governed institutions – i.e., assemblies and public courts – we have reason to believe that constant negotiations have been going on over policies between societally politically privileged and non-privileged parties.<sup>426</sup> Nevertheless, the conceived sharpness in the transition to the at least formally realized civic equality of δημοκρατία may be assumed *ex silentio* by the lack of evidence from the Archaic Age of alternative constitutions having been conceptualized as differing principles of rules in their own right – or as principles that could be argumentatively opposed.

The answer to the second question thus builds on the first. It is only after the democratic breakthrough, and the concomitant cratistic turn, that we encounter evidence of the kind of alternative-admitting political theory which I have equalled with the beginnings of Classical Political Theory. Likewise, as it seems, it was only after the constitutionalization effected by the cratistic turn that a political thought could even ensue, wherein the envisioned alternatives began to be combined into “mixtures”.<sup>427</sup> To finally touch upon the question

---

<sup>425</sup> For an account of Pericles as the first Athenian elite leader applying a kind of rhetoric, where the masses' control over public behaviour was acknowledged, see Ober 1989, 90-91.

<sup>426</sup> Cf. Giddens 1984, 16: “Power within social systems which enjoy some continuity over time and space presumes regularized relations of autonomy and dependence between actors or collectivities in contexts of social interaction. But all forms of dependence offer some resources whereby those who are subordinate can influence the activities of their superiors. This is what I call the *dialectic of control* in social systems.”

<sup>427</sup> See Aalders 1968, 7: “Über den Ursprung der Theorie der gemischten Verfassung können wir nur Vermutungen aufstellen. Sie muss entstanden sein vor Thukydides, der sie in der uns überlieferten Literatur als erster in seinem 8. Buche nennt. Sie kann aber auch erst entstanden sein als sich in der griechischen Welt die Vorstellung ‘Staatsform’ und die Begriffe der unterschiedlichen Verfassungen wie Demokratie Aristokratie usw. deutlich herausgebildet hatten; das aber war vor dem 5. Jahrhundert v. Chr. Nicht der Fall”. Cf. Hansen 2010, 517-522.



of when the notion of mixed constitutions may have originated, the distinction I made in the introduction between two types of Classical Greek “de facto secular” forms of political thought – one practical-political and one political-theoretical – may be of help. If this distinction were to be applied here, one could say that the notion of a possibility to mix different constitutional forms – where each constitutional variant is determined by the application of a distinct principle of societal rule – is attested as a notion pertaining to practical-political thought first in Thucydides, whereas in relation to political-theoretical thought-constructs its first extant appearance is in Aristotle.<sup>428</sup>

To the three Classical constitutional forms of Classical Political Theory, which were explicated already in political theory’s earliest Herodotean manifestation – namely, democracy, oligarchy and monarchy – we may, in the coming world, or perhaps already in the world as we experience it today, add a fourth. This is the unquestioned, but still to some extent concealed, global dominance of the socially and economically over-privileged.<sup>429</sup> In the worst case, this rule would come to mean something more than just global oligarchy; it would mean a return to a nearly deified form of elite rule. In truth, we may already be on the brink of reaching that stage. If resistance to change prevails, it is only a question of time before the influence of this exclusive group fully

---

<sup>428</sup> At 8.97.2, Thucydides writes of the occasion of the “rule of the 5000” (411 B.C.), which he relates to as the time when Athens had showed itself to be most εὖ πολιτεύσαντες (“best governed”). According to Thucydides, this form of government was so good because of its moderate ζύγκρασις (“mixture”) of τοὺς ὀλίγους καὶ τοὺς πολλοὺς (“the many and the few”). The earliest evidence of clear-cut theoretical conceptualizations of the notion of mixed constitutions, on the other hand, may be found in Aristotle’s *Politics*. Here, Aristotle reckons with the possibility of constitutional mixture particularly with regard to the two main varieties of democratic and oligarchic governments he conceives of – i.e., oligarchies and aristocracies and democracies and polities, respectively. See Aristot. *Pol.* 6.1316b-1317a: τὰς συναγωγὰς αὐτῶν τῶν εἰρημένον ἐπισκεπτέον πάντων τῶν τρόπων· ταῦτα γὰρ συνδυαζόμενα ποιεῖ τὰς πολιτείας ἐπαλλάττειν, ὥστε ἀριστοκρατίας τε ὀλιγαρχικὰς εἶναι καὶ πολιτείας δημοκρατικωτέρας. (“now we must look at all the ways these (single arrangements within the constitutions) that we have spoken about may combine. For these arrangements, when joined together, cause the constitutions to begin to change over, so that the oligarchies turn into aristocracies and the polities become more democratic”).

<sup>429</sup> See Piketty 2014, 19-20: “the impressive disequilibria observed in recent decades in the financial, oil, and real estate markets have naturally aroused doubts as to the inevitability of the ‘balanced growth path’ described by Solow and Kuznets, according to whom all key economic variables are supposed to move at the same pace. Will the world in 2050 or 2010 be owned by traders, top managers, and the superrich, or will it belong to the oil-producing countries or the Bank of China? Or perhaps it will be owned by the tax havens in which many of these actors will have sought refuge. It would be absurd not to raise the question of who will own what and simply to assume from the outset that growth is naturally ‘balanced’ in the long run.” The assumption of the “balanced growth path” equals the traditional neoclassical consensus regarding the ability of the markets to find optimal equilibriums by themselves in the long run. See Roncaglia 2010, 33. Within mainstream economic theory, this traditional consensus may first have been broken thanks to the heroic effort of Thomas Piketty. On the general tendency of neoclassical economic theory to enhance the influence of power on economic realities by denying this influence, see Häring et Douglas 2012, 45-46.

overrides all independent political powers that still today may be allowed some room to operate.<sup>430</sup>

---

<sup>430</sup> See Stiglitz 2014a, 147. Cf. Gupta 1977, 992: “the fact that State control works in consonance with monopoly and bourgeois interest is a pointer to the fact that the ruling party can easily shed its democratic veneer without the slightest compunctions.”

## Chapter 4: The War Councils of Xerxes and the Emergence of Political Philosophy: Constructing a Theory of Absolute Beginnings

In the theoretical background of this chapter, I introduce the final two delegates of the school of thought that I have taken a special interest in for what I conceive to be its emphasis on a “world-historical restart”, pertaining specifically to the radical breaks in the societal and mental infrastructure of the Ancient Greek world. The thinkers presented in this chapter are the two most notable representatives of the Paris school of philology, namely Jean-Pierre Vernant and his teacher Louis Gernet.

Vernant was a Classical scholar, whom later critics of eurocentrism, such as Kostas Vlassopoulos, would not hesitate to count among the writers responsible for upholding an “orthodox account of Greek history”. This orthodoxy would consist of a view based on the assumption of a “false start” of the history of Greece represented by the palatial societies of the Greek Bronze Age – a counterfeit beginning imagined to have been overcome by the complete dismantling of these societies taking place alongside the consolidating of the Greek city-states in the Archaic and Classical Ages.<sup>431</sup> Vlassopoulos may be right in recognizing such an orthodoxy with regard to our understanding of the history of Ancient Greece.

Based on my readings, however, Vernant joins a restricted group of scholars, who actually have been able to draw out the consequences of what they reckon to be a restart, and really strived to reach out to the unprecedented nature of the societal and intellectual developments leading up to the “true beginning” of Greek/Western history.<sup>432</sup> Here, my intention is to tend to those parts of the historical theories of Vernant around which a hypothesis of the origins of Classical Political Philosophy may be constructed.

The theory I put forward in this chapter, conceives of the beginnings of Classical Political Philosophy as being effected by philosophy taking a step beyond Classical Political Theory – namely, into visions of true transcendence of the given societal order as well as of any of its conceived-of real-world alternatives. As with the hypothesis put forward in the last chapter, this is a theory resting on conceptual assumptions, which in fact altogether disqualify

---

<sup>431</sup> See Vlassopoulos 2007, 56.

<sup>432</sup> Cf. Vlassopoulos 2007, 53.

certain types of investigations from the ranks of political theory and/or political philosophy proper.

Acceptance of the conceptual assumptions of these theories would mean that the discussions – if we are to assume that they took place – in late 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Greece between proponents of a societal order based in the old principle of εὐνομία (‘good order’) and one based in its modification, ἰσονομία (‘like order’), would not qualify as political theory. These discussions would be disqualified, then, on the grounds that before the breakthrough of δημοκρατία, εὐνομία and ἰσονομία were in general probably not conceived of as anything beyond varying ways of giving expression to the prevailing (godly sanctioned and naturally given) order.<sup>433</sup> On the other hand, if the conceptual assumptions relating to Classical Political Philosophy were to be accepted, this would mean that neither could some of the most prominent intellectuals of the Greek Classical Age – although themselves claiming to be the true defenders and representatives of both political life and of philosophy – be counted as political philosophers. A perfect example of such a thinker would be Isocrates. He seems to have tended quite steadfastly to the prevailing “nomological knowledge” – i.e., to the superior normative ordering of society, or to his understanding thereof – rather than offering anything akin to utopian visions of societal change.

τοὺς δὲ τῶν μὲν ἀναγκαίων ἀμελοῦντας, τὰς δὲ τῶν παλαιῶν σοφιστῶν τερατολογίας ἀγαπῶντας φιλοσοφεῖν φασιν [...] καὶ τὸν ἴδιον οἶκον καὶ τὰ κοινὰ τὰ τῆς πόλεως καλῶς διοικήσουσιν, ὧν περ ἕνεκα καὶ πονητέον καὶ φιλοσοφητέον καὶ πάντα πρακτέον ἐστίν.<sup>434</sup>

Those who do not tend to the necessities but love the amazing arguments of the old sophists they say philosophize (φιλοσοφεῖν φασιν) [...] however, that out of which the private household as well as the community prosper. Just these are the things, for the sake of which one must

---

<sup>433</sup> *Contra* Frei 1981, 218: “Ist ἰσονομία, wie wir vermutet haben, in Opposition zu εὐνομία gebildet worden, so wird man die Entstehung des Wortes in einer politischen Auseinandersetzung zu suchen haben, in der eine Gruppe das Ideal der εὐνομία vertrat, gegen das eine andere etwas Neues propagierte.” Cf. Aalders 1968, 11: “Vielmehr war ἰσονομία eine in konstitutioneller Hinsicht reichlich vage Losung, mehr negativ als positiv bestimmt, welche im Kampfe gegen Tyrannis erhoben wurde von den Adligen, die Unterstützung von der Seite der breiten Masse des Volkes wünschten und brauchten...”

<sup>434</sup> See Isocr. *Ant.* 285. In the end, true philosophy as Isocrates conceives of it makes sense only as a practical utility. See Isocr. *Ant.* 271: ἐπειδὴ γὰρ οὐκ ἔνεστιν ἐν τῇ φύσει τῇ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐπιστήμην λαβεῖν, ἣν ἔχοντες ἂν εἰδείμεν ὅ τι πρακτέον ἢ λεκτέον ἐστίν, ἐκ τῶν λοιπῶν σοφοὺς μὲν νομίζω τοὺς ταῖς δόξαις ἐπιτυγχάνειν ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ τοῦ βελτίστου δυναμένου, φιλοσόφους δὲ τοὺς ἐν τούτοις διατρίβοντας, ἐξ ὧν τάχιστα λήγονται τὴν τοιαύτην φρόνησιν. (“As men are not of the nature to be able to gain knowledge of that by which, if we would possess it, we would know what to do and say, of the rest I hold as wise those, who with beliefs are able often to reach that which is for the best, and philosophers I call those who spend their time in such a way that they are able to reach such a judgment as fast as possible”).

toil and philosophize and do everything (πονητέον καὶ φιλοσοφητέον καὶ πάντα πρακτέον ἐστίν).

In the above lines, disapproval of any kind of investigative activity not aiming for an understanding or knowledge that could be immediately useful in and for the prevailing order is clearly implied. Philosophy, according to Isocrates, should not be striving for societal and personal transformance at all, but instead commit itself completely to the necessities at hand (τῶν ἀναγκαίων ἐξ ὧν...), thereby making the city and its people prosper (...τὸν ἴδιον οἶκον καὶ τὰ κοινὰ καλῶς διοικήσουσιν), without, however, changing anything substantially. The exact opposite of this view may be found in the heart of the works of the canonical Classical Political Philosophers – namely, in book V of Plato's *Republic* and book VII of Aristotle's *Politics*. In the latter, Aristotle explicitly states that even the seemingly best governed Greek city-states (ἄριστα δοκοῦντες πολιτεύεσθαι τῶν Ἑλλήνων) have not been arranged in such ways that they would meet the requirements of the best end (οὔτε πρὸς τὸ βέλτιστον τέλος φαίνονται συντάξαντες).<sup>435</sup> Plato, in turn, sets in front of his audience the model (παράδειγμα) of the supremely virtuous man (ἄνδρα τὸν τελέως δίκαιον), so that he may stand as an example for those who have failed to govern themselves and their societies well enough.<sup>436</sup> Underlying both of these visions is the common assumption that radical change may be a necessity even to begin to approach the ideal order – i.e., that political philosophy in fact presupposes what in modern terms could be labelled 'utopian visions of this-worldly societal transcendence'.

The hypothesis on the origins of political philosophy in Ancient Greece defended in this chapter should be understood to form an assumption specifically of the beginnings of this kind of philosophy – i.e., of the kind of philosophy that for the first time began to work directly with visions of societal transformance. This was the Classical Political Philosophy conducted, *inter alia*, by Plato and Aristotle, and which probably could be traced back to the research undertaken by the historical Socrates as well.<sup>437</sup> What I will suggest here, however, is that the investigations of the canonical Classical Political Philosophers may have had its predecessor, or early counterpart, in an original form of democratized social critique – which found its expression in a criticism directed at political life as such. The hypothesis of this chapter will be weighed against a reading of the War Councils of Xerxes contained in Book VII of the *Histories* of Herodotus. This reading offers an essentially new interpretation of the passage in question.

In the previous chapter, I defended a theory of how in the Herodotean debate Classical Political Theory (political theory proper) may be witnessed to

---

<sup>435</sup> See Aristot. *Pol.* 7.1333b.5-11.

<sup>436</sup> See Plat. *Rep.* 472c-d.

<sup>437</sup> Cf. Plat. *Apol.* 38a.

have embarked from the first coming together of refuting arguments with politico-ethical content (internal critique) and of a new ability to think of constitutions in terms of arbitrary, transferrable and mutually excluding entities (cratistic thinking).<sup>438</sup> In this chapter, I aim to use the work of the two most prominent figures of the Paris philological school as a gateway to the construction of a theory of how Classical Political Philosophy – understood as the endpoint of the intellectual progressions under the societal conditions of Classical democracy, and as the decisive step beyond Classical Political Theory – first arose.

### **Louis Gernet and the idea of the advent of the Greek city-state as equalling the emergence of reason**

The notion of Ancient Greece as the place of origins of absolute beginnings – i.e., as the sole bedrock of the earliest awakening of truly rational thought and the genuine homeland of the rise of philosophy – is most often confronted with the aid of what could be labelled an ‘exogenous perspective’.<sup>439</sup> This view replaces the age-old notion of a “Greek Miracle” with the fundamentally different assumption, according to which the quintessential changes in the “collective problematizing” of the Greeks may be reduced to the outcome of hefty influences from neighbouring cultures. A decisive stage in the rise of this perspective may have been the gathering together by Kurt A. Raaflaub of experts on the political history of different Ancient European and Near Eastern cultures. In the resulting publication, *Anfänge politischen Denkens in der Antike: die nahöstlichen Kulturen und die Griechen*, it was assumed that a “massive” (*ganz massive*) role was played by influences from neighbouring cultures in the “socio-genesis” of the Ancient Greek World.<sup>440</sup> How, then, was the antithesis to the exogenous view – i.e., the endogenous explanatory model – typically constructed and how did it gain ground?

Undoubtedly, it was Jean-Pierre Vernant, who instigated the emphasizing of the fundamental tie between the advancement of Greek philosophy, on the one hand, and the societal circumstances established by the political life of the Greek city-state, on the other hand. The man, who stood behind Vernant, however, and began paving the way for emblematic investigations of this kind, was no smaller figure than the foundational hero of the ‘Paris School’ of philology, namely Louis Gernet. Gernet came up with the idea of applying a so-

---

<sup>438</sup> In extant Greek literature, a prefiguration of the juxtaposition of three distinct real-world political alternatives may be detected in and around 470 B.C., as this would be the approximate date we may give to Pindar’s second Pythian: ἐν πάντα δὲ νόμον εὐθύγλωστος ἀνὴρ προφέρει, παρὰ τυραννίδι, χῶπότην ὁ λάβρος στρατός, χῶταν πόλιν οἱ σοφοὶ τηρέωντι. (“in all orders the well-spoken man prevails, in a tyranny, as well as when the furious army or the wise men hold power”). See Pind. *Pyth.* 2.86-88. Cf. Raaflaub 2007, 107.

<sup>439</sup> The exogenous perspective may have become more attractive since the post-WWII rise of “ethnohistory”. See Faubion 1993, 41.

<sup>440</sup> See Raaflaub 1993, XV.

ciological method to the study of Ancient Greece – a method in which parallels between forms of thought and societal structure were expressly sought out.<sup>441</sup> Right from the start, with his 1917 thesis *Recherches sur le développement de la pensée juridique et morale en Grèce*, he also directed the searchlight of his investigations on absolute beginnings.

Through the agency of Louis Gernet, the quest for absolute beginnings assumed its primal form of a search for the origins of one conspicuous “conquest of the human thinking” – namely, of the acquisition of the “notion of the individual”.<sup>442</sup> Gernet embarked on his mission “from the point of view of criminal law”, under the heuristic assumption that there was “a certain sense of the individual” inherent already in the systems of law pertaining to the city-states of Classical Greece.<sup>443</sup> Moreover, the work of Gernet proceeded by means of a semantic where “the history of words” was utilized for the purpose of explicating the development of a “collective representation”.<sup>444</sup>

Thus, he targeted his ultimate aim, the elucidation of the origins of the notion of the individual, by showing how the completed notions of “crime and punishment” were foreshadowed by the rise of the idea of “the person as the object of the offence” and “of the individual as the subject of the crime”. This pair of representations he thought had emerged in response to a “continuous and diffuse sentience”.<sup>445</sup>

According to Gernet, the decisive event that caused a break with this diffuse transcendentalism, and gave rise to the “clear and distinct idea of the individual”, was nothing else than the social integration caused by the advent of the city-state.<sup>446</sup> It was “the moment of the city” and the concomitant establishment of an organized system of justice, which brought with them the parallel evolutions of the notions of voluntarily acting persons as the subjects of responsibility, and the conception of the individual as a guarantee of protection from society.<sup>447</sup>

In truth, Gernet considered the creation of a sovereignty of the system of justice as a symbol of sorts of the mentalities, or of the conceptions, which he thought of as being in themselves the prime movers in the rise of rationality

---

<sup>441</sup> See Gernet 1917, xvi: “[un] vue sociologique [...] [que] consiste justement à admettre une relation entre les modes de l’intelligence et la structure de la société...”. Cf. Humphreys 1971, 191-192.

<sup>442</sup> “conquête de la pensée humaine [...] la notion de l’individu”.

<sup>443</sup> “au point de vue du droit penal [...] une certaine représentation de l’individu”.

<sup>444</sup> “biais de la sémantique [...] l’histoire des mots [...] représentation collective”.

<sup>445</sup> “le délit et la peine [...] l’idée de la personne comme objet du délit [...] l’idée de l’individu comme sujet du délit [...] répondent à un sentiment continu et diffus”. See Gernet 1917, i-x.

<sup>446</sup> “chose transcendente, d’une sorte de réalité néfaste en soi [...] l’idée claire et distincte de l’individu [...] l’intégration sociale qu’a réalisée la cité”.

<sup>447</sup> “le moment de la cite [...] l’établissement d’une justice organisée [...] un parallélisme analogue [...] l’évolution de la responsabilité [...] distinction du volontaire et de l’involontaire [...] la conception [...] de l’individu comme assuré d’une protection sociale”.

in Greek thought.<sup>448</sup> In Gernet's understanding, the establishment of rational thinking was tantamount to a decisive stage in the development of morality, the inauguration of "the autonomous conception of properly human institutions".<sup>449</sup> Thus, the origins of "the abstract cognitions of crime and punishment, of persons as subjects of rights, of individual responsibility", all coincide with the beginnings of a "new society" – i.e., a society complex enough to comprise the notion of juridical operations pertaining to singular victims, now actually conceived of as individual persons.<sup>450</sup>

This stage in the societal evolution, as well as in the concomitant development of judicial and politico-moral thinking was reached, as Gernet thought, with the city-state of the emerging Classical Age. Here, the individual was no longer absorbed into the "impersonal and divine force" of the honour (τιμή) inherent in the social determination of the 'family' (γένος). Because, by now, the city-state had been consolidated and with it "the abstract and positive notion of the individual" established.<sup>451</sup> As was the conviction of Gernet, it was thus that rationality and morality had arisen.<sup>452</sup>

Throughout his early masterpiece, the *Recherches*, Gernet stressed the religious root of criminal law. As Gernet conceived of it, however, it was not until this original "religious feeling" had been refined by an intellect within which the social institutions were comprehended as "human work", that anything like a "rational sentiment" may be recognized.<sup>453</sup> Consequently, the conception of the individual established with the system of justice of the consolidated city-state, as well as any true form of genuine morality and rationality, would have presupposed a certain detachment of the human spirit from the

---

<sup>448</sup> "le principe moteur de la pensée rationnelle [...] symbolisé par la souveraineté de la justice sociale".

<sup>449</sup> "un fait [...] décisif dans l'évolution de la pensée morale [...] l'idée autonome des institutions proprement humaines."

<sup>450</sup> "les notions abstraites du délit, de la peine, de la personne comme sujet de droits, de la responsabilité individuelle [...] l'idée du fonctionnement judiciaire dans une société déjà complexe [...] la pensée d'une société nouvelle, celui d'une sympathie abstraite en faveur de la victime individuelle". Cf. Siedentop 2014, 12 and 18: "the family, more or less extended, was the only social institution [...] Beating the bounds of the family domain was understood as establishing not just a physical but also a moral frontier. Outside that frontier were strangers and enemies [...] For the Greeks and Romans, the crucial distinction was not between the public and private spheres. It was between the public and domestic spheres. And the domestic sphere was understood as the sphere of the family, rather than as that of individuals endowed with rights."

<sup>451</sup> "l'individu est absorbée dans l'unité d'une force divine et impersonnelle qui symbolise le groupe lui-même [...] la conception abstraite et positive de l'individu."

<sup>452</sup> See Gernet 1917, 432-439.

<sup>453</sup> "sentiment religieux [...] œuvre humaine [...] sentiment rationnel". Cf. Gernet 1948, 196-197: "By means of a transition that we can no longer retrace, an operation of law was substituted for an operation of prelaw [...] There is a decisive turning point in the use of words when one goes from the oath-libation to obligation *verbis*, and, in a general way, from a religiously efficacious act to one that is juridically valid."



forces of nature and from the divine surroundings.<sup>454</sup> In truth, we can read Gernet with Vernant as putting forward a view, according to which an “aboriginal secularization” as the product of the consolidated city-state may be pointed at:

it led finally to the birth of a moral and political thought that was secular, and which dealt with the problems of order and disorder in human society in a purely pragmatic fashion.<sup>455</sup>

So far, we have seen how in the thinking of Gernet the supposed creation in Classical Greek Antiquity of the notion of the individual and of rationality, which the *Recherches* treated as two non-separable phenomena, were made dependent on the one and same event – namely, on the merger of the city-state.<sup>456</sup> What, then, does the notion of the advent of the city-state really proclaim? When could it have occurred and how did it come about?

### **Criticism of the essentialist conception of the Greek city-state**

Underlying the notion of the birth of the city-state is an essentialist and idealizing apprehension of the Greek polis as an “internal proceeding”. This entails an understanding of the city-state as characterized not only by its people and its institutions but as represented by a “spirit” of its very own (the “πόλις spirit”). In this view, the city-state forms its own historical process, in which a rise, a high point (ἀκμή) and a decline are thought to be clearly discernable.

In his influential article “When Did the Polis Rise?”, Victor Ehrenberg gave a perfectly undimmed answer to the question of when and how the dating of the onset of the city-state-process should be made: depending on region, he dated it to in and around 800 B.C. This fixing he based on the assumption that at this point ‘justice’ (δίκη), at least in many parts of the Greek world, had become the “traditional and admitted principle” of the polis, with a binding force on high and low alike.<sup>457</sup> Thus, in Ehrenberg’s view, the passage from γένος to πόλις would have been brought to completion when “the will and the way of the community” became the sole dominant political force. According to this, it was Classical democracy, which finally fulfilled the idea of a comprehensive community of citizens. The turn to direct democracy signalled the perfection of the πόλις, the ἀκμή after which decline was inevitable.<sup>458</sup>

This essentialist and idealizing conception of the Greek city-state, inherent in the work of Gernet and crystallized in Ehrenberg’s article, has been severely criticized by Kostas Vlassopoulos. According to Vlassopoulos, it is above all the “needs of Eurocentric history” which the concept of the πόλις has served. These needs the essentialist concept of the city-state has answered to by way

---

<sup>454</sup> “l’homme se détache de la nature où l’engageaient et le retenaient les δαίμονες.”

<sup>455</sup> See Vernant 1982, 71 and Gernet 1917, 277, 336, 394, 420, 432 and 447.

<sup>456</sup> Cf. Gernet 1917, 432.

<sup>457</sup> See Ehrenberg 1937, 155.

<sup>458</sup> See Ehrenberg 1937, 157-158.

of differentiating the Greeks and painting a picture of them as “originators of liberty and democracy”, in contrast and in contradistinction to notions of Oriental monarchies and their (assumed) characteristic despotism.<sup>459</sup> The history of the Greek city-state would amount, then, to nothing but another means to relegate the history of “the Rest of the World” to a story of aberrations. According to Vlassopoulos, this history has been written repeatedly ever since “the rise of the West” became the dominant view in the aftermath of the industrial revolution.<sup>460</sup>

In relation to this ‘Occidentalist game’, Vlassopoulos recognizes what he refers to as “orthodox accounts of Greek history”. These are histories conceiving of the Mycenaean societies, with their eastern-type monarchs and palatial bureaucracies, as a “false start of Greek history”. For Greece to be a true ancestor of the West, Vlassopoulos reasoned, a conception of an “unbridgeable gap” in its history was required. In order to conceive of a natural end to the counterfeit Mycenaean beginnings, what Vlassopoulos thought to have been introduced was the notion of the complete dismantling of the Bronze Age redistributive kingdoms. Thus, the stage emptied, and so the πόλις, the dominion of citizenship and rule of law, could finally arrive – bringing with it light to the passing Dark Age.<sup>461</sup>

This orthodox account, assuming the shape of a juxtaposition of the world of the Greek city-state against Orientalism and despotism – beautiful as it may appear – is exactly what Vlassopoulos would have us react against.<sup>462</sup> The counteraction he initiated himself, through a dismemberment of the envisaging of Ancient Greece as the provenance of radical societal innovation, as well as through the admitting of the need for an “environmental analysis of Greek politics” – i.e., for an exogenous perspective on Greek socio-genesis and on the progression of Greek political thought.<sup>463</sup> Indeed, Vlassopoulos even stated that it is impossible to approach the Greek city-state as a unit of analysis, since historically there was never any unitary form of a city-state society.<sup>464</sup> Most

---

<sup>459</sup> See Vlassopoulos 2007, 4.

<sup>460</sup> See Vlassopoulos 2007, 1. According to Vlassopoulos, the idealizing conception of the Greek city-state began to reign unchallenged in the field of Ancient History after the Second World War, not in the least due to the influence of the Paris School of philology. See Vlassopoulos 2007, 53.

<sup>461</sup> Cf. Vlassopoulos 2007, 56.

<sup>462</sup> See Vlassopoulos 2007, 117.

<sup>463</sup> See Vlassopoulos 2007, 110, 114 and 121.

<sup>464</sup> This is a view, which is certainly collaborated by the evidence provided by Aristotle regarding varieties of different constitutional arrangements on a scale between extreme democracy and radical oligarchy witnessed in the Greek world and beyond. See Aristot. *Pol.* 4.1290a.5: φανερόν τοίνυν ὅτι πλείους ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι πολιτείας, εἶδει διαφερούσας ἀλλήλων· καὶ γὰρ ταῦτ' εἶδει διαφέρει τὰ μέρη σφῶν αὐτῶν (“It is clear, therefore, that there must exist many different constitutions, differing from one another in kind”). Cf. Aristot. *Pol.* 4.1290a.12-15: μάλιστα δὲ δοκοῦσιν εἶναι δύο, καθάπερ ἐπὶ τῶν πνευμάτων λέγεται τὰ μὲν βόρεια τὰ δὲ νότια, τὰ δ' ἄλλα τοῦτων παρεκβάσεις, οὕτω καὶ τῶν πολιτειῶν δύο, δῆμος καὶ ὀλιγαρχία. (“For most part, however, they seem to be of two kind, just as with regard to the winds some are referred

importantly, in Vlassopoulos' understanding, Greek communities were always part of larger historically specific systems. Thus, instead of studying the πόλις, the πόλις as such or, as in truth often is the case, the Athenian city-state in particular, Vlassopoulos would have us embrace the analytical tool of a network spreading ideas, socio-political as well as military and other types, across the ancient world.<sup>465</sup>

In truth, an essentialist conception à la Vlassopoulos of the Greek city-state may be ascribed at least to the 'Paris School' of philology.<sup>466</sup> In my rendering of the *Recherches*, we saw how for Gernet, the moment of *la cité* came to form the organizing principle for the very rise of genuine rationality. Indeed, still half a century later, the sentiment was shared by his most important follower, Jean-Pierre Vernant.

The advent of the *polis*, the birth of philosophy – the two sequences of phenomena are so closely linked that the origin of rational thought must be seen as bound up with the social and mental structures peculiar to the Greek city.<sup>467</sup>

At this point, a series of questions, which I do not really find answered in the conjoined efforts of Gernet and Vernant, certainly present themselves. One question concerns the work of Gernet specifically and relates to his unquestioned equating of proto-individualism with rationality. Why should this identity be assumed, and who, except the male head of the family, could ever have been "individualized" in any given Greek city-state? In fact, one may ask whether Greek Antiquity ever really left the γένος behind.<sup>468</sup> Another, perhaps

---

to as being of north while some are of south, while the others are regarded as deviations of these, thus the constitutions are also of two kinds, people's rule and rule of the few").

<sup>465</sup> See Vlassopoulos 2007, 156, 170-171 and 179-180. While reading the in many ways excellent work of Vlassopoulos, I often got the impression that he could have profited from taking the time for a closer study of the theoreticians he most eagerly accuses of playing the 'Occidental game'. In that case, he may have noticed that quite a bit of his own advices had already been worked out in the theories he attacked. One of the scholars mentioned by name by Vlassopoulos, and whose theories he clearly pays special attention to in his criticism, is Christian Meier. Meier's notion of "the Greek invention of politics" is deemed by Vlassopoulos to be simplistic in presupposing a restricted conception of politics, equaling it with the workings of "self-proclaimed participatory institutions" and with foreign policy. This notion of politics is, as Vlassopoulos notes, problematic for the democracies of today, since in them foreign politics are, in fact, conducted by small unaccounted groups or individuals. The functioning of these would then have to be conceived of as pre-political or even despotic. See Vlassopoulos 2007, 117-118. It is exactly the exceedingly problematic character of modern political life, however, which Meier is reacting against in his work. See Meier 1990, 7. It must also be noted that Meier is not at all foreign to the idea of intellectual movements functioning as networks spreading ideas all across Greece and beyond. In truth, he presupposes the existence of such a network at the starting point of the process of politicization of the Greek world. See Meier 1990, 41.

<sup>466</sup> Cf. Detienne 1996, 103: "The interconnected hoplite reform and the birth of the Greek city were indissociable from a crucial intellectual mutation in the development of Greek thought..."

<sup>467</sup> See Vernant 1982, 130.

<sup>468</sup> Cf. Siedentop 2014, 352.

even more pressing, question arises from the work of Vlassopoulos, as well as from the exogenous perspective on Greek societal development more generally. Given all that we know about relations of trade, colonization, and exchange of ideas in the “networked” ancient world, is it not very short-sighted to believe in any kind of unique Greek contribution to rational thought.<sup>469</sup> The latter is a question, which an exclusively endogenous perspective on the development of Western thought in its initial Greek phase seems unable to grapple with.<sup>470</sup>

These kinds of objections notwithstanding, I share the main sentiment of Gernet, Vernant and the rest of the Paris school. The societal constructs and the developing political thinking – enfolding over the course of some centuries and fixated in thorough societal-intellectual breaks within some Greek city-states – was endowed with features that justify a conception of some specific Greek beginnings.<sup>471</sup> By taking on the work of Vernant, I will now strive to add to the inquiries of the previous chapters and flesh out my understanding of that in which these beginnings may have crystallized.

### **Jean-Pierre Vernant and the birth of philosophy as a “desacralizing” of knowledge: moving towards the theory of the origins of political philosophy**

I have pointed my finger at how Gernet conceived the rise of the notion of the individual, or even rationality and morality as such, as presupposing a certain

---

<sup>469</sup> Cf. Giddens 1984, 245: “Agrarian states always exist along time-space edges in uneasy relations of symbiosis and conflict with, and partial domination over, surrounding tribal societies, as well, of course, with other states which may struggle for hegemony over a given area. To insist that social change be studied in ‘world time’ is to emphasize the influence of varying forms of intersocietal system upon episodic transitions. If all social life is contingent, all social change is conjunctural. That is to say, it depends upon conjunctions of circumstances and events that may differ in nature according to variations of context, where context (as always) involves the reflexive monitoring by the agents involved of the conditions in which they ‘make history’”.

<sup>470</sup> What made the emerging inquiries into nature and the cosmos at large in the Ancient Greek cultural sphere more genuinely rational than, e.g., the speculative abstract theorizing surmounting in the intellectual life of the ancient Indian world just before the time of the Buddha? See Organ 1954, 125. Cf. Taber 2004.

<sup>471</sup> Cf. Gschnitzer 1988, 302: “die Rolle des Griechentums scheint in dieser Entwicklung der inneren Verfassungen doch eine grundsätzlich andere gewesen zu sein als bei der Ausbildung und Ausbreitung der Staatstaaten als solcher. Denn diese Entwicklung von der Monarchie über die Adelherrschaft zur Demokratie hat ihren Ausgangspunkt offenbar in Griechenland selbst gehabt, wo sie etwa vom 8. Oder 7. Bis zum 5. Und 4. Jahrhundert durchlaufen wurde [...] Wir sehen noch deutlich genug, wie der ‘Fortschritt’ in der Verfassungsentwicklung vom Herzen Griechenlands aus wellenförmig um sich greift, wie er mit beträchtlicher Verspätung und zum Teil nur sehr unvollkommen die anderen Länder der Alten Welt erreicht (und manche auch nicht). Auch auf diesem Gebiet also ist die Einheit der politischen Entwicklung des Altertums ziemlich deutlich ausgeprägt, auch auf diesem Gebiet stehen die Griechen nicht isoliert da; aber auf diesem Gebiet sind offenbar sie die Führer und Lehrmeister aller anderen gewesen, jedenfalls solange, bis die Entwicklung Roms zum Weltreich in der römischen Verfassungsgeschichte, die bis dahin durchaus der von den Griechen gewiesenen Richtung gefolgt war, einen höchst gewaltsamen Bruch herbeigeführt hat, der zuletzt das Ende nicht nur der römischen, sondern aller antiken Stadtrepubliken mit sich bringen sollte.”

partition of the human mind and its institutions from the perception of the forces of nature and/or the divine sphere.<sup>472</sup> Furthermore, I showed how this conception was emphasized by Vernant, so that in the understanding of the latter the arrival and consolidation of the city-state came to be tantamount to what could be referred to as an “aboriginal secularization”.<sup>473</sup> After having been acquainted with the critique of Vlassopoulos, the work of Vernant may now be included among its specific targets, since not only does Vernant seem to have embraced the essentialist notion of the πόλις, but he certainly also clinched to a version of an orthodox account of Greek history. In the hands of Vernant, this orthodoxy assumed the form of quite a straightforward exposition of the beginnings of the “secularized” politico-ethical rationale within Greek thought.<sup>474</sup>

In the understanding of Vernant, the initial Mycenaean collapse and the synchronized disappearance of the ἄναξ – i.e., the king on top of the Bronze Age palatial societies – lead to the clash of the subsisting social forces, or of the surviving village communities and the old warrior aristocracy (the γένη). Because of this antagonism, the Greek world could witness the rise of σοφία, an early form of human wisdom, aspiring to harmonize the conflicting forces, and thus from the beginning set on the quest for a “human order of the city”.

An unbridgeable distance had opened between humans and the gods: the figure of the god-king had vanished.<sup>475</sup>

...*sophia* appeared as early as the dawn of the seventh century, and was associated with a rather odd assortment of figures who came to be

---

<sup>472</sup> Cf. Detienne 1996, 103-104: “namely, the construction of a system of rational thought that dramatically broke with the old, religious, all-encompassing type of thought in which a single form of expression sufficed for different types of experience.”

<sup>473</sup> Of course, neither Vernant nor I have meant either to deny the continued central place of religion in Greece civic life, or to refuse to accept that the gods were, throughout the Classical Age and still later on, conceived of both as the originators of the society as well as guarantors of its further existence and prospering. See Sourvinou-Inwood 1990, 305-306. Cf. Bryant 1996, 174. However, by the time of the Classical Epoch, it may be that at least a partial disembedding of religion had occurred. This may very well have resulted in both a more abstract form of religious thinking, as well as in a more pragmatically fashioned political and moral thought. Cf. Snell 1955, 60.

<sup>474</sup> See Vernant 1982, 39-40. Cf. Vidal-Naquet 1986, 255-256. It is possible, of course, to aim at making nonsense of the idea of an ancient counterpart to secularization. This could be done with resort to the claim that in the Greek world there seems never to have been any attempt to do away with religion in relation to any public or domestic institution. Cf. Siedentop 2014, 352: “instead of an antiquity free of religion, priesthood and superstition – a ‘secular’ inspiration for modern Europe – we find on closer examination that the family, tribe and city were each a kind of church.” However, I am yet to discern any religious views in the constitutional understanding evidenced in the Constitutional Debate.

<sup>475</sup> Vernant 1982, 39.

clothed with an almost legendary radiance and whom the Greeks continued to revere as their first true sages.<sup>476</sup>

On this account, the “true beginning” of Greek history would presuppose the erasing of the “false start” of the Bronze Age societies, but only insofar as this dismantling paved the way for the sages, the σοφοί. In the understanding of Vernant, these were the primeval representatives of a distinctively human wisdom relating to distinctively human affairs, of ἀνθρωπίνη σοφία disclosing ἀνθρωπίνη φύσις.<sup>477</sup> Yet the wisdom of the early sages would still have been thought of as being exceptional in character; the σοφοί were always conceived of as transmitters of a truth coming from above.<sup>478</sup> With the “advent of the city-state”, this epistemic exclusiveness was, however, broken.<sup>479</sup> As Vernant thought, it was the civic sphere inaugurated within the city, which transformed the nature of the secret wisdom. From now on, this wisdom was forced into assuming the shape of a body of communal truths: σοφία “brought the mystery out into the public sphere”.<sup>480</sup> In the end, the demand for accountability would have resulted in explicitly posed problems requiring answers fully without mystery; with the Milesians the “desacralizing of knowledge” was completed.<sup>481</sup>

Gernet had conceived of the origins of genuine rationality and morality as a sort of intellectual refinement, or clarifying, of an original religious sentiment. In a similar fashion, through what I have referred to as the notion of an “aboriginal secularization”, Vernant understood the beginnings of philosophy as an “alienation” in relation to its own religious-mysterious roots. How was this *Entfremdung* brought about?

The answer may be found in Vernant’s conception of the paradoxical nature of early philosophy: “it wavered between the sense of secrecy peculiar to

---

<sup>476</sup> Vernant 1982, 40.

<sup>477</sup> See Vernant 1982, 40. Cf. Gernet 1917, 336, Hdt. 2.45 and Plat. *Apol.* 28e.

<sup>478</sup> Cf. Sol. fr. 4 (30-32) (West): ταῦτα διδάξει θυμὸς Ἀθηναίων με κελεύει, ὡς κακὰ πλείστα πόλει Δυσνομία παρέχει, Εὐνομία δ’ εὐκοσμία καὶ ἄρτια πάντ’ ἀποφαίνει. (“This my heart orders me to teach the Athenians, that ill order brings most bad things, whereas good order reveals everything with well-attunedness and fittingness.”)

<sup>479</sup> To speak of the coming of the city-state as a factual happening, as the representatives of the philological school of Paris generally do, is somewhat mystifying.

<sup>480</sup> See Vernant 1982, 54 and 58-59.

<sup>481</sup> See Vernant 1982, 107. Cf. Aristot. *Met.* 983b.17-25: ...δεῖ γὰρ εἶναι τινα φύσιν ἢ μίαν ἢ πλείους μιᾶς ἐξ ὧν γίγνεται τᾶλλα σωζομένης ἐκείνης. τὸ μέντοι πλῆθος καὶ τὸ εἶδος τῆς τοιαύτης ἀρχῆς οὐ τὸ αὐτὸ πάντες λέγουσιν, ἀλλὰ Θαλῆς μὲν ὁ τῆς τοιαύτης ἀρχηγὸς φιλοσοφίας ὕδωρ φησὶν εἶναι... .. λαβὼν ἴσως τὴν ὑπόληψιν ταύτην ἐκ τοῦ πάντων ὄραν τὴν τροφήν ὑγρὰν οὖσαν καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ θερμὸν ἐκ τούτου γιγνόμενον καὶ τούτῳ ζῶν... .. διὰ τε δὴ τοῦτο τὴν ὑπόληψιν λαβὼν ταύτην... (“it must be of some one (thing of) nature, either of one or of several, out of which the other things are born, while it (they) (the original thing(s)) prevail(s). However, on the number and the character of such first things not all say the same, but Thales, the originator of this kind of philosophy, says it is water [...] having perhaps gotten this idea from seeing that everything is nourished by moisture, and that warmth itself comes from it and lives by it [...] this is how he got this idea”).

the cults and the public argument that characterized political activity”<sup>482</sup> In the understanding of Vernant, it was with the Eleatics, and specifically with Parmenides’ posing of the unique problems of Being and Knowing, that philosophy finally began to free itself from its double-origins – only to commit itself, initially at least, to its self-made spheres of problematizing.<sup>483</sup>

Here, however, our interest must pause. What I aim to target instead is that very pass in the theoretical construction of Vernant, where the human mind is pictured to have begun to elevate itself above its naturalized and deified surroundings.

The decline of myth dates from the day the first sages brought human order under discussion and sought to define it, to render it in formulas accessible to the intelligence, and to apply to it the standard of measure and number. Thus evolved a strictly political thought, separate from religion, with its own vocabulary, concepts, principles, and theoretical aims.<sup>484</sup>

It emerges, then, that the broad constitutional notions that had formerly been current – embracing economic, social, ethical, and political affairs and grounded in religion and metaphysics – were superseded in the fifth century by others that centred narrowly upon the public order and relations among the citizens as citizens (*politai*) – in other words, on what we could call the political sphere, which now assumed an almost autonomous role within the total structure of relations...<sup>485</sup>

With the above lines, two great scholars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in what must be considered their main works, pushed their pencils onto the question of the origins of an autonomous politico-ethical rational. In these passages, the core meaning can be conceived of as lying in the idea of a break of the human spirit from panoptic conceptions, relating the whole of nature and the divine sphere with society. This original disengagement, Vernant and Meier agree, was what enabled the rise of a political thinking in its own right. In the work of these scholars, we can detect the formation of an idea of the “beginnings of secular

---

<sup>482</sup> Vernant 1982, 59. Cf. Gernet 1945, 364: “In fact, the claim inherited by the philosopher from a prehistoric past is not really codified in the actual polis. Beforehand it was disavowed by the polis. The very conditions that made the philosophical movement possible could not support the quasi-religious assent that domination by sages would have demanded.” The idea of the beginnings of a secular-political rationale connecting to a “decline of myth” within Greek thought cannot convince, of course, otherwise than as a figure of speech. In the second chapter of the present investigation, I connected the finalization of autonomous political thought with the factual construction of new myths, albeit of a demythologizing character.

<sup>483</sup> See Vernant 1982, 131-132. Cf. Vernant 2006, 247.

<sup>484</sup> See Vernant 1982, 131.

<sup>485</sup> See Meier 1990, 164-165.

thinking”. How can this germ, this alleged quintessential event in the development of collective problematizing capacities, be utilized in an attempt at tracing the origins of political philosophy?

I closed the previous chapter with the assumption that Classical Political Philosophy could not ensue from the fusion of the cratistic turn and of internal critique, which I hypothesized had resulted in the inauguration of Classical Political Theory, before truly new horizons had been discovered. This would require fields of visions enabling a view beyond the different theoretical positions hitherto fully determined by “the distances separating the real political oppositions”.<sup>486</sup> In the thinking of Vernant, in contrast, it seems to have been “the advent of the *polis*” as such, or the disclosing within it of an orb of categorically human affairs, which gave room for a wholly new secular-political-philosophical thought to emerge.<sup>487</sup>

Nonetheless, Vernant reckons with continuity in early philosophy with regard to pre-existing forms of thought. The first societal reformers, equalling the initial philosophers, the σοφοί, were still proclaimers of hidden or privileged truths, of things unseen or of the completely invisible – of ἄδηλα or of ἀφανῆ.<sup>488</sup> What Vernant thought to have caused the crucial break, leading to a completely new type of investigation and theory, was in fact the progression that in some city-states would have its end-point in the emergence of direct democracy. With “the cosmological projection” of Anaximander, philosophy finalized the secularization of political thinking, initiated by the first σοφοί, Vernant thought. Thus, the “spatial framework” of the city-state, or the new conceptions of order, based on ideas of equality and symmetry at work on the human level, were tossed onto the world of nature, and so:

*Monarchia* was replaced, in nature as in the city, by a rule of *isonomia*.<sup>489</sup>

Nevertheless, the claim could be made that even the philosophy of Anaximander – and in fact the whole of that part of early Greek cosmological thought that dealt with questions of “balancing of powers”, and worked with conceptions presupposing ideas of ‘like order’ (ἰσονομία) – was unable to envision a radical real-world alternative to the, as of yet, unreplaced (albeit broadened)

---

<sup>486</sup> See Meier 1990, 185.

<sup>487</sup> “With Solon, Dike and Sophrosyne came down from heaven to take up residence in the agora”. See Vernant 1982, 84-87.

<sup>488</sup> See Vernant 1982, 57-60. Cf. Gernet 1956, 343-345.

<sup>489</sup> See Vernant 1982, 122. Cf. Vernant 1982, 108 and 119. Cf. Anaximand. B 2 (DK): ὅλον τὸν κόσμον πνεῦμα καὶ ἀήρ περιέχει (“the whole universe is surrounded by breath and air”). Of course, one would have to go quite far back in time from Anaximander’s days to find μόναρχος actually present in the Greek poleis.



elite rule.<sup>490</sup> This probably remained so until the factual replacement of the reigning principle of elite rule had taken place – i.e., when in the real world δημοκρατία had first materialized.

Thus, if one assumes, with Vernant, that the beginnings of ancient “secular” thought can be traced to the new emphasis brought to equality – on both a societal and cosmic level – within early Greek thought of the late 6<sup>th</sup> century, the “secularism” thus arrived at would still be unable to circumvent the religious authorization of the societal status quo. This is to say that the political thought, with which this “secularism” had merged, would have no real capacity to cause any major changes in the political life which it referred to, but would function rather like a mirror of the prevailing order. Therefore, if one’s interest is in the beginnings of a kind of “secular” rationale, which allowed for proper displacement of religious legitimation in the form of an admitting of real-world alternatives – not to mention the further overcoming of these alternatives in the form of non-religiously legitimized “utopian visions of societal transformation” – one must look further ahead in time.

Departing from Vernant’s assumptions of the early development of philosophy, conceived of as the first true secular rationale emerging under the guiding light of the democratizing city-state, a theory regarding the development of political thinking towards political philosophy may nevertheless be constructed. *The hypothesis suggested here posits two decisive sequences in the history of the origins of political philosophy. In the first sequence, a “secular” political thought is prefigured – i.e., a secular thought not in the modern sense of aiming consciously to disregard all religious considerations by conceptually alienating itself from them, but in the sense of being de facto secular.*

Referred to here is a political thought directed conclusively on the matter at hand (τὰ προκειμένα πράγματα), by way of strictly paying heed to the best argument or solution (e.g., λόγος, γνώμη) to the given situation.<sup>491</sup> Perhaps the prefiguring of this kind of rationale may be sensed already in the earliest projections of “horizons of divine authorization”, which moved from conceptions of disorder in the human world to a refiguring of the order of the divine sphere – e.g., when Solon replaces Zeus with Εὐνομίη as the main deity.<sup>492</sup> All the same, *in the second sequence this de facto secular thought is finalized and embarks upon its era of domination. This happens when philosophy finally frees itself from its mysterious-religious beginnings and entrusts itself to the public sphere of the now fully democratized city-state.*

Offered here is a vision of political philosophy as an intellectual endeavor, which no longer is the announced wisdom of the chosen few, nor is it anymore

---

<sup>490</sup> Cf. Vlastos 1947, 156: “Greek scientific thought generally [...] envisaged harmony in terms of equality. Cosmic equality was conceived as the *guaranty* of cosmic justice: the order of nature is maintained *because* it is an order of equals.”

<sup>491</sup> Cf. Hdt. 1.207.3.

<sup>492</sup> See Solon fr. 4 (30-32) (West). Cf. Irwin 2005, 187.

allocated to its self-made sphere of problematizing.<sup>493</sup> What has taken place instead, is that philosophy has become so deeply entrenched in some of the most fundamental questions formative for the political life of the democratized city-state – above all, the question of which main principle of rule to follow – that it has taken upon itself the task of overcoming these oppositions by conceiving of wholly new ways of ordering society.<sup>494</sup> This would be a type of philosophy, which – as a child of the political life of the democratized city-state – has grown and begun to look more and more like its parent.

Greek reason was not so much the product of human commerce with things as of the relations of human beings with one another. It developed less through the techniques that apply to the world than through those that give one person a hold over others, and whose common instrument is language: the art of the politician, the rhetorician, the pedagogue. Greek reason is that reason which makes it possible to act practically, deliberately, and systematically on human beings, not to transform nature. In its limitations as in its innovations, it is a creature of the city.<sup>495</sup>

Perhaps it would be worthwhile to aim at clarifying the hypothesis suggested in this chapter by stating it in even more figurative terms. In this case, we could say that Classical Political Philosophy emerged, after a form of thought had begun to be practiced, wherein the projectors shooting images on the basis of conceptions of an ideal order – which had always been relating to the human sphere, but which had also always been projected onto the divine – were shut down completely. This would have first transpired, so the hypothesis states, when the societal determinations peculiar to some parts of Ancient Greece of the Classical Age – those parts where full-scale direct democracy had emerged

---

<sup>493</sup> For a clear-cut example of post-Parmenidean self-made problematizing in connection to early Greek philosophy, see Empedocle. D19 (Most and Laks): οὐκ ἔστιν πελάσασθαι ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἐφικτόν, ἡμετέροις ἢ χερσὶ λαβεῖν, ἢ πῆρ τε μεγίστη, πειθοῦς ἀνθρώποισιν ἀμαξίτῳ εἰς φρένα πίπτει. (“It is not possible for us to reach it by approaching it with our eyes, or grab it with our hands, although it is just this way, which for human beings is the main road of persuasion going into the mind.”) Here πειθοῦς ἀνθρώποισιν ἀμαξίτῳ, the passage of persuasion for humans, clearly connects to the Parmenidean πειθοῦς κέλευθος, the road of persuasion, which shows how firmly the Parmenidean association of ἀλήθεια (truth) with true inducement, and the corresponding radical dissociation of this type of persuasion from what was conceived of as mere δόξα (belief or opinion) had grown into the mind of the philosophers.

<sup>494</sup> See Plat. *Menex.* 238c: πολιτεία γὰρ τροφή ἀνθρώπων ἐστίν, καλὴ μὲν ἀγαθῶν, ἢ δὲ ἐναντία κακῶν (“the constitution is the nourisher of men, a good one of good men, the opposite of bad ones”). Cf. Aalder 1968, 2: “Die Form der Verfassung, die Staatsform, war für die Griechen des 5. und 4. Jahrhunderts v. Chr., die, wenigstens für Griechen, nur die Polis als vollwertige politische Gemeinschaft betrachteten, von zentraler Bedeutung. Die Verfassungsform war das zentrale Problem in ihren innerpolitischen Streitigkeiten, und daher vielfach auch in ihrem politischen Denken”).

<sup>495</sup> See Vernant 1982, 132.

– had finalized its pervasion of the intellectual life belonging to it. For philosophy to finally take the form of Classical Political Philosophy, the only further progression needed was for philosophy to begin its pervasion of Classical democracy.

I will set about resolving the question of the viability of this hypothesis through a reading of the evidence contained in Book VII of Herodotus. The evidence is provided by the War Councils of Xerxes. These are the Herodotean speeches, in which Xerxes is deliberating with two of his trusted counsellors, Mardonius and Artabanus, at the very moment of the beginning of Xerxes' campaign against Greece.<sup>496</sup> The councils offer an inestimable glimpse of the clash and fusion of two opposing representations – which in fact are at odds with each other to such an extent that they could be conceived of as antithetic. What we will meet here is, on the one hand, a thinking based in the simple recognition of the undeniable force of the best argument (pragmatic secular thinking). On the other hand, we will encounter a representation declaring the notion of one man above everyone and everything. This is the original notion of godly sanctioned authority; the conception of the sacred monarch, with so much power invested in him that he sees himself, and others are forced to conceive of him, as being in parity with the gods.

It was Herodotus who placed the words into the mouths of the characters in the stories, where we find the clash of *λόγος* and *μόναρχος*. At the basis of this juxtaposition there probably was, however, if not a *représentation collective*, at least a common area of interest, pertaining to the intellectual climate of the time and place of Herodotus – namely, that of the heart of the Classical Epoch of Ancient Greece.<sup>497</sup>

### **Xerxes' War Councils and the beginnings of Classical Political Philosophy**

I claimed that the War Councils of Xerxes carry with them the amalgamation of two conflicting representations – that of the god-king and that of the power of *λόγος*. The hubristically godly pretension of Xerxes is played up in the famous scene in which Xerxes has the Hellespont whipped with 300 lashes for destroying his bridge.<sup>498</sup> Thus, the Xerxes figure of the Herodotean narrative lays claim to exclusive power, not just with regard to his fellow men and subjects, but like a true god, he sees himself standing above nature too, and he

---

<sup>496</sup> For the four speeches, two for Xerxes and one each for Artabanus and Mardonius, see Hdt. 7.8-11. Artabanus was the brother of Darius and thus, as Xerxes' uncle, in a special position in relation to him. Mardonius had a history of high command under Darius. Herodotus famously portrays Mardonius setting up democracies in Ionian city-states subdued by the Persians. See Hdt. 6.43. Later in the Herodotean narrative, Mardonius' figure stands out in the aftermath of Xerxes' defeat at Salamis and at Plataea. See Hdt. 8.100 and 9.41.

<sup>497</sup> Cf. Thomas 2000, 67.

<sup>498</sup> See Hdt. 7.35. Here, the contrast between Xerxes' sudden burst of anger and his disengaged Zeus-like pose and gaze at other occasions in his campaign against Greece is conspicuous. Cf. Hdt. 7.44 and Jong 1999, 268.

cannot stand the thought of some part of it not bowing to his will. Nevertheless, right before crossing the sea, he prays to the sun and makes offerings to the Hellespont, as had he suddenly remembered that there are other gods as well.<sup>499</sup>

εὔχετο πρὸς τὸν ἥλιον μηδεμίαν οἱ συντυχίην τοιαύτην γενέσθαι, ἢ μιν παύσει καταστρέψασθαι τὴν Εὐρώπην πρότερον ἢ ἐπὶ τέρμασι τοῖσι ἐκείνης γένηται [...] μετεμέλησέ οἱ τὸν Ἑλλήσποντον μαστιγῶσαντι καὶ ἀντὶ τούτων τὴν θάλασσαν ἐδωρέετο.<sup>500</sup>

he prayed towards the sun that no other such incident would befall, before he would pause from conquering Europe or reach its limits [...] he then regretted having whipped the Hellespont, so instead he gave the sea offerings.

Equally striking, when it hits the reader somewhat earlier in the narrative, seems the opposing representation of the power invested in λόγος. This happens when Xerxes is about to announce his decision to attack Greece, but wishes first to discuss the matter with his counselors. In a strange contrast to his utterly tyrannical manners, he says

ἵνα δὲ μὴ ἰδιοβουλεύειν ὑμῖν δοκέω, τίθημι τὸ πρῆγμα ἐς μέσον.<sup>501</sup>

in order not to seem to you to be following my own counsel, I place the matter in the middle.

Indeed, one could say that Xerxes' "language of openness – setting the 'affair in the middle' and inviting 'whoever wishes to speak' – sits uneasily with the language of necessity and command."<sup>502</sup> Because just a few lines before, Xerxes had expressed his clear intention to conquer the lands he seems to think of as a territory destined to be subdued.

οὐ γὰρ δὴ χώραν γε οὐδεμίαν κατόψεται ἥλιος ὄμουρον ἐοῦσαν τῇ ἡμετέρῃ, ἀλλὰ σφέας πάσας ἐγὼ ἅμα ὑμῖν χώραν θήσω, διὰ πάσης διεξελθὼν τῆς Εὐρώπης.<sup>503</sup>

---

<sup>499</sup> Cf. Zali 2015, 78.

<sup>500</sup> See Hdt. 7.54.2-3.

<sup>501</sup> See Hdt. 7.8.δ2.

<sup>502</sup> See Barker 2009, 176-177. Cf. Grethlein 2009, 198: "In truly tyrannical fashion, albeit using vocabulary reminiscent of democratic procedures, Xerxes opens the floor for a general discussion of whether or not to invade Greece after he has given the first orders to start the preparations for the expedition."

<sup>503</sup> See Hdt. 7.8.γ2.

Not one land that the sun looks down upon shall border ours, but I will make them all into one land for you, after having marched through the whole of Europe.

### *The War Councils of Xerxes*

The speech that follows begins the council. In it, Mardonius is depicted as expressing his adherence to the judgment of Xerxes. In this connection, he makes use of what may strike the modern reader as a particularly twisted plea for moral consistency.

ὦ δέσποτα, οὐ μόνον εἷς τῶν γενομένων Περσέων ἄριστος, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν ἐσομένων, ὃς τά τε ἄλλα λέγων ἐπίκειο ἄριστα καὶ ἀληθέστατα, καὶ Ἴωνας τοὺς ἐν τῇ Εὐρώπῃ κατοικημένους οὐκ ἐάσεις καταγελάσαι ἡμῖν ἔοντας ἀναξίους. καὶ γὰρ δεινὸν ἂν εἶη πρῆγμα, εἰ Σάκας μὲν καὶ Ἴνδους καὶ Αἰθιοπίας τε καὶ Ἀσσυρίους ἄλλα τε ἔθνεα πολλὰ καὶ μεγάλα ἀδικήσαντα Πέρσας οὐδέν, ἀλλὰ δύναμιν προσκτᾶσθαι βουλόμενοι, καταστρεψάμενοι δούλους ἔχομεν, Ἕλληνας δὲ ὑπάρξαντας ἀδικίης οὐ τιμωρησόμεθα.<sup>504</sup>

‘Master,’ he said, ‘you are the greatest Persian there has ever been, nor will there ever be anyone equal to you in the future either. Throughout your speech you made some excellent and extremely valid points, but particularly important was your promise not to let those despicable Ionians – the ones living in Europe – get away with making fools of us. We conquered the Sacae, the Indians, the Ethiopians, the Assyrians, and plenty of other important races, and we now hold them in slavery. Why? Not because they did us any wrong, but just because we wanted to increase our dominion. It would be a terrible thing, then, for us not to punish the unprovoked aggression of the Greeks.’

Here, Mardonius uses an argument which represents a kind of self-referential internal critique, where implicit normative principles are remonstrated as being inconsistent with explicit normative views.<sup>505</sup> The principle in question is connected to the Persian way of conquering and enslaving without retaliation. The explicit view can be traced to the unwillingness of the Persians to take up arms against the Greeks. In fact, Mardonius bases his approval of the standpoint of Xerxes exclusively on the soundness of the λόγος of the king. What Mardonius is aiming for, then, is to enforce the strength of Xerxes’ arguments by bringing them to their logical conclusion. By the power of an unbeatable argument, the Greeks should be subdued along with the other races.

<sup>504</sup> See Hdt. 7.9. Transl. Waterfield.

<sup>505</sup> Cf. Tralau 2012, 46-48.

After Mardonius, Artabanus enters the scene with the intention of doing what probably no one else would dare to in the presence of the king – namely, “pointing at an opposing thought” (γνώμην ἀποδείκνυσθαι ἀντίην τῇ προκειμένῃ).<sup>506</sup> In fact Artabanus also begins his argumentation with an implicit plea for the overriding power of λόγος in that he denies the possibility of sound judgment in circumstances where the possibility to choose between opposing arguments is not provided.<sup>507</sup> Artabanus then reveals himself to be the carrier of a very specific functional role in the overall scheme of the Herodotean narrative, namely that of a “wise adviser” of a purely dissuading kind (*Warner*).<sup>508</sup> His actual argument against the expedition rests on his own experience: it would be futile to attack the Greeks, who are so much more powerful than the Scythians who even they were able to defeat the Persians – as Artabanus himself had been forced to witness under the rule of Darius.<sup>509</sup>

However, like Darius before him, Xerxes refuses to pay heed to the warning of Artabanus, because “in this enmity there is no middle ground” (τὸ γὰρ μέσον οὐδὲν τῆς ἐχθρῆς ἐστί). Either the Greeks will attack the Persians, or the Persians will attack the Greeks, Xerxes claims, and in the end, one of them will surrender to the other.<sup>510</sup> Yet the same night, Xerxes’ belief in this necessity falters, and the conclusion he reaches is that Artabanus is right. Very soon, however, he is convinced otherwise again, this time by a twice-recurring nightly vision of an imposing and threatening man.<sup>511</sup> Thereafter, after dressing in the king’s clothes and sleeping in his bed, the same vision of a man magically enforces the agreement out of Artabanus as well, the sole person in the betrothed group of Xerxes who had dared to oppose the planned invasion.<sup>512</sup>

The final impetus to the decision to go on a march against Greece, Herodotus’ narrative here suggests, rests neither in the authority of speech, nor in the godly power of Xerxes.<sup>513</sup> The final authority rests in a figure in a nightly

<sup>506</sup>Here, Artabanus’ daring is not a matter of fool-heartedness: Ἀρτάβανος ὁ Ὑστάσπεος, πάτρως ἐὼν Ξέρξης, τῷ δὴ καὶ πύσσινος ἐὼν. (“Artabanus, son of Hystaspes, being uncle to Xerxes, was also thrust to him”). See Hdt. 7.10.

<sup>507</sup>μη λεχθεισέων μὲν γνωμέων ἀντιέων ἀλλήλησι οὐκ ἔστι τὴν ἀμείνω αἰρεόμενον ἐλέσθαι. See Hdt. 7.10a. This is “the most formal articulation of the benefit of antilogy” to be found in the Herodotean corpus. See Barker 2009, 181.

<sup>508</sup>See Lattimore 1939, 24: “There are, in the main, two kinds of wise adviser [in Herodotus]. Of these, the more familiar may be called, for convenience, the tragic warner [...]. This type of adviser, then, is the sage elder who tries to halt the headstrong action in a chief; he is in general pessimistic, negative, unheeded, and right.” Cf. Bischoff 1932.

<sup>509</sup>See Hdt. 7.10A.2-3. Cf. Hdt. 5.83.

<sup>510</sup>See Hdt. 7.11.

<sup>511</sup>For Xerxes’ two *Schicksalsträume* regarding the ἄνδρα μέγαν τε καὶ εὐεϊδέα, the “big and well-shaped man”, encouraging and threatening Xerxes to go on with his planned campaign against Greece, see Hdt. 7.12-14. Cf. Frisch 1968, 11-15.

<sup>512</sup>See Hdt. 7.17-18.

<sup>513</sup>On the lacking *auctoritas* of Xerxes, in contrast to his full *potestas* with regard to his Persian interlocutors, see Zali 2015, 77-78.

vision. This leads Artabanus to the following reinterpretation of the brashness of Xerxes.

γνώμην εἶχον ἀτρεμίζοντά σε μακαριστὸν εἶναι πρὸς πάντων ἀνθρώπων. ἐπεὶ δὲ δαιμονίη τις γίνεται ὄρμη, καὶ Ἕλληνας, ὡς οἶκε, φθορή τις καταλαμβάνει θεήλατος, ἐγὼ μὲν καὶ αὐτὸς τράπομαι καὶ τὴν γνώμην μετατίθεμαι, σὺ δὲ σήμηνον μὲν Πέρσησι τὰ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ πεμπόμενα, χρᾶσθαι δὲ κέλευε τοῖσι ἐκ σέο πρότοισι προειρημένοισι ἐς τὴν παρασκευήν, ποίειε δὲ οὔτω ὅκως τοῦ θεοῦ παραδιδόντος τῶν ὄντων ἐνδεήσει μηδέν.<sup>514</sup>

I was of the opinion that happiness for you – and happiness that everyone would recognize – lay in remaining peacefully at home. But since your impetuosity is god-given, and since the destruction overtaking the Greeks is apparently heaven sent, it is my turn to turn back and change my mind. Let the Persians know about the visions you have received from the god and tell them to carry on with their preparations in accordance with the first orders you issued; and then make sure that, since the god commands it, you do everything you must.

Thus, Herodotus has made Artabanus transfer all the responsibility for the upcoming war to a sphere above the human:

ἐπεὶ δὲ δαιμονίη τις γίνεται ὄρμη, καὶ Ἕλληνας, ὡς οἶκε, φθορή τις καταλαμβάνει θεήλατος, ἐγὼ μὲν καὶ αὐτὸς τράπομαι καὶ τὴν γνώμην μετατίθεμαι.

Since some divine onrush comes, and the Greeks, as it seems, some godly destruction overtakes, I also turn back myself and change my argument.

That the perception of a godly charge (δαιμονίη ὄρμη θεήλατος) was what finally led Xerxes' on his march, and that Herodotus also recognized this as the ultimate cause for the campaign, was a claim brought forth by the most authoritative voice of modern scholarship.<sup>515</sup> Can we be certain, though, that Herodotus really thought or wanted his audience or readers to think that

---

<sup>514</sup> See Hdt. 7.18.3. Transl. Waterfield.

<sup>515</sup> See Jacoby 1913, 445-446, who believed that Herodotus had been able to gather “ganz vorzügliche Nachrichten” on the events taking place at the Persian court. Cf. Hdt. 7.12.1.

Xerxes was a man chosen to be a recipient of immortal deception and tragically predestined to march against Greece?<sup>516</sup> More recently, this tragic interpretation of Herodotus' historical understanding has been defended by Jonas Grethlein:

Besides divine envy that seems to underlie the apparition that appeared to Xerxes, divine retribution and the cycle of good and bad fate are competing models that conceptualize dramatic changes in the *Histories* [...]. In the end, as the dreams of Xerxes reveal, human beings are at the mercy of the gods.<sup>517</sup>

Actually, it is not wrong to say that what could be labeled a tragic view of history may be divined in Herodotus' work.<sup>518</sup> Perhaps Herodotus could even be taken to explicitly state such a view in the form of the idea expressed by Croesus after his own downfall of the cycle determining human destiny:

ἐκεῖνο πρῶτον μάθε, ὡς κύκλος τῶν ἀνθρωπιῶν ἐστὶ πρηγμάτων, περιφερόμενος δὲ οὐκ ἔῃ αἰεὶ τοῦς αὐτοῦς εὐτυχέειν.<sup>519</sup>

Learn this first, that human matters form a cycle, which when turning does not allow for the same people to be fortunate forever.

Nevertheless, the Herodotean dissolving of the conflict between reasoned argument and absolute might could be interpreted following another course. This would be an interpretation paying heed to the tension between the “secularism” and the “metaphysics” inherent in the juxtaposition of the council scene and the story of the dream.

The tension between the “secular” character of the problematic decision facing Xerxes and its alternative “metaphysical” solution evidenced by the dream-story was first brought to the fore by Friedrich Solmsen in one of his last contributions to the field of Classical philology. Solmsen noted that the fully “secular” version provided by the council scene is in fact backed up in the subsequent narrative at the place where Artabanus and Xerxes are made to review the decision to go on the march after the campaign against Greece has

---

<sup>516</sup> Perhaps we may detect an echo in the dream of Xerxes and Artabanus of a “Greek tradition: the narrative of a dream – apparently deceitful – appearing to a king to urge him to war unmistakably recalls the beginning of the second book of the *Iliad*, when Zeus sends the false dream to Agamemnon. Here too a dream follows on from a debate in which the king gets angry, only in this case Xerxes demonstrates a great deal more self-control and reflection than Agamemnon.” See Barker 2009, 180. Cf. Hom. *Il.* 2.5-36 and Thompson 1996, 103 (f.n. 29).

<sup>517</sup> See Grethlein 2009, 203-205. Cf. Pohlenz 1937, 125.

<sup>518</sup> Cf. Jong 2014, 190.

<sup>519</sup> See Hdt. 1.207.2.



already begun. Here, however, they suddenly pass over the allegedly divine interference of the dream.<sup>520</sup>

The time has now come for a reappraisal of the interpretive strand introduced by Solmsen.

### *Herodotus and political philosophy?*

What are we to make of the fact that Herodotus chooses to dissolve the clash and fusion of the two antithetical representations of, on the one hand, the λόγος of the free city-state (ruled only by the δεσπότης νόμος), and on the other hand, of the ultimate power of the god-king (the tyrant who extends his power pretensions to the point of being immune against ὕβρις) in the vision of a dream?<sup>521</sup>

One way of answering this question without paying heed to a Herodotean vision of tragic faith is to take resolve to the arguments contained in the War Councils preceding the tale of the ominous dreams of Xerxes and Artabanus. Here, the first argument of Xerxes is also the one which strikes the reader with particular force as it is taken up by Mardonius, as we have seen, in the latter's employment of internal critique in order to defend his master's position. This is the argument from Persian custom, or νόμος – which is presented here as the historically approved and godly sanctioned way of the Persians. This way is, according to Darius and Mardonius, of never seizing to conquer and subduing, but always striving to increase the dominion of the empire.<sup>522</sup>

The suggestion would be, then, that actually Xerxes' dream and his own way of thinking and arguing are telling him the same thing:

To return to the dream of Xerxes: the dream is telling Xerxes the truth...  
...Xerxes is a kind of tragic figure, but what drives him into an act of *hybris* is not his fate, but the *nomoi* of Persia, which he cannot abandon without changing the nature of his empire and endangering his own position.<sup>523</sup>

As far as it brings forth a likely historical substratum in the Herodotean account of Xerxes' decision, this attempt to subdue the difficulty inherent in the

---

<sup>520</sup> See Solmsen 1974, 157-159. Cf. Hdt. 7.47: ὦ βασιλεῦ, ὄνις μὲν ἡ ἐπιφανεῖσα τοῦ ὄνειρου ὡς βουλόμεθα ἀμφοτέρου τελευτήσειε, ἐγὼ δ' ἔτι καὶ ἐς τὸδε δείματος εἰμί (“My king, may the vision showed in the dream turn out the way we both want it, I, however, still worry about...”).

<sup>521</sup> For the concept of δεσπότης νόμος, see Hdt. 7.104.

<sup>522</sup> See Hdt. 7.8a: “νόμον τόνδε [...] παραδεξάμενός [...] αὐτῷ χρῆσομαι [...] οὐδαμὰ κω ἡτρεμίσαμεν, ἐπεῖτε παρελάβομεν τὴν ἡγεμονίην [...] ἐγὼ δὲ ἐπεῖτε παρέλαβον τὸν θρόνον τοῦτον, ἐφρόντιζον ὅπως μὴ λείπομαι τῶν πρότερον γενομένων ἐν τιμῇ τῆδε μηδὲ ἐλάσσω προσκλήσομαι δύνάμιν Πέρσησι”. “This law [...] having received it [...] I use myself [...] never have we kept quiet, not since we received the leadership [...] and I having received this throne here [...] have been thinking how not to be left behind in regard to honour, as compared to those born before me, and how not to acquire any less territory for the Persians”.

<sup>523</sup> See Evans 1961, 111.

apparent conflict of the narrative is sound.<sup>524</sup> My choice, however, is to look at the Herodotean conflict of argument and religiously authorized power from another angle. I claim that with his separate and equivocal accounts of the estimations leading Xerxes on his utterly unsuccessful march against Greece, Herodotus is conducting what could properly be called political philosophy.

What occurs with the brusque nightly visions of Xerxes and Artabanus is that the opposing pretensions of *μόναρχος* and *λόγος* dissolve and fade. Acknowledged is thus the need for recognizing a standard beyond the authorities of argument, the power of reason, and might – the might of the king, or the even more powerful might of custom and law in any shape:

καὶ ὀρθῶς μοι δοκεῖ Πίνδαρος ποιῆσαι νόμον πάντων βασιλέα φήσας εἶναι.<sup>525</sup>

Truthfully, it seems to me, Pindar says in his poem that law is king of all.

The tension between “metaphysics” and “secularism” in the story giving the background to Xerxes’ final decision to march against Greece is thus annihilated at the moment when the *Histories* enters the domain of a critique of politics and the political life *tout court*.<sup>526</sup> Such a critique is exactly what the audience is invited to take part in as the narrative dresses up the religiously authorized might of *νόμος* through which the power of *λόγος* may be fully disqualified into a most hideous form, and yet gives it all the power to invalidate that which has been decided by reasoned argument.<sup>527</sup> In truth, what Herodotus does is to invite his audience to themselves take part in a debate that seemingly takes place at the Persian court, but which in fact is centred in the very specific and very real political life of the Greeks:

the possibility of dissent in the Persian court is raised only to be silenced. Yet, the debate *does* work: Artabanus’ carefully framed dissent makes Xerxes think again and reach a judgment that is more favourable

---

<sup>524</sup> For further discussion of the possible historical substrata in the narrative giving the background to Xerxes’ decision, see Köhnken 1988, 37-38.

<sup>525</sup> See Hdt. 3.38.4.

<sup>526</sup> More explicit critiques of political life may be detected in Greek literature from the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C., e.g. in Xenophon’s *Cyropaideia* – where it is clear that “a comparison of the strengths and weaknesses of republican and imperial politics as an elaboration of the contradictions and limitations of the attainment of justice and the common good in both regimes” takes place. See Nadon 1996, 373. Cf. *Xen. Cyr.* 1.2.15 and 1.3.10, where the story is, in the one place, on social immobility in the Persian empire, and in the other place, the punchline is on democratic “freedom of speech” (*ἰσηγορία*).

<sup>527</sup> For the most hideous form the power of Persian customs and laws takes in the Herodotean narrative, see Hdt. 7.18.1, where Xerxes’ dream-vision appears to Artabanus threatening him *θερμοῖσι σιδηρίοισι ἐκκαίειν αὐτοῦ μέλλειν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς* (“to burn his eyes with hot gleaming iron”).

to all. Contrary to expectations, then, it appears that it is possible to dissent at the Persian court [...] Moreover, it is a decision by which Xerxes stands; it takes the intervention of the dream-vision to get the move to war back on track. Greek assumptions about debate are being severely tested.<sup>528</sup>

To become convincing in itself, Herodotus' narrative teaches us, the "secular" power of reasoned argument needs to be strengthened; it needs to be transformed. Perhaps this would be a transformation reaching all the way into the souls, or the minds in a thorough fashion, of the individuals being thus changed.<sup>529</sup>

Doubtlessly, this kind of transformative-seeking story could not have been envisioned by Herodotus had there not been at least one individual in his surroundings, in whose hands Classical Political Philosophy – as a form of philosophy seeking transcendence of all hitherto envisioned political alternatives – had actually been practiced. At least for a short while, this original form of political philosophy had thus formed a living substance in the midst of the society, wherein the presuppositions for its birth had first been fulfilled.

If there was an absolute beginning for political philosophy, it was when philosophy, after maturing into the vision of its parent, started its independent life as a transformer of the society, which had given birth to it. Did this occur for the first time when Socrates sat down with the pair of youngsters named Critias and Alcibiades, and did Classical Political Philosophy commit the paramount and decisive betrayal of its promises, as Critias became the leader of the Thirty Tyrants?

---

<sup>528</sup> See Barker, 2009, 181.

<sup>529</sup> Cf. Plat. *Symp.* 216c-223d.

# Conclusion: The Origins of Political Philosophy – and the End of History and Progress?

The contribution of the present investigation to the field of research on the Histories of Herodotus may be summarized under the following two points.

1. In the first place, this study has completed the comprehension, first enhanced in a systematic fashion by Rosalind Thomas in her *Herodotus in Context*, regarding the *Histories* as directly relating to a common area of inquiry into nature and society witnessed in 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Greece. The present investigation has especially been able to increase the understanding of the work of Herodotus as taking part in progressions shaping the kind of logically well-rounded arguments which were employed by the Classical Greek intellectuals in their investigative activities.<sup>530</sup> As an addition to the examples of deductive arguments of the *reductio ad absurdum* type found in the Herodotean corpus and explicated by Thomas, this study has brought to knowledge the range of argumentative patterns extant in the *Histories* connected specifically to investigations surrounding normative and societal questions. These arguments are of a kind that refute indirectly by taking up normative views and principles the criticized subjects themselves adhere to, but they cannot be considered any less logically well-rounded than any of the reductive arguments that the *Histories* also contain. Although internally critical arguments do not necessarily proceed directly from the premises to the conclusion, what they strive to uncover are still nothing less than logical inconsistencies in the application of norms. The present investigation has particularly focused on uncovering the range of arguments forming proper internal critique extant in Book III of the *Histories*, but clearly recognizable examples of internal critique of different kinds may be detected throughout the Herodotean corpus.<sup>531</sup> One central accomplishment of this investigation is thus to have shown that the *Histories* of Herodotus, together with the early tragedies, form the earliest preserved texts within the

---

<sup>530</sup> Cf. Thomas 2000, 175-190.

<sup>531</sup> See e.g. Hdt. 4.137, 7.9 and 9.122.

Ancient Greek cultural sphere, incorporating clear-cut examples of arguments designed to scrutinize by directly confronting subjects with inconsistencies in their politico-moral outlook.<sup>532</sup>

2. In the second place, this investigation has brought forth new interpretations of three central and much discussed passages in the *Histories*. The Deioeces episode in Book I has for the first time in this study (Chapter 2) been given a reading that offers an alternative to the common scholarly assumption interpreting the story primarily as a set-piece of Greek political theory centred on the question of the origins and characteristics of tyrannical rule.<sup>533</sup> In the alternative reading put forward here, the story of the first Median king is understood to mirror a prior desacralization of the world-historically dominant notion of sacred monarchy. In this investigation, the Deioeces episode has thus been interpreted as a foundational myth of a demythologizing character, but as one relating foremost to the notion of divinely sanctioned kingship rather than tyranny. The Constitutional Debate in Book III, on the other hand, has been given a reading (Chapter 3), which shows how in the Herodotean debate centred on the question of the best alternative constitution, a conflating of logically sound internally critical arguments and a new way of thinking of constitutions as humanly applicable entities conjoin for the first time in extant Greek literature. The reading of the Constitutional Debate offered in this investigation may thus be seen to present an antithetical interpretation to the one put forward by Helmut Apffel in the hitherto only monograph on the Constitutional Debate. Here, Apffel concluded that the speeches of the debate evidence “instead of logical rationales a sort of historical-genetical point of view”.<sup>534</sup> Finally, in this study Xerxes’ War Councils in Book VII has been given a reading (Chapter 4) that proceeds from a reappraisal of the interpretative strand introduced by Friedrich Solmsen, and which concentrates on the tension between “secularism” and “metaphysicism” evidenced in Herodotus’ rendering of the Councils and the surrounding narrative. The reading provided by this study may thus be seen to defend an alternative to the interpretations stressing the tragic view of history, which the story of Xerxes’ councils is supposed to bear witness to.<sup>535</sup> The alternative reading offered here assumes that Herodotus’ story of Xerxes’ councils on the eve of

---

<sup>532</sup> For the explication of internal critique found in some of the earliest tragedies such as Aeschylus’ *Oresteia* and Sophocles’ *Antigone*, see Tralau 2005 and Tralau 2018.

<sup>533</sup> For the common scholarly view connecting the story with questions of tyrannical rule, see Patzek 2004, 69, Bichler 2000, 235 Thomas 2012, 250-251 and Raaflaub 2002, 173.

<sup>534</sup> “...statt logischer Begründungen eine Art von historisch-genetischer Sicht”. See Apffel 1958, 54.

<sup>535</sup> For more recent studies stressing the Herodotean tragical apprehension of history as it is evidenced in the story of Xerxes’ councils as well as in other passages of the *Histories*, see Grethlein 2009, 203-205 and Jong 2014, 190.

the Persians' march against Greece, together with the surrounding narrative's suggestion of divine intervention as the ultimate cause for the campaign, may be interpreted as bearing witness to an early form of democratized social critique. In this understanding, the Herodotean narrative would have juxtaposed the account stressing the role played by reasoned argument with the one emphasizing the absolute might stemming from divinely sanctioned custom in order to bring out the danger inherent in blind adherence to custom or law of any kind.

In general, this investigation may be seen to have continued on the path disclosed by that part of the scholarship on Herodotus of recent decades, which recognizes in Herodotus a genuine representative of and source for the political thought of the Classical Age of Ancient Greece. Bearing in mind that the first exposition dealing particularly with Herodotean political thought, Karl Wüst's *Politisches Denken bei Herodot*, did not consider the *Histories* as evidencing any kind of genuine political rationale, a change in paradigm in this regard is truly noticeable.<sup>536</sup> Particularly important for the strand of scholarship stressing the genuine political nature of Herodotus' work have been the contributions of Sarah Forsdyke and Rosaria Vignolo Munson, both of which have laid emphasis on the thorough present-orientedness that the text of Herodotus bears witness to and the reaction against Athenocentric and Graecocentric supremacist tendencies that the *Histories* evidence.<sup>537</sup> The shift in paradigm thus witnessed during the last decades and which has resulted in a new appreciation of Herodotus as a political thinker in his own right may be detected also in broader works dealing with the history of political thought in general. In the work of Alan Ryan, e.g., Herodotus' *Histories* is actually presented as the first text giving evidence to genuine political thought: the inauguration of the classical conception of politics.<sup>538</sup>

The novelty that the present investigation has had to offer with regard to research focusing on ancient political thought is the utilization of the content of the *Histories* as evidence for a historical theory focusing on the progression of ancient Greek political and moral thought towards political theory and philosophy proper.

The remainder of this concluding chapter is divided into two parts. In the first part, I recapitulate the set of three hypotheses forming the historical theory defended in this work. I will recount, then, the main arguments and evidence in favour of the theory, as well as contrast each of the three connected hypotheses with some alternative conceptualizations dealt with in the course of the investigation. In the second part of the chapter, I return to the contemporary relevance of the question of the origins of political philosophy.

---

<sup>536</sup> See Wüst 1935, 75: "Die herodoteische Geschichtsschreibung ist in ihrem eigentlichen Wesen und in ihrer Absicht nicht politisch..."

<sup>537</sup> See Munson 2001, 79 and 172 and Forsdyke 2006, 229-232.

<sup>538</sup> See Ryan 2012, 23-24.

## Recapitulation of the theory

As it stands, the series of hypotheses forming the theory suggested in this work rests on conceptual assumptions: the theory strives to isolate autonomous political thinking from whatever does not meet these standards, and it separates political theory and political philosophy proper from its non-sufficient counterparts as well. In the following, I first break down the respective conceptual assumptions presumed by the hypotheses by contrasting each of them with an alternative account. After that, I will move to the recounting of the main arguments and evidence in favour of the hypotheses forming the theory.

### 1. *The birth of “secular”-autonomous political thought as a consequence of the completed turn to direct democracy*

The theory defended in this investigation suggests (Chapter 1 and 2) that a new kind of autonomous and “secular” political thought was first introduced into human societies with the turn to direct democracy – a shift that was completed in the beginning of the Classical Age in some city-states of Ancient Greece. According to the dominant scholarly view, the breakthrough of δημοκρατία took place in Athens with the reforms of Cleisthenes in 508/507 B.C., but an alternative account holds that direct democracy may have been first realized in 494 B.C. in Argos.<sup>539</sup> I myself, again, have defended the view that at least in Athens the breakthrough resulting in the completed turnover of the main principle of rule followed in and by the society at large did not occur before 462 B.C. and the reforms of Ephialtes.<sup>540</sup> Regardless of when exactly δημοκρατία was first realized in the Ancient Greek world, the political thought resulting from the shift may be conceived of as autonomous because its basis was in the continued independent operation of the political system belonging to the newly established direct democracies. As far as the in-group of enfranchised male citizens was concerned, this was a political operation characterized by an almost fully realized formal equality with regard to the communal decision-making process. The democratic resettling resulting in conditional egalitarianism overriding social hierarchies within the political sphere was the fundament upon which the autonomy of the political life and the political thought belonging to it also rested.<sup>541</sup>

The “secularity”, in turn, of the political thought in question could not have been based on any kind of institutionally established conceptual distinction

---

<sup>539</sup> For the dominant scholarly view connecting the breakthrough of direct democracy with the reforms of Cleisthenes, see Cartledge 2007, 164. Cf. Simonton 2017, 20-25. For the alternative view placing the first realization of people’s rule in Argos in the 490’s B.C., see Robinson 2011, 196-197.

<sup>540</sup> For the view underlining the importance of the reforms of Ephialtes for the realization of full-scale direct democracy in Athens, see Rihill 1995, 96-97. Cf. Raaflaub 2007, 106.

<sup>541</sup> Cf. Cartledge 2016, 7-8.

between religious and secular spheres, such as would be typical for modern Europe after the reformation – as well as perhaps for certain premodern societies, such as ancient Japan after the introduction of Buddhism.<sup>542</sup> Instead, it was political thinking of a “de facto secular” kind – i.e., it was secular in a way in which all or most religious considerations were factually left out of play in the actual operating of the political thought in question. The difference between modern secularization and ancient “secular” thought could perhaps best be described as a difference between alienation from and circumvention of religious authority, where the former would apply, e.g., to the modern Christian world, whereas the latter would apply (in at least some significant contexts) to the Classical Age of Ancient Greece.

The theory defended by me points to the inauguration of this kind of “secular” and autonomous political thought as one central necessary and enabling condition for the originating and continued existence of both Classical Political Theory, as well as for Classical Political Philosophy (Chapter 1 and 2). However, based on a different conceptual understanding, such a realized political autonomy and/or “secularity” may not at all be a necessary condition for the beginnings of either political theory or political philosophy as properly understood. In this case, we could easily trace both political theory and political philosophy further back in time – perhaps even as early as to the earliest forms of political thought. If so, then a *terminus post quem* for neither political theory nor political philosophy could be fixed either, since political thought in one form or another is bound to have existed for as long as there has been human co-living.<sup>543</sup>

Other possibilities of conceptualizing the question of the beginnings of political theory and political philosophy are of course possible as well, as will be shown.

## 2. *The beginnings of political theory as effected by the first conjoining of cratistic political thinking and internal critique*

The theory defended in this investigation suggests further (Chapter 3) that political theory in its proto-typical alternative-admitting Western form came to existence for the first time when the new form of autonomous and “secular” political thought – which had begun its operation as a consequence of the turn to direct democracy – had resulted in a “cratistic” transition in political thinking. The turn to cratistic thinking would be tantamount to an earliest constitutionalization of political thinking, as it was now, for the first time, that different constitutions – democracy, oligarchy and monarchy, as well as their combinations and varieties – began to be conceived of as abstract, transferrable

---

<sup>542</sup> For the view according to which a clear-cut separation between the political and the religious sphere of societal power was realized in ancient Japan as a consequence of the introduction of Buddhism as state religion in the 550’s A.D., see Paramore 2017, 24-25.

<sup>543</sup> Cf. Black 2009, 8.



and humanly applicable entities.<sup>544</sup> What was required apart from the cratic turn for political theory to commence was, as I have hypothesized, the further fact that the juxtaposing of these constitutional alternatives was embarked upon by way of an application of arguments critically scrutinizing normative statements and principles – namely, by way of internal critique.

A different conceptual understanding relating to the question of the beginnings of political theory would be one which would disqualify the requirement of an admitting of a radical alternative order for political thinking to rise to the plane of political theory proper. In this case, the political thought evidenced by the earliest thorough critiques of the prevailing rule – namely by those segments of the works of Hesiod and Homer, wherein the rule of the βασιλεῖς is judged upon, and which point to a comprehensive elite-rule reformation having taken place in the Greek world of the Archaic Age – could well be counted as political theory.<sup>545</sup> Such an alternative take on the beginnings of political theory would be one, which ascribes political theory proper to a societal setting – where as of yet no alternative had been admitted to the prevailing principle of rule. This would be the principle equating the possession of societal privilege with divinely sanctified custody of most or all political power.

3. *The origins of political philosophy as effected by the earliest visions of humanly attainable transcendences of all political alternatives*

Finally, the theory defended here suggests (Chapter 4) that political philosophy in its earliest form, Classical Political Philosophy, began to be practiced in the Ancient Greek world first when the possibility had been envisioned of actually transcending all the different constitutional forms and their varieties disclosed by Classical Political Theory. For this to happen, the theory states, philosophy had first to complete the transition, which took it beyond its mysterious-religious beginnings and into the plane of the “secular” thought now decisive for at least part of the political thinking taking place in the fully democratized societies – wherein philosophy also continued to be practiced. For philosophy to turn into political philosophy proper, it had to take the further step beyond the “secularism” of Classical Greek political thought and begin the actual transformation of the subjects involved in this new way of thinking – but without taking resort to the divine sphere, which political thinking had already left behind.

An alternative conceptual understanding relating to the question of the origins of political philosophy would be one which would not take into account the requirement of any sorts of “utopian visions of overcoming” of the prevailing rule and its alternatives for political philosophy to be practiced. In this case, one could count among the ranks of Classical Political Philosophy many more of the representatives of inquiries into the political πράγματα – all of

---

<sup>544</sup> Cf. Ehrenberg 1950, 525 and Bleicken 1979, 164-165.

<sup>545</sup> See Hes. *WD*. 263-264 and Hom. *Od*. 4.690-691.

those, in fact, which can be seen to relate directly to the political life of the Greek societies – and certainly not only the canonical Classical Political Philosophers: Socrates, Plato and Aristotle.

Examples of investigative activities that could be taken to form Classical Political Philosophy would include the conservative works of Isocrates on how to best perform one's duties as a citizen precisely under the prevailing order and with a view mostly to one's own best benefit.<sup>546</sup> A differing conceptual understanding could even allow for the admitting of the author of the "Sisyphos-fragment" as part and parcel of Classical Political Philosophy, as in this fragment the "secular" political thought is taken to its extreme. With this, I mean that the fragment gives evidence of a kind of atheism, which equals the supposed revealing of the misconception of divine origins and divine upholding of the societal order with a factual disclosure of the gratuitousness pertaining to all societal arrangements (all νόμοι). According to this view, it would be futile to maintain any of the norms regulating human co-living.<sup>547</sup>

However, explicit reckonings with the philosopher's need to produce utopian visions of societal transcendence and corresponding individual transformation are found at the very center of the paradigmatic examples of Classical Political Philosophy, namely in the works of Plato and Aristotle.<sup>548</sup>

After having thus presented the conceptual underpinnings, as well as some relevant alternatives to the theory proposed in the present investigation, I move to the recapitulation of the central evidence and the arguments in favour of the theory.

### **Overview of the evidence and arguments in favour of the theory**

First, I will overview the evidence in favour of each hypothesis separately. After that, I will conclude with a few remarks regarding their connection.

#### *1a. Evidence and arguments in favour of the postulation of Ancient Greek "secular"-autonomous political thinking*

The most famous representatives of the school of thought connecting the emerging world of the Classical Greek city-states with the coming into being of a comprehensive secular rationale are the representatives of the Paris philological school, Louis Gernet and particularly Jean-Pierre Vernant.<sup>549</sup> Later, the view that extensive secularity can be traced to the world of the Classical

---

<sup>546</sup> Cf. Isocr. *Ant.* 271, 285.

<sup>547</sup> See See Crit. *Sis. Sat.* 25.12-14 and 37-40 (DK). Holding this view would entail nothing less than a failure "to understand that norms figure as 'factual' boundaries of social life, to which a variety of manipulative attitudes are possible". See Giddens 1984, 4.

<sup>548</sup> See See Aristot. *Pol.* 7.1333b.5-11 and Plat. *Rep.* 472c-d.

<sup>549</sup> See e.g. Vernant 1982, 71

poleis have been defended by others, e.g. Friedrich Solmsen and Peter Euben.<sup>550</sup> Against the view of secular thought having characterized Classical Greece, the idea of “embedded religion” as a defining feature for all institutions in all societies of the Graeco-Roman world stands in stark contrast. This school of thought has been presented, *inter alia*, in the works of Mary Beard, Simon Price and Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood.<sup>551</sup>

At first glance, it seems that the ideas of secularism and embedded religion are mutually exclusive, and they would be, if we were to look at some of the claims made in favour of them. Thus, the conviction of Louis Gernet that the judicial systems of the Greek Classical Age saw the earliest emergence of the notion of societal institutions as *œuvre humaine* (‘human work’) cannot be reconciled with Simon Price’s view, according to which religion in Ancient Greece was “embedded in all aspects of ancient life”.<sup>552</sup> I believe, however, that the ideas of an “aboriginal secularization” and “embedded religion” can be harmonized. This could be done if we would pay heed to the possibility that whereas throughout Antiquity the gods continued to be generally reckoned with as both originators and guarantors of societal life, by the time of the Classical Age, there had nevertheless appeared a political thought that as a matter of fact completely bypassed the divine sphere. The latter form of thought is what I have referred to with the term “de facto secular” political thought.

The most clear-cut evidence of an ancient de facto secular rationale can be found in the works of the earliest preserved Greek historians, namely in the works of Herodotus and Thucydides. Herein, one encounters examples of what I have termed a “practical-political” rationale (Thucydides), or of political thinking consisting in pure “political-theoretical” constructs (Herodotus). The latter is evidenced, above all in the Constitutional Debate in Book III of Herodotus, wherein different constitutional alternatives are weighed against each other without any resort taken to a divine sphere.<sup>553</sup> The former is evident throughout Thucydides’ *Histories*, but may be exemplified with reference to the Mytilenean Debate. Here, Cleon begins his speech by assuming that the prevailing democracy is practically useless as a system, by which he means that it is “unable to rule over others” (ἀδύνατόν ἐστιν ἐτέρων ἄρχειν), thereby implying that the democratic order should be replaced by turning to some other principle of rule.<sup>554</sup>

The combined evidence provided by Herodotus and Thucydides can hardly leave any room for doubt regarding the existence of the kind of rationale in

---

<sup>550</sup> See Solmsen 1974, 157-159 and Euben 1986, 371-372.

<sup>551</sup> See Sourvinou-Inwood 1990, 305-306, Beard & al. 1998, 43 and Price 1999, 89.

<sup>552</sup> See Gernet 1917, 336. Cf. Price 1999, 89.

<sup>553</sup> See Hdt. 3.80-82.

<sup>554</sup> See Thuc. 3.37.1: πολλάκις μὲν ἤδη ἔγωγε καὶ ἄλλοτε ἔγνων δημοκρατίαν ὅτι ἀδύνατόν ἐστιν ἐτέρων ἄρχειν. (“Often already have I, on other occasions, noticed in democracy its inability to rule over others”).

the Classical Age of Ancient Greece, which I have termed ‘de facto secular’.<sup>555</sup> This would be so, even if this kind of thought were to be found only within history writing, which, however, it is not.<sup>556</sup>

The question that emerges is whether this kind of “secularism” ever really was a novelty in the Ancient Greek world, or whether it had not in fact been around for much longer. Here, one could look at the example provided by the earliest preserved law codes, e.g., that of Dreros from 550 B.C., wherein it is stated that a citizen should not be allowed to act as *κόσμος* (i.e., some kind of officer) twice within the period of ten years. Since there are no references to divine authorizations in the preserved text of the code, could it not be assumed that the political thought evidenced by the care taken as to the circulation of offices represents a “de facto secular” rationale as well, but one pertaining to the Archaic Age of Ancient Greece?<sup>557</sup>

What is disregarded if this is assumed to have been the case, however, is the possibility that divine legitimation – i.e. such authorizations that would not allow for any view not taking the principle of elite rule as a given – was simply working as an ever-present background in the whole system of law followed by the Drerians at this point in time. Therefore, the need to inscribe the conceptions and concepts giving expression to these authorizations would never have existed – not in Dreros, nor in any other city-state – before the inauguration of the first democracies, except in certain exceptional circumstances (e.g., when a new colony was set up).<sup>558</sup> That such conceptions could no longer be self-evidently appealed to in the struggle to uphold the prevailing order by

---

<sup>555</sup> For a further example of this kind of political thinking as evidenced in the *Histories* of Herodotus, see Hdt. 7.47.

<sup>556</sup> See e.g. Aesch. 3.6.

<sup>557</sup> For the full text of the law code from Dreros, see Gagarin 1986, 81-82.

<sup>558</sup> Cf. Anderson 2005, 197: “the scope of extant early laws is distinctly narrow and their competence limited. Grand intentions, like structuring relations between different status groups, are conspicuously avoided [...] there is little evidence in the laws themselves that they were used to nurture the development of more ‘progressive,’ egalitarian regimes. Their concerns are rather for the most part procedural, focusing more on the conduct of officials than on behavior within the community as a whole. In other words, the impression of the archaic state we derive from the early laws is not one of any well-articulated political order, suitably equipped to govern a relatively complex society. Still less does this entity seem to have been animated by the kind of broadly inclusive sense of civic community that was so characteristic of the polis in the classical era. The early Greek city-state, it seems, was an altogether less ambitious enterprise—a minimally structured, vaguely defined institutional space in which private interests and competition for power within the elite might be negotiated.” See also Foxhall 1997, 119, according to which the politico-social systems in the city-states of the Archaic Age boiled down to “little more than a stand-off between the members of the elite who ran them.” I don’t think we have any reason to believe, though, that the lower strata in the citizen-body were completely hindered from influencing the communal decision-making process in the Archaic Age either. See Giddens 1984, 16: “Power within social systems which enjoy some continuity over time and space presumes regularized relations of autonomy and dependence between actors or collectivities in contexts of social interaction. But all forms of dependence offer some resources whereby those who are subordinate can influence the activities of their superiors. This is what I call the *dialectic of control* in social systems.”

δήμου κρατοῦσα χεὶρ ('the ruling hand of the people') is suggested, *inter alia*, by the introduction of a "writ alleging unconstitutional proposals" (γραφὴ παρανόμων), sometime after the breakthrough of democracy in Athens.<sup>559</sup>

It is at this point that the theory of the emergence of "secular" political thought in the Classical Greek world combines with the idea of a beginnings of autonomous political thinking. The theory defended by me states that it was first when the very principle of rule followed in and by the community at large had completely shifted that political thought *could* start to disregard, or circumvent, cosmically naturalizing notions of divine legitimation.<sup>560</sup> In other words, it was when the hitherto always (in one form or another) prevailing principle of elite rule had been replaced by realized rule of the people – i.e., when the turn to direct democracy had been completed and acknowledged – that the human order began to be conceived of in terms freed from religious authorizations.

Up and until that point, the different forms these divine legitimations could take (in their authorizations of differing forms of elite rule) would always have been decisively present in the background in the organization of the rule of the society and in the upholding of the societal order. It was only when δημοκρατία had been realized that the political thought decisive with regard to the organization of the societal arrangements freed itself, or began to circumvent, notions of authoritative control – both of a societal-hierarchical as well as a divine kind.<sup>561</sup> This is why it is first in the Classical Age of Ancient Greece, and first after the breakthrough of democracy, that we encounter evidence of a kind of political theory that reckons with a radical alternative to the prevailing principle of rule.

---

<sup>559</sup> See Aristot. *Ath. Pol.* 29.4 and Hansen 1974, 28 and 55. That the charge of an unconstitutional proposal would have been considered a serious matter, perhaps the most serious matter, in the Athenian direct democracy of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C., is brought out clearly in Andocides' speech *On the Mysteries*. Here, the text brings forth a completely new tone of distress, as the speaker moves to recapitulate an opinion according to which some alleged offences may have involved a more hideous conspiracy, namely one directed against the democratic order as such. See Andoc. 1.36: ἔλεγον ὡς εἶη τὰ ἔργα τὰ γεγενημένα οὐκ ὀλίγων ἀνδρῶν ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τῇ τοῦ δήμου καταλύσει, καὶ χρῆναι ἐπιζητεῖν καὶ μὴ παύσασθαι. ("...they said that what had happened was not the work of a few men, but an organized attempt to overthrow the people's rule, and that therefore the investigation had to continue and not be allowed to pause").

<sup>560</sup> Which is not to say, of course, that hereafter it always and everywhere did, nor that all or most of the people practicing this kind of thought would not have still reckoned with their πόλις-religion as an essential part of societal life. Cf. Linke 2005, 5: "Die Teilnahme an den Opferritualen der Polis symbolisierte die Zugehörigkeit zur politischen Gemeinschaft und diente damit der Selbstvergewisserung der sozialen Identität."

<sup>561</sup> Cf. Arendt 2006a, 105: "...the master, according to Greek common opinion (which was still blissfully unaware of Hegelian dialectics), was not free when he moved among his slaves; his freedom consisted in his ability to leave the sphere of the household altogether and to move among his equals, free men. Hence, neither the despot nor the tyrant, the one moving among slaves, the other among subjects, could be called a free man."

*2a. Evidence and arguments in favour of the beginnings of political theory as effected by the coming together of cratistic thinking and internal critique*

The strongest arguments in favour of the Constitutional Debate of Herodotus forming the first extant example of political theory proper have been provided by the combined efforts of Jochen Bleicken and Victor Ehrenberg. It was Ehrenberg who first brought forth the important insight that the Herodotean debate represents the earliest theoretical discussion, in which alternative constitutions are weighed over and against each other.<sup>562</sup> Bleicken, in his turn, realized that in the Constitutional Debate, the constitutions are treated as abstract, transferrable and humanly applicable entities in a way previously unheard of.<sup>563</sup>

At least among Classical scholars, it is in fact a commonly accepted view that the Constitutional Debate represents the first example of political theory proper.<sup>564</sup> In my own attempt to explain the emergence of political theory – as it is evidenced in and by the Constitutional Debate – I have approached the question of its origins as the causal outcome of the merger of a new kind of political thought (cratistic thinking) and a new emphasis brought to the logical consistency of normative reasoning (internal critique).

The presupposition of a prior realization of constitutional alternatives as humanly changeable, in combination with the premise that these alternative rules were then weighed against each other by means of normative reasoning of an internally critical kind, would explain how political theory began to be practiced first in the Classical Age of Ancient Greece.

As I have argued for (Chapter 3) by providing a historical background moving from the argumentative turn in early Greek philosophy, normative reasoning and arguing in the form of internal critique became an ever-more dominant feature of the moral and political thinking in the democratized city-states of the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Greece. Therefore, it seemed probable as well that the constitutionalized (ruling-subject-oriented) cratistic thought inaugurated after the turn to direct democracy had taken place, would proceed exactly by means of internal critique. In truth, this is the assumption borne out by my reading of the arguments contained in the debate. The historical hypothesis thus fits the most relevant evidence neatly, and points to political theory's Western prototype, Classical Political Theory, having been the outcome of the conflating of internal critique with cratistic political thought.

How could it be, then, that political theory did not really commence earlier in the societies of the Greek world or in some neighbouring cultural sphere? Again, one must take into account the conceptual underpinnings of the hy-

---

<sup>562</sup> See Ehrenberg 1950, 525.

<sup>563</sup> See Bleicken 1979, 164-165.

<sup>564</sup> See Cartledge 2009, 73. Cf. Allen 2011, 78. Cf. Myers 1991, 541.

pothesis regarding the beginnings of political theory. Among the pre-Socratics, we already encounter examples of certain types of theorizing which are quite exciting, and within which a certain principle of rule with regard to both the societal and the cosmic order are elevated above others.

Thus, Heraclitus raises the principle of the ‘sole ruler’ (personified as Πόλεμος: ‘War’) to the determinant factor for both the human and the divine spheres, but this envisioning leaves no room for an alternative to the prevailing principle of (utterly narrowed) elite rule.<sup>565</sup> In a fragment by Parmenides, in contrast, one may sense how the concept of *ισονομία* (‘like order’) had begun to move to the fore of the societal-cosmic theorizing, but here the call for the balancing of the like forces of ‘light’ (φάος) and ‘night’ (νύξ) may just mirror the need for a reordering stemming from a broadening of the elite rule.<sup>566</sup>

In what remains of the “medical-philosophical” writings of Alcmaeon of Croton (ca. 500 B.C.), we may finally find a prefiguring of the argumentative opposing of different principles of rules, as one of the fragments ascribed to him states that ‘like order of forces’ (*ισονομία δυνάμεων*) equals health, whereas ‘sole rule’ (*μοναρχία*) of one of them would be tantamount to sickness. Here, however, the theorization is still of a cosmically naturalizing kind and not yet directly connected to political thought.<sup>567</sup> In a poem by Pindar (from 470 B.C), on the other hand, we may actually have the earliest example of an admitting of variant principles of strictly societal rule, but still these variants seem to represent different modifications of elite-rules, rather than fundamentally varying principles for the ordering of the society at large.

Regarding examples of a political theory – within which the notion of the constitutions as humanly applicable entities has penetrated so deeply into political thinking that the alternative rules have been clearly separated from each other as units of analysis and then argumentatively opposed with normative arguments – the earliest evidence is provided by the Constitutional Debate in book III of Herodotus.

---

<sup>565</sup> See Her. B 53 (DK): Πόλεμος πάντων μὲν πατήρ ἐστι, πάντων δὲ βασιλεύς, καὶ τοὺς μὲν θεοὺς ἔδειξε τοὺς δὲ ἀνθρώπους, τοὺς δὲ δούλους ἐποίησε τοὺς δὲ ἐλευθέρους. (“‘War’ is the father of everything, the king of all, and some he turned into gods others into humans, some he made slaves others free.”)

<sup>566</sup> See Parm. B 9 (DK): αὐτὰρ ἐπειδὴ πάντα φάος καὶ νύξ ὀνόμασται, καὶ τὰ κατὰ σφετέρως δυνάμεις ἐπὶ τοῖσι τε καὶ τοῖς, πᾶν πλεόν ἐστὶν ὁμοῦ φάεος καὶ νυκτὸς ἀφάντου ἴσων ἀμφοτέρων, ἐπεὶ οὐδετέρωι μετὰ μηδέν. (“...but as everything is called either light or night, and this according to their strengths with regard to either this or that, it is clear, rather, that everything is made equally of light and insightable night, since neither of these can merge with the other...”). Cf. Vlastos 1947, 164: “In the equipoise of opposite powers Parmenides finds the next best thing to the internal equipoise of Being itself. That is why the mock world of Light and Night is, in its own way, not chaos but cosmos”.

<sup>567</sup> See Alc. Cro. B4 (DK): τῆς μὲν ὑγείας εἶναι συνεκτικὴν τὴν ἰσονομίαν τῶν δυνάμεων, ὕγρου, ξηροῦ, ψυχροῦ, θερμοῦ, πικροῦ, γλυκέος καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν, τὴν δ’ ἐν αὐτοῖς μοναρχίαν νόσου ποιητικὴν φθοροποιὸν γὰρ ἑκατέρου μοναρχίαν. (“Fitting for keeping health in place is like order of forces, of moisture, dryness, cold, heat, bitter, sweet and the rest, whereas monarchy among these is the maker of decease: the monarchy of any of these is the cause of destruction.”)

3a. Evidence and arguments in favour of the origins of political philosophy as the earliest attempts at humanly attainable visions of political transformation

Nowhere in the preserved literature from the Classical Age in Ancient Greece do we find such a clear-cut reckoning with the human ability to affect comprehensive societal change, or transformation, as in the following passage in Plato's *Apology* – although at the same time it is admitted that such an enterprise might form no easy task, even for someone like Socrates:

ἐάντ' αὖ λέγω ὅτι καὶ τυγχάνει μέγιστον ἀγαθὸν ὃν ἀνθρώπῳ τοῦτο, ἐκάστης ἡμέρας περὶ ἀρετῆς τοὺς λόγους ποιεῖσθαι καὶ τῶν ἄλλων περὶ ὧν ὑμεῖς ἐμοῦ ἀκούετε διαλεγομένου καὶ ἐμαυτὸν καὶ ἄλλους ἐξετάζοντος, ὁ δὲ ἀνεξετάστος βίος οὐ βιωτὸς ἀνθρώπῳ, ταῦτα δ' ἔτι ἦττον πείσεσθέ μοι λέγοντι. τὰ δὲ ἔχει μὲν οὕτως, ὡς ἐγὼ φημι, ὧ ἄνδρες, πείθειν δὲ οὐ ῥάδιον.

if again I say that to talk every day about virtue and the other things about which you hear me talking and examining myself and others is the greatest good to man, and that the unexamined life is not worth living, you will believe me still less. This is as I say, gentlemen, but it is not easy to convince you.<sup>568</sup>

Plato's *Apology* may or may not paint a truthful picture of Socrates in front of his judges in and around 399 B.C., but it is clear that Plato is here portraying his teacher as actually having pursued a transmutation of the whole superior normative ordering of the society, or of the “nomological knowledge” decisive in relation to the societal arrangements. Only by changing their preoccupations in fundamental respects may the life worth living (βίος βιωτὸς) be achieved – and this is also why Socrates task is so difficult (πείθειν οὐ ῥάδιον). That the envisioned transcendence of the existing conditions pertains to the society as a whole, and not only to the individuals whose transformance Socrates in Plato's rendering strived to achieve, follows from the reckoning with the substantial view of virtue – i.e., with the assumption that the goal of political life is virtue. The substantial view of virtue was taken for granted by the paradigmatic representatives of Classical Political Philosophy, Plato and Aristotle, at least as far as their own envisioned ideals go – but as the Sisyphos-fragment clearly shows, it was certainly not reckoned with by all writers of Classical Antiquity.<sup>569</sup> Obviously, what Plato is hinting at as well, is that the

<sup>568</sup> See Plat. *Apol.* 38a.

<sup>569</sup> Leo Strauss' famous claim was that the substantial view of virtue disappeared from political philosophy with the works of Machiavelli. See Strauss 1959, 40-43.



reason Socrates was put to death was that despite the difficulty inherent in his mission, he was nevertheless too successful in his enterprise.

Whether or not Plato's report is accurate, it is clear that he could not have drawn such a picture of his master if beforehand a political philosophy of the kind Plato envisions had not actually been practiced. In other words, when Plato wrote his version of the defence of Socrates, such a humanly attainable transformation – or attempted overcoming of the prevailing rule as well as of all of its envisioned real-world alternatives – must have been aimed at in the real world outside the Σωκρατικοί λόγοι.

In this investigation (Chapter 4), I have strived to trace the origins of political philosophy, understood as the earliest utopian visions of this-worldly societal transformation, back to Ancient Greece of the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. This, I have done by attempting to move beyond the previous readings given of a specific passage in Book VII of Herodotus, namely of Xerxes' counsels before his ensuing campaign against Greece. As an alternative to earlier underlinings of the "tragic vision" inherent in the Herodotean passage – or to the interpretation of story as simply highlighting the superior might of custom – I have laid emphasis on how the passage can be seen to point at the need of actually overcoming such a "tragic might" as a blind adherence to any currently prevailing set of νόμοι may hold in store for the one complying. It is in this sense, as well, that the work of Herodotus may be seen to give evidence to the actual practice of Classical Political Philosophy.

Finally, we may ask whether or not similar kinds of humanly attainable visions of societal transformation could have occurred already prior to the turn to direct democracy in the Greek Classical Age. In order to begin to determine if this could be the case, we may consider the latest example in the preserved Greek literature before the birth of the Classical democracies, wherein the societal critique goes as far as to explicitly call for a wholesale re-arrangement of the societal conditions, and of the individual minds adhering to these conditions. This assessment is found in the so-called *Eunomia*-elegy of the Athenian political leader Solon (ca. 600 B.C.).

ταῦτα διδάξει θυμὸς Ἀθηναίους με κελεύει

this my heart orders me to teach the Athenians

ὡς κακὰ πλεῖστα πόλει Δυσνομίη παρέχει·

that ill order brings most bad things for the city

Εὐνομίη δ' εὖκοσμα καὶ ἄρτια πάντ' ἀποφαίνει.

whereas good order reveals everything with well-attunedness and fittingness.<sup>570</sup>

The call in this famous poem by Solon is, indeed, for societal reordering, but it is to be a resettling in accordance with a pre-conceived idea of one right and divinely authoritative conception of a “good order” (Εὖνομίη). In Solon’s poem, the notion of a “divine horizon of legitimation” projects onto the divine sphere so that the personification of this conceived order-guarantee, Εὖνομίη, in fact takes the place of Zeus as the main divinity.<sup>571</sup> The path downwards from Olympus, and onwards towards a political thought, wherein the gods and other religious authorizations could be more or less disregarded, had only just begun.

#### 4. *The connectedness of the hypotheses*

Simply put, the set of three hypotheses forming the historical theory defended in this thesis connects in a way, wherein the coming into being and the prevailing of the first condition (“secular”-autonomous political thought) functions as a presupposition and a guarantee for the continued existence of the latter two (Classical Political Theory and Classical Political Philosophy). When the kind of rationale, which the first realized turnover in the principle of rule had made possible, was made to disappear at the hands of out-of-control societal forces, so did the practice of the original forms of political theory and philosophy.<sup>572</sup>

### **The contemporary relevance of the question of the origins of political philosophy**

As I stressed in the beginning, the main reason I have chosen to look back to the Greeks of the Classical Age is that I recognize in the underpinnings of that past and essentially strange world a potentiality for the formation of trans-

---

<sup>570</sup> See Sol. fr. 4 (30-32) (West).

<sup>571</sup> Cf. Irwin 2005, 187-188. I believe with André Lardinois that our text of Solon’s elegies must be somewhat different from the poetry Solon himself composed in the early 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Solon’s poem were, like those of Theognis, for the most part orally transmitted until the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. However, the fact that we know of varying versions of having been transmitted of Solon’s elegies already in the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. allows us to infer that at least some if not most of them stand in a close relationship with the original words of Solon. The iambic verses ascribed to Solon, on the other hand, may all derive from later poets making use of his person. See Lardinois 2006, 17-28.

<sup>572</sup> Cf. Ober 1999, 368: “Even if (counterfactually) the Athenian critics of democracy had been uniformly rejectionist and had contributed nothing of positive value to Greek democracy in its own day, it would still be the case that it was their texts that kept alive the memory of a very real era, both glorious and terrifying, when the ordinary people of a great state were masters of their own fate and ruled themselves by open debate and democratic ballot.”

historical value. Trans-historical value in the way I have defined it is an ambiguous term, and it is intended to be so. That some questions or movements of thought may lie dormant for an unspecified amount of time, only to be reawoken in the discourses or in the collective mindsets of a whole other era, does not necessarily mean that the reawoken questions have any value in themselves. It could also just mean that the conditions sufficient for their reanimation have been fulfilled repeatedly in the “unfolding of history”.

However that may be, it has become clear that the question of egalitarian κράτος possesses trans-historical value just in the sense of being an issue, or a mindset, inherent with the potentiality of reawakening. This potentiality has actualized in the contemporary West. Our present predicament, the decay of industrial capitalism, the lurking mass-unemployment likely to hit the developed world even harder within decades, in combination, of course, with ever-increasing social inequality (nothing less than thorough social injustice), have forced the issue of egalitarian κράτος to be pushed to the fore.<sup>573</sup>

When egalitarian κράτος was first obtained in Classical Greece, it was realized in its conditional form, which was the only viable option at a time, when rights pertaining to the “socially stripped” human being as a simple human was non-conceivable. With the original empowering of the demos, it became possible, nevertheless, to reach a form of political thinking for the first time, within which genuine and humanly realizable societal transformation as opposed to any kind of moderate alteration of the status quo could be conceived of. This was one of the heuristic assumptions, based on which I have constructed and to the best of my ability tried to defend the theory of the rise and rapid fall of Classical Political Philosophy.

How, then, could such a theory justify the jump to the conclusion of some kind of 21<sup>st</sup> century “re-empowering of the demos”? Of course, the latter is not a conclusion at all, but rather a statement relating to the dystopic view rising from the adequate description of the “progress” of the world system in its current state.

Even if the top thousandth’s [0,1 per cent of the world population] capital returned only 4 percent a year, their share [of global capital] would still practically double in thirty years to nearly 40 percent. Once again, the force for divergence at the top of the wealth hierarchy would win out over the global forces of catch-up and convergence, so that the

---

<sup>573</sup> See Piketty 2014, 1: “When the rate of return on capital exceeds the rate of growth of output and income, as it did in the nineteenth century and seems quite likely to do again in the twenty-first, capitalism automatically generates arbitrary and unsustainable inequalities that radically undermine the meritocratic values on which democratic societies are based.” For comparison, the egalitarian Swedish case may be informative. Here, a randomly selected group from the economical elite can be seen to have increased their incomes relative to the average salary of an industrial worker from 9 times the latter’s salary to 54 times that salary over the course of 33 years (1980-2014). See Almqvist 2016, 20-22.

shares of the top decile and centile would increase significantly, with a large upward redistribution from the middle and upper-middle classes to the very rich. *Such an impoverishment of the middle class would very likely trigger a violent political reaction.* (My emphasis).<sup>574</sup>

Thomas Piketty's dystopia of a return in the 21<sup>st</sup> century of the 19<sup>th</sup> century "rentier state" – i.e., a society in which most part of the endogenous income is based on ownership and rent – is, we may all hope, overly pessimistic. It is based, however, in the undeniable facts of a raging societal crisis consisting in ever-increasing economic, social and political inequality, as well as in political unaccountability.

The liberation of market forces establishes an antisocial tyranny that enforces its own version of Hobbes' "state of nature." Imagine that a foreign power attempted to convert the US or Britain into a political dependency in which that foreign power demanded the right to veto decisions of the democratically elected governments.

We require no strain of the imagination to conjure up such a nightmarish world. We live in it. In Britain and the US, politicians are told that the economic policies they would implement must receive the prior endorsement of "markets", a euphemism for financial capitalists. Far more powerful than any foreign country, these men and women (most of them the former) demand and receive the unlimited right to restrict the choices that both the electorate and the politicians can consider, much less implement. Not since the era of divine right of monarchs have populations suffered under the tyranny of such unaccountable power.<sup>575</sup>

The embrace of austerity, from Britain to Germany, is leading to high unemployment, falling wages, and increasing inequality [...]. That things may have bottomed out – that the recession may be 'officially' over – is little comfort to the 27 million out of a job in the EU. On both sides of the Atlantic, the austerity fanatics say, march on: these are the bitter pills that we need to achieve prosperity. But prosperity for whom?<sup>576</sup>

Thus, the trans-historical value of egalitarian kratos has proven itself again in the face of resistance. In ancient times, it was Classical Political Philosophy itself, as soon as it was inaugurated – or very soon afterwards, at the latest with Plato – that most eagerly pursued the questioning of it.<sup>577</sup> In our own age,

---

<sup>574</sup> See Piketty 2014, 556.

<sup>575</sup> See Weeks 2014, 187.

<sup>576</sup> See Stiglitz 2013, 121.

<sup>577</sup> See Plat. *Rep.* 562a and 561b-c.

we have seen how the very content of egalitarian empowering, autonomous political thought, has been distorted by thinkers in support of authoritarian sovereignty – the Schmitts and Strausses of this world.<sup>578</sup>

The truth is, however, that we remain as far away in practice as we have been in theory from the conditions which once enabled the brief blossoming of Classical Political Philosophy. For direct democracy to emerge in Classical Athens, the advancement of the latter to the position of Sea Empire, and the concomitant radical rise in societal value of the lowest strata in the citizen-body – i.e., of the *θηῆτες* serving as rowers in the Athenian navy – may have been required.<sup>579</sup> What we are facing instead is the opposite prospect of a continued increase in redundancy in all income classes, leaving everyone except the societally privileged vulnerable to political and social devaluation. To begin the transition to direct democracy in the world of today, quite a few new Ephialteses would be required. Such a passage may not be necessary, however, if space to operate is provided for those who, in the age of late industrialism, have been able to take up the legacy left to us by the Classical Greeks, and who have continued on the path of utopian visions of a transcendence of the societal status quo.<sup>580</sup>

Could it be, though, that the historical process has taken us beyond the point of no return, and that the promise of real-world change is as dead now as it soon had become in the world where political philosophy first began to be practiced? In the end, what I have singled out as the essential concern of our age, the waning of the central promise of industrial capitalism, seems to boil down to whether or not the latest (enforced) low-growth phase of (post)capitalism signals the end of the world.<sup>581</sup> When contemplating on this, it may be worthwhile to remember that the end of Western Civilization was prognosed already 100 years ago, namely by Oswald Spengler:

We men of the Western Culture are, with our historical sense, an exception and not a rule. World-history is *our* world picture and not all mankind's. Indian and Classical man formed no image of a world in progress, and perhaps when in due course the civilization of the West is extinguished, there will never again be a Culture and a human type in which "world-history" is so potent a form of the waking consciousness.<sup>582</sup>

---

<sup>578</sup> See Schmitt 2015, 18-19 and 38. Cf. Strauss 1953, 92.

<sup>579</sup> Cf. Bleicken 1979, 171-172.

<sup>580</sup> See e.g. Bowles et al, 1983, 260-390, Häring et Douglas 2012, 192-205 and 218-220, Lind 2013, 451-482, Mason 2015, 263- 292 and Jacobs et al. 2017, 19-29.

<sup>581</sup> Cf. Streeck 2016, 10: "*Electronization* will do to the middle class what mechanization has done to the working class, and it will do it much faster. The result will be unemployment in the order of 50 to 70 per cent by the middle of the century, hitting those who had hoped, by way of expensive education and disciplined job performance (in return for stagnant or declining wage), to escape the threat of redundancy attendant to the working classes."

<sup>582</sup> See Spengler 1926, 15.

Has it finally arrived, the end of history and of progress? Well, I would not have finished this investigation, this attempt at redeeming the beginnings of Western thinking, if I believed its end to be already present. What my reconsideration of the beginnings of Western thought has shown, is that these beginnings were built on a struggle perhaps even more accomplished than those of the organized working class of the industrial age. It was the aboriginal rise of the under-privileged, taking place in a societal-intellectual milieu where the viability of such an accession could have hardly even been conceived of, that made possible the formation of an even greater promise still with us.

This is the promise of real-world change. If we still long for the continuation of history and progress, we – as a worldwide community – may have to rethink both history and progress. What do they really mean to us? What should they mean, so that they no longer signal only the deception of an empty promise? What should we regard as sacred in the world of today, where sacred kingship has vanished: our new-fangled Ayn Randian total equalling of dollar-making abilities with human worth; our global enterprises, financial institutes and markets, and their ability to create ever-deepening divides between us – or perhaps something completely different?<sup>583</sup> In truth, this is a rethinking already underway in many places. Not all hope is gone. However, to turn away from the failure of the νομοθέται and work towards establishing a new model of “nomological knowledge”, the transformation of the old wisdom determining the superior normative ordering of the society – of the norms forming the “factual boundaries of social life” – must first be carried out.<sup>584</sup>

In truth, a general conservative outlook – an Isocratean ideal of looking out for one’s own best interest with a view to an upholding of the prevailing order – could be an option if the societal setting would still be such that there would be enough worth conserving. However, when we wake up each day in a world where 0.1 % of the world population has accumulated enough capital to wipe out world poverty, at the same time as in a formerly rich country like Finland with only 5 million inhabitants, 40,000 men or more between 20-30 years of age are currently unemployed and without a future, we can only conclude that somewhere something has gone utterly wrong.<sup>585</sup> That something needs to change now, and we should not be afraid to look to strange places in order to find possible solutions. In this investigation, I have looked back to Classical Antiquity and to the work of Herodotus as one early representative of Classical Political Philosophy.

---

<sup>583</sup> Cf. Roncaglia 2010, 3: “The myth of an all-powerful invisible hand of the market, the blind faith in automatic equilibrating mechanism, the hostility to setting rules of the game binding for all participants, the systematic under-evaluation of uncertainty are all, as we shall see, serious mistakes, favoured by their consonance with major economic and financial interests”.

<sup>584</sup> Cf. Giddens 1984, 4.

<sup>585</sup> For a statistical analysis of the general trend in Finland during the last 30 years leading towards heightened unemployment striking particularly against the male part of the population, see Myrskylä 2017, esp. 5-6.

Classical Political Philosophy, according to the conceptual assumption borne out by this investigation, began when thinking people for the first time realized that there is something utterly flawed in a conception, which allows for the legitimation of the human order with reference to an other-worldly source for societal authority. In the place of such cosmically naturalizing authorizations, Classical Political Philosophy soon began to place their own this-worldly visions of transcendence. These visions were not so distant either, but were in fact connected quite intimately to the resettled *πόλις*-life, from which they had arisen.<sup>586</sup> In a time when renewed calls for visions of societal trans-formation are heard throughout the world, the two-folded lesson of Classical Political Philosophy is still of the outmost importance: deny those who would seek to redefy the human order and replace their other-worldly constructs with beneficial visions that can actually be approached in this world.

---

<sup>586</sup> For the idea of Classical Political Philosophy as related directly to the political life of the democratized Greek city-state, see Strauss 1959, 84.

## **Appendix: the Warring States Period of Ancient China and the Classical Age of Ancient Greece; Internal Critique as a Trans-Cultural Phenomenon**

These additional remarks should be understood to form a question mark and will lead up to some suggestions for further research. The question left hanging is whether the circumvention of notions of divine authorizations of the human order, the radical alternatives to the prevailing order and the visions of humanly attainable societal transformation – which are evidenced in connection with the direct democracies of Classical Greece – could be lacking a counterpart anywhere else in the ancient world at any given historical moment. In order to touch upon this possibility of re-establishing the uniqueness of the Greeks, I will briefly consider the case of Ancient China.

With its resembling history to the Greek experience of small-state independence and intellectual mobility, it is easy to imagine that in some societies of pre-imperial (prior to 220 B.C.) China, the societal conditions necessary for both the political autonomy witnessed in Ancient Greece as well as its alternative-admitting political theory and commensurate political philosophy could well have existed. What I will do here, however, is to set forth the possibility that the intellectual undertakings witnessed in China may have been prevented *a priori* from developing into this sort of political thinking and theorizations. The main reason why this is so, I hypothesize, is that the Ancient Chinese thinkers, and Chinese societies at large, never detached themselves from one overriding principle for the ordering of the society. As I do not read Ancient Chinese, however, and base my understanding of this matter on translations and the scholarship of others, this suggestion should not be given any of the same weight as my theories relating directly to the formation of Ancient Greek thought.

In the following, I will present the Ancient Chinese comparison against the background of the so-called Axial Age debate.

### **The Axial Age and the societal setting of the Warring States Period**

The reckoning of an “Axial Age” (*Achsenzeit*) of intellectual revolutions in human history may be familiar to some readers. The originator of this thought model, Karl Jaspers, conceived of this “axis” of world history as independently instantiated in three separate cultural spheres of the ancient world,



namely in India, in China and in Greece, respectively. Jaspers' understanding was that the breakthroughs took place at the same point in time in all three of these spheres, namely in and around 500 B.C. The result was, as Jaspers thought, a first true awakening of human beings to the human condition.<sup>587</sup> Jasper's notion of an Axial Age was broadened in place and in time and specified in content by Schmucl Eisenstadt. With Eisenstadt, the notion of several breakthroughs of "transcendental world views" was introduced into the Axial Age debate.<sup>588</sup>

The debate surrounding the Axial Age has grown quite intense after Eisenstadt's reintroduction of Jasper's idea in the 1970s.<sup>589</sup> In truth, it may be that the Axial Age discussions will never proceed beyond the description of a variety of sweeping affinities as well as of variations and dissimilarities of a broad type in and between different cultural spheres. The acknowledgment of these similarities and dissimilarities may be highly conducive, however, when reflecting on different types of developments within and across cultures, and on the impact of these progressions on world historical processes.

Here, the cases in point are cross-cultural comparisons relating to the affinities between the societal situations and the intellectual achievements of the Classical Age of Greece (480-323 B.C.) and those of the Warring States Period in China (475-221 B.C.). The later period came to a halt with the first effective unification of the Chinese empire under the first Ch'in ruler. The unification of the empire ended an era of autonomous states, which had enabled a certain social and political pluralism – a societal determination bearing resemblance to the situation in Greece throughout the Archaic and Classical Ages. Also in an analogous way to the Greek experience, extensive intellectual inquiries took place during the Warring States Period. This was the golden age of Chinese intellectual history, bearing witness to 'the Hundred Schools' and the "Chinese sophists" – 'recluses' (Chin.: *ch'u-shih*), or scholars without official responsibilities. Importantly, in the investigative activity undertaken by these scholars, were included a considerable variety of such inquiries, which could be claimed to form instances of moral and political philosophy.<sup>590</sup>

If we are to believe the historian of science G.E.R. Lloyd, there remains, however, an essential difference between the politico-ethical theorizations of Ancient Greece and their Chinese counterparts. According to Lloyd, this difference consists of the non-existence within the latter cultural sphere of any alternative to the overarching framework of monarchic government.<sup>591</sup> This would mean nothing less, then, than that in Ancient China, the principle for the reigning type of societal order was always taken as a given and criticism of the prevailing rule was restricted to the pointing out of deviations from its

---

<sup>587</sup> See Jaspers 1964, 19-20.

<sup>588</sup> See Eisenstadt 1986a, 1.

<sup>589</sup> See e.g. Eisenstadt 1986 and Bellah & Joas 2002.

<sup>590</sup> Cf. Hsiao 1979, 4-8.

<sup>591</sup> See Lloyd 1990, 122-123.

ideal, divinely sanctioned, form.<sup>592</sup> Consequently, never even in theory would constitutional experimentation have been attempted in the Ancient Chinese cultural sphere.<sup>593</sup> If this were so, the difference with regard to the situation in Ancient Greece of the Classical Age could hardly be more marked.<sup>594</sup>

Recently, the assumption of sacred monarchy as the defining feature of Ancient Chinese political thought has been put into question by Youngmin Kim. In the understanding of Kim, the notion of monarchism is not sufficient to capture the complexity of Ancient Chinese political history and thought, since the Chinese political discourses in fact show a paradoxical coexistence of the image of a strong state and an abundance of passive governance.<sup>595</sup> A similar idea has been put forward by the school of thought connecting the Western political tradition of anarchism with the Taoist strand in Ancient Chinese philosophy. In this view, from the Warring States Period onwards, the Taoist critique of the prevailing rule may be characterized as an “intellectual pacifist guerrilla project” in order to “sabotage the confidence of the ruling elite”.<sup>596</sup>

Notwithstanding these objections, it seems that even the most critical strands of Ancient Chinese philosophy dealing with questions of the societal order refrain from admitting anything akin to a real-world alternative to the prevailing principle of kingly rule. In the *Tao Te Ching*, the canonical text of the Taoist tradition, at least 13 of the 81 chapters included in the work seem to have been written either to articulate the idea of one dominant societal-cosmical ordering principle (*Tao*) or to be addressed expressly to a sole ruler.<sup>597</sup> Similarly the Mohist tradition – which as will be seen takes a highly critical stance towards injustice and arbitrariness inherent in the societal rule – reckon with *tian ming*, the ‘mandate of heaven’, as the ultimate normative principle guaranteeing the maintenance of social justice in any given worldly

---

<sup>592</sup> This could be compared to the picture rising forth from the sacred ancient Indian texts, such as the epic *Mahābhārata*, where the “*rājadharmā*-, the eternal norms, laws and duties belonging to kings are expressly stated to surpass all other manifestations of *dharma*” (≈order). See Gonda 1956, 54. Cf. Mhb. 12.63: “Amongst men, the highest duties are those which are practised by Kshatriyas. The whole world is subject to the might of their arms. All the duties, principal and subordinate, of the three other orders, are dependent (for their observance) upon the duties of the Kshatriya. The Vedas have declared this. Know that as the footprints of all other animals are engulfed in those of the elephant, even so all the duties of the other orders, under every circumstance, are engulfed, in those of the Kshatriya.”

<sup>593</sup> Cf. Hsiao 1979, 8: “Chinese political thought belongs in large part to the realm of *Politik*, or the Art of Politics, and only in small part to that of *Staatslehre*, political philosophy”.

<sup>594</sup> See Pocock 1971, 78: “we know that Greek and classical Western political theory are distinguished from the Chinese by the possession of a plurality of political forms, a plurality of social and other values, a moral philosophy which asks pressingly how these pluralities came to exist, a profound divergence between physical and political theory, and a way of life which makes the citizen’s role in decision-making a principal index to his social position and a formative influence upon his personality”. Cf. Black 2008, 32-33: “Only in Greece were different forms of government discussed, and only in Greece was there empirical research (under Aristotle) into how different constitutions actually worked”.

<sup>595</sup> See Kim 2018, 10-11.

<sup>596</sup> See Rapp 2012, 46. Cf. Kohn 2014, 74-76.

<sup>597</sup> See Tao. 3, 14, 21, 25, 30, 32, 34, 37, 41, 51, 53, 60 and 68.

dynasty. Any ruler may be disqualified if he fails to live up to the standards of heaven, but such a failure only means that some other ruler better equipped to meet these standards must take his place.<sup>598</sup>

### **Ancient Chinese vs. Ancient Greek political utopias**

The absence of the admitting of a radical alternative to the prevailing main principle of rule may be seen most clearly when considering the kind of utopian visions evidenced in Ancient Chinese political philosophy. Such a utopia may be found in the next to last chapter contained in *Tao Te Ching*:

A small country may have many machines,  
but the people will have no use for them;  
they will have boats and carriages  
which they do not use;  
their armour and weapons  
are not displayed,  
for they are serious when regarding death.  
They do not travel far from home,  
And make knots in ropes,  
rather than do much writing.

The food they eat is plain and good,  
And their clothes are simple;  
Their homes are secure,  
without the need of bolts and bars,  
and they are happy in their ways.

Though the cockerels and dogs  
of their neighbours  
can be heard not far away,  
the people of the villages  
grow old and die in peace.<sup>599</sup>

Contained in the above lines is a kind of utopia which completely isolates the ideal world from the prevailing circumstances, and which in fact blurs the distinction between a nostalgic longing for a lost golden age and a profound surpassing of the current living standards. What is lacking completely in the utopian vision offered above, however, is the feeling of a connectedness between the offered alternative and the prevalent reality. When reading the passage, the sensation conveyed is in fact that of a utopia in the literal meaning of the word. The small country village of the Taoist vision gives the impression of a true no-place – to be found nowhere and in no way connected to the actual

---

<sup>598</sup> Cf. Els 2013, 88.

<sup>599</sup> See Tao 80. Transl. Rosenthal.

world. Of such a kind, however, are not the utopian visions at the center of the works of Classical Political Philosophy. Rather, these are, in the words of Leo Strauss, connected directly to the actual political life from which they had arisen.<sup>600</sup>

In Book VII of his *Politics*, Aristotle begins his plea for the best imaginable constitution by turning the attention to the utter failure of the existing constitutions and of the lawgivers (νομοθέται) thought to have come up with them:

οἱ δὲ νῦν ἄριστα δοκοῦντες πολιτεύεσθαι τῶν Ἑλλήνων, καὶ τῶν νομοθετῶν οἱ ταύτας καταστήσαντες τὰς πολιτείας, οὔτε πρὸς τὸ βέλτιστον τέλος φαίνονται συντάξαντες τὰ περὶ τὰς πολιτείας οὔτε πρὸς πάσας τὰς ἀρετὰς τοὺς νόμους καὶ τὴν παιδείαν...

The ones among the Hellenes who are now thought to have the best constitutions, and the lawgivers who established these constitutions, seem neither to have designed them with a view to the best end, nor did they put in order the education and the laws by taking into account all the virtues...<sup>601</sup>

In a similar way, Plato, in book V of the *Republic*, sets in front of his audience the model (παράδειγμα) of the supremely virtuous man (ἄνδρα τὸν τελέως δίκαιον), so that he may stand as an example for those who do not (yet) live up to these standards. These are the same standards which – taking into account the substantial view of virtue (the goal of societal life seen as virtue) shared by the Classical Philosophers – would lead to the realization of the best possible society.<sup>602</sup>

παραδείγματος ἄρα ἕνεκα, ἣν δ' ἐγώ, ἐζητοῦμεν αὐτὸ τε δικαιοσύνην οἷόν ἐστι, καὶ ἄνδρα τὸν τελέως δίκαιον εἰ γένοιτο, καὶ οἷος ἂν εἶη γενόμενος, καὶ ἀδικίαν αὖ καὶ τὸν ἀδικώτατον, ἵνα εἰς ἐκείνους ἀποβλέποντες, οἷοι ἂν ἡμῖν φαίνωνται εὐδαιμονίας τε πέρι καὶ τοῦ ἐναντίου, ἀναγκάζομεθα καὶ περὶ ἡμῶν αὐτῶν ὁμολογεῖν, ὅς ἂν ἐκείνοις ὅτι ὁμοιώτατος ἦ, τὴν ἐκείνης μοῖραν ὁμοιοτάτην ἔξειν...

For the sake of a model, I said, did we look for the nature of righteousness, and for the perfectly righteous man if he were to be, and if indeed he were of which kind he would be, and for unrighteousness and for the unrighteous person did we look for in the same way, so that by gazing at them, that is, at how they turned out to be in our view with regard to

---

<sup>600</sup> See Strauss 1959, 84.

<sup>601</sup> See Aristot. *Pol.* 7.1333b.5-11.

<sup>602</sup> For the concept of the substantial view of virtue shared by the Classical Philosophers, see Strauss 1959, 40.

happiness and the opposite, therewith would we also be forced to agree with regard to ourselves.<sup>603</sup>

Underlying both of these visions is the assumption that the ideal – the ideal constitution or the ideal man in accordance with the perfectly just regime – may actually be approached in the real world, although the ideal form may perhaps only be realized completely in theory.<sup>604</sup> In this investigation, I have strived to shed light on the societal and intellectual progressions that had made possible just this kind of philosophy – the kind of philosophy which for the first time offered visions of humanly attainable real-world transcendence of the prevailing order. In the real world of the democratized Classical Greek city-state, where both Plato and Aristotle wrote their respective contributions to Classical Political Philosophy, the most radical societal alternative had already come true. The hitherto always prevailing principle of elite rule had been replaced by its precise opposite: realized rule of the people. Thus had been obtained the means to reach a certain freedom within the political sphere – a freedom inherent in the political community not only to choose between a range of radical alternatives for the ordering of the society, but also to search for a true alternative to all of these options. Perhaps, as there never was any turnover in the main principle of rule in Ancient China, so within the ancient Chinese cultural sphere there never could have arisen any radical societal alternative in defiance of the main principle of rule followed in and by the society at large. Thus, the utopias taking the shape of a true societal alternative envisioned by Chinese political philosophy would have been predetermined to remain as distant as the one that has come down to us in *Tao Te Ching*.<sup>605</sup>

### **Ancient Chinese internal critique**

Taking into account this absence of freedom in the political sphere, it is surprising to learn that one of the components that the present investigation has singled out at as an enabling presupposition in relation to the origins of political theory in Ancient Greece also forms a part of Ancient Chinese political thought. Normative arguments of a kind that can be recast as internal critique may be found in the canon of Chinese philosophy. The following three examples taken from the so-called *Fei Gong*-section (the section ‘against aggressive warfare’) in the *Mozi* correspond to the three examples of internal

---

<sup>603</sup> See Plat. *Rep.* 472c-d.

<sup>604</sup> Cf. Plat. *Rep.* 472d: ἀλλ’ οὐ τοῦτου ἔνεκα, ἵν’ ἀποδείξωμεν ὡς δυνατὰ ταῦτα γίνεσθαι. (“...but this we did not do to show that these could actually come to be just so”).

<sup>605</sup> From this alleged absence of utopian visions in Ancient Chinese political thought should be excepted the backward looking visions of societal enhancement that remain within the bonds of the prevailing order, found *inter alia* in the writings of Mengzi. See e.g. Mencius 1B5, where the vision is of a lost age when the ruler shared his fondness of women and wealth with his subjects. Cf. Mencius 4A20, where it is stated that the rectifying of the ruler would equal the correction of the state.

critique found in the Herodotean corpus and dealt with in Chapter 3 of this investigation.

Suppose you enter someone's orchard and pick a peach or a plum. When the people hear about it, they will condemn it. When the authorities catch you, they will punish you. Why? Because you harm the other to benefit yourself.

Now suppose you seize someone's dog, pig chicken, or piglet. This unrighteous act is worse than picking a peach or a plum from someone's orchard. Why? Because you cause greater harm to the other, the greater your lack of humaneness and the graver your crime.

And now suppose you enter someone's stable and seize a horse or an ox. This unrighteous act is even worse than seizing someone's dog, pig, chicken, or piglet. Why? Because you cause greater harm to the other. The greater harm you cause to the other, the greater your lack of humaneness and the graver your crime.

And finally, suppose you kill an innocent man, strip him of his fur coat, and appropriate his spear or sword. This unrighteous act is far worse than entering someone's table and seizing a horse or an ox. Why? Because you cause far greater harm to the other. The greater harm you cause to the other, the greater your lack of humaneness and the graver your crime.

Up to this point, the gentlemen of the world know enough to condemn such acts and brand them as unrighteous. Yet when it comes to the gravest act of attacking other states, they do not know enough to condemn it. Instead, they applaud it and call it righteous. How can we say they know the difference between righteous and unrighteous?<sup>606</sup>

The internal critique in this passage is of a kind where an inconsistency between an implicit normative principle and an explicit normative view is ascribed to the people, or to the noble gentlemen (*junzi*) forming the political elite, who engage in aggressive warfare.<sup>607</sup> The principle in question pertains to the gentlemen's non-approval of harming other gentlemen, while the explicit view relates to their lacking condemnation of attacks against foreign states. How can the gentlemen of the world condemn minor acts of harming others, while approving the most horrific acts of hurting their fellow gentlemen of other states? This is the first type of internal critique applied by the Mohists in their condemnation of aggressive warfare. The internal critique in question corresponds to the critique applied by Charilaus against Maeandrius, the tyrant of Samos in Book III of Herodotus. There, Charilaus had asked how

---

<sup>606</sup> See Mozi 17. Transl. Els.

<sup>607</sup> See Tralau 2012, 46-48. Cf. Kim 2018, 38.

Maeandrius could allow himself to keep his own brother in prison, while remaining passive against the Persians. In that case, the implicit normative view was one that approved of violence and harmful acting, while the explicit view disapproved of harmful acts in a specific circumstance: aggression directed against the Persians.

The next chapter in *Mozi* offers the following example of Chinese internal critique:

Now let us calculate the costs of a military expedition. Arrows, flags, tents, armor shields, sword hilts – countless quantities are taken on a campaign, where they wear, tear rust, and rot, never to return again. Spears, lances, swords, poniards, chariots, carts – countless quantities are taken on a campaign, where they break burst, rust and rot, never to return again. Oxen and horses – countless quantities start out fat and come back lean, or perish and do not return at all. Countless people will die because of the long journey or the shortage of food supply. Countless people will fall ill and die on the way because the encampments are unsafe, they do not eat and drink at proper time, and appetite and satiation are poorly attuned to one another. Countless troops will be lost in large numbers or perish entirely. As a result, also countless spirits will lose their worshippers.<sup>608</sup>

Here, the internal critique may be recast as a kind of questioning of empirical premises, which in fact seems to form a sequel to the critique of the previous section.<sup>609</sup> For the sake of argument, the Mohists grant the gentlemen criticized by them a normative principle, which would justify aggressive warfare. What the Mohist do thereafter is to turn this principle on the people adhering to it, by showing how the real-world circumstances works against the justification of the principle in question. The principle approving of aggressive warfare cannot be justified, because the cost of maintaining such a principle would simply turn out to be too high. The Mohist internal critique here corresponds to the passage in Book IV of Herodotus, where the Ionian leaders take counsel and decide, against contrary opinions, that they should approve of the expansion of the Persians and not “set Ionia free” (ἐλευθεροῦν Ἰωνίην). This decision is reached on the ground that the fight for freedom would endanger their own positions as vassal tyrants under Persian rule.<sup>610</sup> The principle of freedom,

---

<sup>608</sup> See *Mozi* 18. Transl. Els.

<sup>609</sup> See Tralau 2012, 48-52.

<sup>610</sup> See Hdt. 4.137.2: βουλήσεσθαι γὰρ ἐκάστην τῶν πολιῶν δημοκρατέεσθαι μᾶλλον ἢ τυραννεύεσθαι. (“...each of the city-states would rather be democratically governed than be ruled by tyrants”). This type of argumentation, which deals with contrafactual situations, was labeled by Franz Haible as “nicht widerlegende, nicht auf Widersprüche bauende Anwendung der Folgerung aus dem Nichtwirklichen”. See Haible 1962, 251. It is clear, however, that the argumentation in question is “nicht widerlegende” only in the sense that it is not reductive – i.e., the conclusion does not follow directly from the premises, but requires the admittance of

in this case, turns out to be worth as little in the real world as the principle justifying warfare in the Mohist argument.

The final example of Chinese internal critique is found in the last chapter of the *Fei Gong*-section of *Mozi*:

How different are the kings, nobles, and dignitaries, all the feudal lords of today! They dispatch their best soldiers, arrange their boats and chariot forces, and equip them with strong armor and sharp weapons to attack innocent states. They cross the borders of those states, cutting down grain fields, felling trees and woods, tearing down city walls, filling up ditches and ponds, slaughtering cattle, setting ablaze the ancestral temples, massacring the people, exterminating the aged and the weak, and carrying off treasures and valuables. They force their soldiers to move forward and fight by saying: “Bravest are those who are killed in action. Next are those who kill many enemy combatants. Lowest are those who are wounded in battle. And whoever leaves the ranks and flees will be executed without mercy!” So their soldiers are kept in fear.<sup>611</sup>

Here, the argument proceeds from the assumption of a thorough exacerbation in the conduct of the current rulers as compared to their ancestors: the great sage kings of the past. The internal critique of the passage is of a kind where a lacking clarity with regard to the criticized subject’s application of principles is assumed to be observable.<sup>612</sup> When the rulers conduct the warfare as poorly and in as misleading a manner as they do presently, one may seriously question whether the principle favouring the warring between states may be justified at all – i.e., in any given circumstances of the given world with their current leaders. The critique in question corresponds to the passage in Book 3 of Herodotus, where Periander, the tyrant of Corinth, reproaches his son Lycophron for staying loyal to his dead mother, whom Periander had slain. There, Periander had suggested that it would be completely futile for Lycophron to remain unsympathetic towards his father thereby “choosing the life of a wanderer” (ἀλήτην βίον αἰρεῖν).<sup>613</sup> No formal principle of justice could be adhered to, as Periander would have it, in order to justify such an absence of equity.

---

the interlocutor to be sound. However, Haible came with another more convincing presumption regarding this type of argumentative pattern: “Diese Form der Argumentation war nicht auf Perikles beschränkt. Sie spielt eine hervorragende Rolle in der Schrift vom Staat der Athener, also in der politischen Debatte um 430. An zahlreichen Stellen wird, um die Folgerichtigkeit der Politik des Demos in seinem Interesse zu zeigen, auf die Ergebnisse einer der jetzigen entgegengesetzten Politik verwiesen; sie widersprechen dem Nutzen des Demos. Die Athener brauchten also dafür nicht die Ankunft des Gorgias abzuwarten. In seinem Werke freilich wird diese Form, verbunden mit der Dichotomie, in unüberbietbarer Weise ausgebeutet.” See Haible 1962, 235.

<sup>611</sup> See Mozi 19. Transl. Els.

<sup>612</sup> See Tralau 2012, 53-55.

<sup>613</sup> See Hdt. 3.52.4.



## The origins of internal critique in Ancient Greece and China

If the hypothesis put forward in this investigation is correct, the originating of internal critique in the Ancient Greek cultural sphere was intimately connected with the inauguration of conditional moral equality and corresponding equal moral accountability within an in-group of fully politicized citizens. In other words, I have assumed that what had made the evolvement of arguments of an internally critical kind possible in the Greek city-states was nothing else than the first completed turnover in the principle of rule. In Ancient Greece, it was the breakthrough of *δημοκρατία* that first allowed for the increase in importance of a kind of political-ethical rationale, in which each full human (i.e. each enfranchised male citizen, according to the twisted ancient popular view) could be made accountable on the basis of the same normative principles and the same normative views. How can the origins of arguments of an internally critical kind be accounted for in an ancient cultural sphere, wherein there had been no turnover in the principle of rule?

Perhaps it could be assumed that the Warring States Period nevertheless witnessed a similar initiation of conditional moral equality within the in-group of gentlemen forming the political elite.<sup>614</sup> Could it be that it was exactly this conditional non-differentiation between the subjects and their rulers that made the Chinese forms of internal critique possible as well?<sup>615</sup> What could have prevented, then, Chinese political thought from progressing into the kind of investigations admitting of a real-world alternative to the main principle of divinely sanctioned monarchic rule, if indeed the members of the political elite could be conceived of on such an equal basis?

These and related queries form the kind of questions of which the answering would require a more systematic cross-cultural investigation. If this kind of Sino-Hellenic study were to be undertaken, diligent care should be taken, of course, not to commit the blunder of forcefully imposing modern Western concepts and modern Western thought-constructs in such locales, where such an intrusion is not called for by the sources. At the same time, it must be remembered that we cannot even begin to understand the ancient sources apart from our modern concepts and conceptions.<sup>616</sup>

---

<sup>614</sup> Cf. Kim 2018, 37, 41.

<sup>615</sup> Cf. Els 2013, 77: "In Mozi's view, moral standards and criminal laws apply to both the people and their ruler, and whoever breaches the law shall be punished".

<sup>616</sup> Cf. Lloyd 2004, 2: "...we cannot, on pain of distortion, impose our own conceptual framework. Yet we have to."

## Ancient and early modern literature (editions used)

- Aubonnet, J. ed.; Aristote. 1968. *Politique*, livres I et II. Paris.
- Aubonnet, J. ed.; Aristote. 1971. *Politique*, tome II, livres III-IV. Paris.
- Aubonnet, J. ed.; Aristote. 1973. *Politique*, tome II (deuxième partie), livres V-VI. Paris.
- Bodin, L. & Romilly, J. edd.; Thucydide. 1955. *La guerre du Péloponnèse*, livres VI et VII. Paris.
- Budé, G. de. edd.; Eschine. 1952. *Discours*. Paris.
- Bury, R.G. ed.; Plato. 1973. *The Symposium of Plato*. Cambridge.
- Burnet, I. ed.; 1902. *Platonis opera*, tomus IV. Oxford.
- Burnet, I. ed.; 1901. *Platonis opera*, tomus II. Oxford.
- Bühler, G. ed.; 1967. *The laws of Manu* (transl. with extracts from commentaries). Delhi.
- Campbell, D. A. ed.; 1982. *Greek Lyric*, vol. 1 (Sappho, Alcaeus). Cambridge.
- Carrière, J. ed.; Théognis. 1975. *Poèmes élégiaques*. Paris.
- Carteron, H. ed.; Aristote. 1966. *Physique*. Paris.
- Chambers, M. ed.; Aristotle. 1986. *AΘΗΝΑΙΩΝ ΠΟΛΙΤΕΙΑ*. Leipzig.
- Dalmeyda, G. ed.; Andocide. 1966. *Discours*. Paris.
- Diehl, E. ed.; 1942. *Anthologia Lyrica Graeca*, vol. II, (editio altera). Leipzig.
- Diels, H. & Kranz, W. edd.; 1906. *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (Erster Band). Leipzig.
- Diels, H. & Kranz, W. edd.; 1910. *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (Zweiter Band). Leipzig.

- Duke, E. A. ed.; Plato. 1995. *Platonis opera*, tomus I. Oxford.
- Edmonds, J. M. ed. 1931. *Elegy and Iambus*, vol. 1. London.
- Ganguli, K. M. ed.; 2005. The Mahabharata of Krishna-Dwaipayana Vyasa, Volume 3 Books 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 (transl.). Project Gutenberg EBook.
- Gemoll, W. ed.; Xenophon. 1968. *Xenophontis institutio Cyri*. Leipzig.
- Henderson, J. ed.; Aristophanes. 1998. *Acharnians/Knights*. Cambridge.
- Hude, C. ed.; Herodotus. 1927. *Tomus prior*. Oxford.
- Hude, C. ed.; Herodotus. 1927. *Tomus posterior*. Oxford.
- Kirchner, I. ed.; 1927. *Inscriptiones Graecae*, vol. II et II, editio minor, pars altera. Berlin.
- Ivanhoe, P. J. ed.; 2009. Mencius. (Transl.). New York.
- Jacoby, F. ed.; 1958. *Die Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker, dritter Teil (Autoren über Einzelne Laender, Nr. 608a-856)*. Leiden.
- Jones, H. S. 1942. *Thucydidis Historiae*, tomus prior. Oxford.
- Jones, H. S. 1942. *Thucydidis Historiae*, tomus posterior. Oxford.
- Kassel, R. ed.; Aristotle. 1965. *De Arte Poetica Liber*. Oxford.
- Keyes, C. W. ed.; Cicero. 1928. *De re publica/ De legibus*. London.
- Kühn, K. G. ed.; 1821. *Claudii Galeni opera omnia*, vol. I. Leipzig.
- Leaf, W. ed.; Homer. 1960. *The Iliad*, vol I, books I-XII. Amsterdam.
- Lloyd-Jones, H. ed.; Sophocles. 1994. *Antigone/The Women of Trachis/Philoctetes/Oedipus at Colonus*. London.
- Lobel, E. ed.; 1951. *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, part XXI. London.
- Lobel, E. ed.; 1956. *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, part XXIII. London.
- Lobel, E. & Page, D. 1955. edd.; *Poetarum Lesbianarum Fragmenta*. Oxford.
- Malbran-Labat, F. ed.; 1994. *La Version akkadienne de l'inscription trilingue de Darius à Behistun*. Roma.
- Marchant, E. C. ed.; Xenophon. 1920. *Xenophontis opera omnia*, tomus V. Oxford.
- Mathieu, G. ed.; Isocrate. 1966. *Discours*. Paris.

- Melograni, P. ed.; Machiavelli, N. 1991. *Il principe*. Milano.
- Most, G. W. & Laks, A. edd.; 2016. *Early Greek Philosophy*, vol. 5. Cambridge.
- Perret, J. ed.; Virgile. 1977. *Ènéide*, livres I-IV. Paris.
- Powell, J. E. ed.; Herodotus. 1949. *Histories*, vol 1. Oxford.
- Powell, J. E. ed.; Herodotus. 1949. *Histories*, vol. 2. Oxford.
- Romilly, J. ed.; Thucydide. 1962. *La guerre du Péloponnèse*, livre II. Paris.
- Romilly, J. ed.; Thucydide. 1969. *La guerre du Péloponnèse*, livre III. Paris.
- Ruehl, F. ed.; Xenophon. 1912. *Xenophontis scripta minora*. Leipzig.
- Schroeder, O. ed.; Pindar. 1900. *Pindari Carmina*. Leipzig.
- Shapiro, I. ed.; Locke, J. 2003. *Two Treatises of Government and a Letter Concerning Toleration*. London.
- Smith, W. ed.; Longinus. 1810. *Dionysius Longinus on the Sublime*. Baltimore.
- Solmsen, F. ed.; Hesiod. 1970. *Hesiodi Theogonia/Opera et dies*. Oxford.
- Sommerstein, A. H. ed.; Aeschylus. 2008. *Oresteia*. Cambridge.
- Stanford, W. B. ed.; Homer. 1947. *ΟΜΗΡΟΥ ΟΔΥΣΣΕΙΑ*, vol. I. London.
- Ta-Kao, C. ed.; 1945. *Tao te ching*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (a new translation). London.
- Tod, M. N. ed.; 1933. *Greek Historical Inscriptions*, vol. I. Oxford.
- Usener, H. & Radermacher, L. edd.; Dionysus Halicarnasseus. 1899. *Opuscula*, vol. prius.
- Warmington, E. H. ed. Aristotle. 1934. *The Nicomachean Ethics*. London.
- Wecklein, N. ed.; Äschylos. 1902. *Die Schutzflehenden*. Leipzig.
- West, M. L. ed.; 1971. *Iambi et elegi Graeci*, volumen I. Oxford.
- West, M. L. ed.; 1971. *Iambi et elegi Graeci*, volumen II. Oxford.
- Wilson, N. G. ed.; 2015. *Herodoti Historiae*, tomus I. Oxford.
- Wilson, N. G. ed.; 2015. *Herodoti Historiae*, tomus II. Oxford.

# Scholarly Literature

- Aalders, G. J. D. 1968. *Die Theorie der Gemischten Verfassung im Altertum*. Amsterdam.
- Adichie, C. N. 2006. *Half of a Yellow Sun*. London.
- Almqvist, A. 2016. "Den ekonomiska ojämlikheten i Sverige". In: *Ekonomisk Politik 2016*. Stockholm.
- Allen, D. 2011. "The Origins of Political Philosophy". In: *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Political Philosophy*. Oxford. 75-95.
- Anagnastopoulos, A. 2011. "Senses of 'Dunamis' and the Structure of Aristotle's 'Metaphysics'". In: *Phronesis*, vol. 56, no. 4. 388-425.
- Anderson, G. 2005. "Before Turannoi Were Tyrants: Rethinking a Chapter of Early Greek History". In: *Classical Antiquity*, vol. 24, no. 22. 173-222.
- Apffel, H. 1958. *Die Verfassungsdebatte bei Herodot*. Düsseldorf.
- Arendt, H. 2006. *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought*. New York.
- Arendt, H. 2006a. "Preface: the Gap Between Past and Future". In: Arendt 2006. 3-16.
- Arendt, H. 2006b. "What is Authority?". In: Arendt 2006. 91-141.
- Arvidsson, M. & al. 2016. "Editor's introduction". In: *The Contemporary Relevance of Carl Schmitt (Law, Politics, Theology)*. New York. 1-17.
- Asheri, D. & al. 2007. *A Commentary on Herodotus Books I-IV*. Oxford.
- Baker, K. M. 1990. *Inventing the French Revolution: Essays on French Political Culture in the Eighteenth Century*. Cambridge.

- Bakker & al. (eds.). 2002. *Brill's Companion to Herodotus*. Leiden.
- Bakker, E. J. 2002. "The Making of History: Herodotus' *Historiēs Apodexis*." In: Bakker & al. (eds.). 3-32.
- Bakker, E. J. 2006. "The Syntax of *Historiē*: How Herodotus Writes." In: Dewald C. & Marincola, J. (eds.). 92-102.
- Barker, E. 2009. *Entering the Agon*. Oxford.
- Baron, J. & al. 2015. *National Security Implications of Virtual Currency*. Santa Monica.
- Beard, M. & al. 1998. *Religions of Rome* (vol. 2). Cambridge.
- Bellah, R. N. & Joas, H. (eds.). 2012. *The Axial Age and Its Consequences*. Cambridge.
- Bichler, R. 2000. *Herodots Welt. Der Aufbau der Historie Am Bild der Främnden Länder und Völker, ihrer Zivilisation und ihrer Geschichte*. Berlin.
- Bireley, R. 2009. "Early Modern Catholicism as a Response to the Changing World of the Long Sixteenth Century". I: *The Catholic Historical Review*, vol. 95, no. 2. 427-466.
- Bischoff, H. 1932. *Der Warner bei Herodot*. Marburg.
- Black, A. 2008. "'The Axial Period': What Was It and What Does It Signify". In: *The Review of Politics*, vol. 70, no. 1. 23-39
- Black, A. 2009. *A World History of Ancient Political Thought: Its Significance and Consequences*. Oxford.
- Bleicken, J. 1979. "Zur Entstehung der Verfassungstypologie im 5. Jahrhundert v. Chr. (Monarchie, Aristokratie, Demokratie)". In: *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, Bd. 28, H. 2, 2nd Qtr. 148-172.
- Blok, J. H. 2009. "Perikles' Citizenship Law: A New Perspective". In: *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, Bd. 58, H. 2 (2009). 141-170.
- Blok, J. H. & Lardinois, A. P. M. H. (eds.). 2006. *Solon of Athens: New Historical and Philological Approaches*. Leiden.

- Blomqvist, C. O. 2017. *Flerspråkighet eller språkförbistring? Finska segment i svenska medeltidsbrev 1350-1526*. Uppsala.
- Bodin, L. 1940. "Diodote contre Cléon. Quelques aperçus sur la dialectique de Thucydide". In : *Revue des Études Anciennes*, Tome 42. 36-52.
- Bowles, S. & al. 1983. *Beyond the Waste Land: A Democratic Alternative to Economic Decline*. New York.
- Bradeen, D. W. 1960. "The Popularity of the Athenian Empire". *Historia: Zeitschrift für alte Geschichte*, Bd. 9, H. 3. 257-269.
- Brickhouse, T. C. & Smith N. D. 2002. *The Trial and Execution of Socrates*. New York.
- Bringmann, K. 1976. "Die Verfassungsdebatte bei Herodot 3, 80-82 und Darios' Aufstieg zur Königsherrschaft". In: *Hermes*, 104. Bd., H. 3. 266-279.
- Brown, S. C. 1988. "The Medikos Logos of Herodotus and the Evolution of the Median State". In: Sancisi-Weerdenburg, H. & Kuhrt, A. (eds.). 71-86.
- Bryant, J. M. 1996. *Moral Codes and Social Structure in Ancient Greece: A Sociology of Greek Ethics from Homer to the Epicureans and Stoics*. New York.
- Carlyle, T. 1887. *The French Revolution*. London.
- Carter, D. M. "Citizen Attribute, Negative Right: A Conceptual Difference Between Ancient and Modern Ideas of Freedom of Speech". In: Sluiter, I & Rosen, R. M. (eds.). 175-196.
- Cartledge, P. 2007. "Democracy, Origins of: Contribution to a Debate". In: Raaflaub, K. A. (ed.). Berkeley. 155-169.
- Cartledge, P. 2009. *Ancient Greek Political Thought in Practice*. Cambridge.
- Cartledge, P. 2016. *Democracy: A Life*. Oxford.
- Choudhry, M. T. 2012. "Youth unemployment rate and impact of financial crises". In: *International Journal of Manpower*, vol. 33, issue 1. 1-18.

- Coleman, J. 2000. *A History of Political Thought, From Ancient Greece to Early Christianity*. Oxford.
- Collingwood, R. G. 1978. *An Autobiography*. Oxford.
- Comte, A. 1877. *Course de Philosophie Positive* (4e ed.). Paris.
- Cox, L. & Nilsen, A. G. 2014. *We Make Our Own History: Marxism and Social Movements in the Twilight of Neoliberalism*. London.
- Crick, B. 2000. *In Defence of Politics*. London.
- Cullhed, E. *Eustathios of Thessalonike: Parekbolai on Homer's Odyssey I-2*. Uppsala
- Debrunner, A. 1947. "Δημοκρατία". In: Festschrift für Eduard Tièche. Bern. 11-24.
- Defoort, C. & Standaert, N. (eds.). 2013. *The Mozi as an Evolving Text*. Leiden.
- Delanty, G. & Isin E. F. (eds.). *Handbook of Historical Sociology*. London.
- Detienne, M. 1996. *The Masters of Truth in Archaic Greece*. New York.
- Detienne, M. & Lloyd, J. 2006. "Doing Comparative Anthropology in the Field of Politics". In: *Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics*, vol. 13, no. 3. 67-86.
- Dewald, C. & Marincola, J. (eds.). 2006. *The Cambridge Companion to Herodotus*. Cambridge.
- Dodds, E. R. 1951. *The Greeks and the Irrational*. Berkeley.
- Donlan, W. 1985. "The Social Groups of Dark Age Greece". I: *Classical Philology*, vol. 80, no. 4. 293-308.
- Doxiadis, A. 2010. "Narrative, Rhetoric, and the Origins of Logics". In: *StoryWorlds: A Journal of Narrative Studies*, vol. 2, 2010. 77-99.
- Drury, S. B. 1997. *Leo Strauss and the American Right*. Hampshire.
- Dugin, A. 2012. *The Fourth Political Theory*. London.
- Dunsch, B. & Ruffing, K. (hgb.). 2013. *Herodots Quellen – Die Quellen Herodots*. Wiesbaden.



- Ehrenberg, V. 1937. "When Did the Polis Rise". In: *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, vol. 57, part 2. 147-159.
- Ehrenberg, V. 1950. "Origins of Democracy". In: *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*. Bd. 1, H. 4, 515-548.
- Eisenstadt, S. (ed.). 1986. *The Origins and Diversity of Axial Age Civilizations*. Munich.
- Eisenstadt, S. 1986a. "The Axial Age Breakthroughs: Their Characteristics and Origins". In: Eisenstadt, S. (ed.). 1-28.
- Els, Paul van. 2013. "How to End Wars with Words: Three Argumentative Strategies by Mozi and His Followers". In: Defoort, C. & Standaert, N. (eds.). 69-94.
- Erasmus, H. J. 1960. "EYNOMIA". In: *Acta Classica*, vol. 3 (In memoriam: William Rollo (1892-1960)). 53-64.
- Euben, J. P. "The Battle of Salamis and the Beginnings of Political Theory". In: *Political Theory*, vol. 14, no. 3. 359-390.
- Evans, J. A. S. 1981. "Notes on the Debate of the Persian Grandees in Herodotus 3,80-82". In: *Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica*, New Series, vol. 7. 79-84.
- Evans, J. A. S. 1961. "The Dream of Xerxes and the 'Nomoi' of the Persians". In: *The Classical Journal*, vol. 57, no. 3. 109-111.
- Evans, R. J. 2000. *In Defence of History*. London.
- Falola, T. & Heaton, M. M. 2008. *A History of Nigeria*. Cambridge.
- Farenga, V. 2006. *Citizen and Self in Ancient Greece*. Cambridge.
- Farrar, C. 1988. *The Origins of Democratic Thinking: the Invention of Politics in Classical Athens*. Cambridge.
- Faubion, J. 1993. "History in Anthropology". In: *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 22. 35-54.
- Festl, M. G. (ed.). 2018. *Handbuch Pragmatismus*. Stuttgart.
- Finley, M. I. 1962. "Athenian Demagogues. In: *Past & Present*, no. 21. 3-24.

- Fischer, M. 1992. "Feudal Europe, 800-1300: Communal Discourse and Conflictual Practices". I: *International Organization*, vol. 46, no. 2. 427-466.
- Fornara, C. W. 1971. *Herodotus: an Interpretative Essay*. London
- Forsdyke, S. 2005. *Exile, Ostracism and Democracy: The Politics of Expulsion in Ancient Greece*. Princeton.
- Forsdyke, S. 2006. "Herodotus, Political History and Political Thought". In: Dewald, C. & Marincola, J. (eds.). Cambridge. 224-241.
- Foxhall, L. 1997. "A View from the Top: Evaluating the Solonian Property Classes". In Mitchell, L. G. & Rhodes, P. J., (eds.). 113-136.
- Frankfort, H. 1948. *Ancient Egyptian Religion: An Interpretation*. New York.
- Frankopan, P. 2015. *The Silk Roads: a New History of the World*. London.
- Freeland, C. 2012. *Plutocrats: the Rise of the New Global Super-Rich and the Fall of Everyone Else*. London
- Frei, P. 1981. "ΙΣΟΝΟΜΙΑ: Politik im Spiegel griechischer Wortbildungslehre" In: *Museum Helveticum*, vol. 38, no. 4. 205-219.
- Frisch, P. 1968. *Die Träume bei Herodot*. Meisenheim.
- Fruret, F. 1981. *Interpreting the French Revolution*. Cambridge.
- Fukuyama, F. "The Future of History: Can Liberal Democracy Survive the Decline of the Middle Class?". In: *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 91, no. 1. 53-61.
- Gagarin, M. 1986. *Early Greek Law*. Berkeley.
- Gammie, J. G. 1986. "Herodotus on Kings and Tyrants: Obejective Historiography or Conventional Portraiture?". In: *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, vol. 45, no. 3. 175-195.
- Garrity, T. F. 1998. "Thucydides 1.22.1". *American Journal of Philology*, vol. 119, no. 3. 361-384.
- Gernet, L. 1917. *Recherches sur le développement de la pensée juridique et morale en Grèce*. Leroux.

- Gernet, L. 1945. "The Origins of Greek Philosophy". In: Gernet, L. 1981. ' 352-364.
- Gernet, L. 1948. "Law and Prelaw in Ancient Greece". In: Gernet, L. 143-215.
- Gernet, L. 1956. "Things Visible and Things Invisible". In: Gernet, L. 1981. 343-351.
- Gernet, L. 1981. *The Anthropology of Ancient Greece*. Baltimore.
- Giddens, A. 1984. *The Constitution of Society*. Cambridge.
- Gillis, D. 1971. "The Revolt at Mytilene". *The American Journal of Philology*, vol. 91, no. 1. 38-47.
- Godley, A. D. 1920. "General Introduction". In: *Herodotus with an English Translation by A. D. Godley*. London.
- Gomme, A. W. 1949. "Review: *Essays in Political Theory*". In: *The Classical Review*, no. 63. 125.
- Gonda, J. 1956. "Ancient Indian Kingship from the Religious Point of View". *Numen*, vol. 3, fasc. 1. 36-71.
- Gottfried, P. 2005. "Strauss and the Straussians". In: *Humanitas*, vol. XVIII, nos. 1&2. 26-30.
- Gowder, P. 2014. "Democracy, Solidarity, and the Rule of Law: In: *Buffalo Law Review*: vol. 62, no. 1. 1-68.
- Grethlein, J. 2009. "How Not to Do History: Xerxes in Herodotus' 'Histories'". In: *The American Journal of Philology*, vol. 130, no. 2. 195-218.
- Grinin, L. & al. (eds.). 2012. *Kondratieff Waves: Dimensions and Prospects at the Dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Volgograd.
- Gschnitzer, F. 1988. "Die Stellung der Polis in der politischen Entwicklung des Altertums". In: *Oriens Antiquus*, vol. XXVII. 287-302.
- Gschnitzer, F. 1993. "Phoinikisch-karthagisches Verfassungsdenken". In: *Anfänge Politischen Denkens in der Antike: die nahöstlichen Kulturen und die Griechen*. München. 187-198.

- Gupta, D. 1977. "The Political Economy of Fascism". In: *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 12, no. 25. 987-992.
- Haible, F. 1963. *Herodot und die Wahrheit. Untersuchungen zu Wahrheitsbegriff, Kritik und Argumentation bei Herodot.* Inaugural-Dissertation. Tübingen.
- Hammer, D. 2002. *The Iliad as Politics.* Oklahoma.
- Hansen, M. H. 1974. *The Sovereignty of the People's Court in Athens in the Fourth Century B.C. and the Public Action Against Unconstitutional Proposals.* Odense.
- Hansen, M.H. 1975. *Eisangelia: The Sovereignty of the People's Court in Athens in the Fourth Century B.C. and the Impeachment of Generals and Politicians.* Odense.
- Hansen, M. H. 1995. *The Trial of Socrates – from the Athenian Point of View.* Copenhagen.
- Hansen, M. H. 2010. "The Mixed Constitution Versus the Separation of Powers: Monarchical and Aristocratic Aspects of Modern Democracy". In: *History of Political Thought*, vol.31, no.3. 509-531.
- Harari, Y. N. 2014. *Sapiens: a Brief History of Humankind.* New York.
- Hartog, F. 1988. *The Mirror of Herodotus. An Essay on the Interpretation of the Other.* London.
- Havers, G. 2005. "Leo Strauss, Willmoore Kendall and the Meaning of Conservatism". In: *Humanitas*, vol. XVIII, nos. 1&2. 5-25.
- Hawthorn, G. 2014. *Thucydides on Politics: Back to the Present.* Cambridge.
- Heinimann, F. 1945. *Nomos und Physis.* Basel.
- Hernandez-Campoy, J. M. & Conde-Silvestre, J. C. (eds.). 2012. *The Handbook of Historical Sociolinguistics.* Malden.
- Heusch, L. de. 1997. "The Symbolic Mechanisms of Sacred Kingship: Re-discovering Frazer". In: *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, vol. 3, no. 2. 213-232.

- Hill, A. & al. (eds.). 2013. *Experiencing Power, Generating Authority: Cosmos, Politics and the Ideology of Kingship in Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia*. Philadelphia.
- Hoffmann, D. C. 2008. "Concerning *Eikos*: Social Expectation and Verisimilitude in Early Attic Rhetoric". In: *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric*, vol. 26, nr. 1 (Winter). 1-29.
- Hohti, P. 1974. "Freedom of Speech in Speech Sections in the *Histories* of Herodotus". In: *Arctos (Acta Philologica Fennica)*. 19-27.
- Hohti, P. 1976. *The Interrelation of Speech and Action in the Histories of Herodotus*. Helsinki.
- Honig, B. 2013. *Antigone Interrupted*. Cambridge.
- How, W. W. & Wells, J. 1921. *A Commentary on Herodotus*, vol. 1. Oxford.
- Hsiao, K. *A History of Chinese Political Thought (Volume One: From the Beginnings to the Sixth Century A.D.)*. New Jersey.
- Humphreys, S. C. 1971. "The work of Louis Gernet". In: *History and Theory*, vol. 10, nr. 2. 172-196.
- Huntington, S. 1993. "The Clash of Civilizations". In: *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 72, no. 3. 22-49.
- Häring, N. & Douglas, N. 2012. *Economists and the Powerful: Convenient Theories, Distorted Facts, Ample Rewards*. New York.
- Immerwahr, H. R. 1966. *Form and Thought in Herodotus*. Cleveland.
- Iordanoglou, D. & Lindqvist, J. 2018. "Double Trouble: Reclaiming the *Dissoi Logoi*." In print.
- Irwin, E. 2005. *Solon and Early Greek Poetry: the Politics of Exhortation*. Cambridge.
- Isichei, E. 1976. *A History of the Igbo People*. London.
- Jacobs, G. & al. 2017. "Quest for a New Paradigm in Economics: A Synthesis of Views of the New Economics Working Group". In: *Cadmus*, vol. 3, issue 2. 10-44.
- Jacoby, F. 1913. "Herodotos". In: *RE Suppl. II*. 205–520.

- Jaeger, W. 1954. *Paideia, die Formung des Griechischen Menschen: erster Band*. Berlin.
- Jaspers, K. 1964. *Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte*. Munich.
- Jones, P. 2005. "Divine and Non-Divine Kingship". In: Snell, D. C. (ed.). 330-342.
- Jong, I. de. 1999. "Aspects narratologiques des *Histoires* d'Hérodote". In: *Lalies*, 19. 217-275.
- Jong, I. de & Sullivan, J. P. (eds.). 1994. *Modern Critical Theory and Classical Literature*. Leiden.
- Kapp, E. 1958. "Anaximander and the Arguments Concerning the Apeiron at Phys. 203 b 4-15". In: *Festschrift Ernst Kapp*. Hamburg.
- Karlsson, L. & al. 2014. *ΛΑΒΡΥΣ: Studies Presented to Pontus Hellström*. Uppsala.
- Kauffmann, C. 1995. "Athen ohne Sokrates? Christian Meier und die historische Begründung der politischen Philosophie". In: *Zeitschrift für Politik*, heft 1. 433-449.
- Keedus, L. 2011. "'Human and nothing but human': How Schmittian is Hannah Arendt's critique of human rights and international law?". In: *History of European Ideas*, vol., issue 2. 190-196.
- Kendi, I. X. 2016. *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America*. New York.
- Keith, S. R. 1989. *The First Political Scientist: Herodotus of Halicarnassus* (Dissertation). Toronto.
- Khomeini, R. A. 2010. *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini (1941-1980)*. Berkeley.
- Kim, Y. 2018. *A History of Chinese Political Thought*. Cambridge.
- Kirk, R. 1953. *The Conservative Mind: from Burke to Santayana*. Chicago.
- Klosko, G. 2012. *History of Political Theory: an Introduction. Volume I: Ancient and Medieval*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Oxford.
- Kohn, L. 2014. *Zhuangzi: Text and Context*. St. Petersburg.

- Korotayev, A. V. & Grinin, L. E. 2012. "Kondratieff Waves in the World System Perspective". In: Grinin, L. & al. (eds.). 2012. 23-64.
- Koselleck, R. & al. 1972. *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland (Band 1: A-D)*. Stuttgart.
- Koselleck, R. & al. 1975. *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland (Band 2: E-G)*. Stuttgart.
- Koselleck, R. & al. 1978. *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland (Band 4: Mi-Pre)*. Stuttgart.
- Koselleck, R. & al. 1992. *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland (Band 7: Verw-Z)*. Stuttgart.
- Kristol, I. 1983. *Reflections of a Neo-Conservative: Looking Back, Looking Ahead*. New York.
- Kuczewski, M. G., & Polansky, R. (eds.). 2002. *Bioethics: Ancient Themes in Contemporary Issues*. Cambridge.
- Köhnken, A. 1988. "Der dritte Traum des Xerxes bei Herodot". In: *Hermes*, Bd. 116, H. 1. 24-40.
- Lanfranchi, G. B. & al. (eds.). 2003. *Continuity of Empire (?): Assyria, Media, Persia*. Padova.
- Lape, S. 2010. *Race and Citizen Identity in the Classical Athenian Democracy*. Cambridge.
- LaPalombara, J. 1966. "The Decline of Ideology: A Dissent and an Interpretation". In: *The American Political Science Review*, vol. 60, no. 1. 5-16.
- Lardinois, A. P. M. H. 2006. "Have we Solon's Verses?". In: Blok, J. H. & Lardinois, A. P. M. H. (eds.). 15-35.

- Lasserre, F. "Le débat sur les constitutions". In: *Museum Helveticum*, vol. 33, no. 2. 65-84.
- Lateiner, D. 2013. "Herodotean Historiographical Patterning: 'The Constitutional Debate'". In: *Herodotus: Volume 1: Herodotus and the Narrative of the Past*. Oxford.
- Lattimore, R. 1939. "The Wise Adviser in Herodotus". In: *Classical Philology*, vol. 34, no. 1. 24-35.
- Legon, R. P. 1968. "Megara and Mytilene". In: *Phoenix*, vol. 22, no. 3. 200-225.
- Lévy, E. 2003. "Les dialogues perses (Hérodote, III, 80-83) et les débuts de la science politique". In : *Lalies* 22. 119-145.
- Lianeri, A. (ed.). 2011. *The Western Time of Ancient History: Historiographical Encounters with the Greek and Roman Pasts*. Cambridge.
- Linderborg, O. H. 2013. *Sokrates i ljuset av sin död* (Avhandling pro gradu). Helsingfors.
- Lind, M. 2013. *Land of Promise: an Economic History of the United States*. New York.
- Linke, B. 2005. "Religion und Herrschaft im archaischen Griechenland". In: *Historische Zeitschrift*, Bd. 280, H. 1. 1-37.
- Liverani, M. 2003. "The Rise and Fall of Media". In: Lanfranchi, G. B. & al. (eds.). 1-12.
- Lloyd, G. E. R. 1966. *Polarity and Analogy: Two Types of Argumentation in Early Greek Thought*. Cambridge.
- Lloyd, G.E.R. 1979. *Magic, Reason and Experience: Studies in the Origin and Development of Greek Science*. Cambridge.
- Lloyd, G. E. R. 1990. *Demystifying Mentalities*. Cambridge.
- Lloyd, G. E. R. 2004. *Ancient Worlds, Modern Reflections. Philosophical Perspectives on Greek and Chinese Science and Culture*. Oxford.
- Lloyd, G. E. R. 2012. *Being, Humanity & Understanding*. Oxford.



- Lloyd-Jones, H. 1999. "The Pride of Halicarnassus". In: *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 124, 1-14.
- Lucas, C. 1973. "Nobles, Bourgeois, and the Origins of the French Revolution". In: *Past & Present*. 84-126.
- Lummis, C. D. 1996. *Radical Democracy*. New York.
- Maass, E. 1887. "Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der griechischen Prosa". In: *Hermes* 22, H. 4. 566-595.
- Machinist, P. 1993. "Diskussionen". In: Raaflaub, K. A. (hgb.). 365-426.
- Mager, N. H. 1987. *The Kondratieff Waves*. London.
- Marincola, J. & al. (eds.). 2012. *Greek Notions of the Past in the Archaic and Classical Eras*. Edinburgh.
- Marincola, J. 2012. "Introduction: a Past Without Historians". In Marincola, J. & al. (eds.). Edinburgh. 1-14.
- Mason, P. 2015. *Postcapitalism: A Guide to our Future*. London.
- Mau, J. & Schmidt, E. G. (hgb.). 1964. *ISONOMIA: Studien zur Gleichheitsvorstellung im griechischen Denken*. Berlin.
- McCormick, J. P. 2011. "Post-Enlightenment sources of political authority: Biblical atheism, political theology, and the Schmitt-Strauss exchange". In: *History of European Ideas*, vol., issue 2. 175-180.
- Mead, G.H. 1973. *Geist, Identität und Gesellschaft*. Frankfurt.
- Meier, C. 1983. *Die Entstehung des Politischen bei den Griechen*. Frankfurt.
- Meier, C. 1988. *Der politische Kunst der griechische Tragödie*. Frankfurt.
- Meier, C. 1990. *The Greek Discovery of Politics*. Cambridge.
- Meier, C. 2009. *Kultur, um der Freiheit Willen: Griechische Anfänge – Anfänge Europas?* Berlin.
- Meier, H. 1995. *Carl Schmitt and Leo Strauss: The Hidden Dialogue*. Chicago.
- Meier, M. & al. (hgb.) 2004. *Deiokes, König der Meder: eine Herodot-Episode in ihren Kontexten*. Stuttgart.

- Minowitz, P. 2009. *Straussophobia: Defending Leo Strauss and Straussians against Shadia Drury and Other Accusers*. Lanham.
- Mishra, P. 2017. *Age of Anger: A History of the Present*. London.
- Mitchell, L. G. & Rhodes, P. J. (eds.). 1997. *The Development of the Polis in Archaic Greece*. London.
- Mondi, R. 1980. “ΣΚΗΠΤΟΥΧΟΙ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΣ: An Argument for Divine Kingship in Early Greece”. In: *Arethusa*, vol. 13, no.2. 203-216.
- Morris, I. 1996. “The Strong Principle of Equality and the Archaic Origins of Greek Democracy”. In: Ober, J & Hedrick, C. (eds.). New Jersey. 19-48.
- Munson, R. V. 2001. *Telling Wonders: Ethnographic and Political Discourse in the Work of Herodotus*. Ann Arbor.
- Murray, O. & Price, S. (eds.). 1990. *The Greek City: from Homer to Alexander*. Oxford.
- Myers, R. 1991. “La démocratie chez Hérodote : une étude du Débat sur les régimes“. In: *Canadian Journal of Political Science*. 541-555.
- Myres, J. L. 1953. *Herodotus: Father of History*. Oxford.
- Myrskylä, P. 2017. “Katoavat työpaikat: työllisten määrän ja rakenteen kehitys Suomessa 1987-2015”. In: *Suomen ammattiliittojen keskusjärjestö*, 3·2017. 3-54.
- Nadon, C. 1996. “From Republic to Empire: Political Revolution and the Common Good in Xenophon’s Education of Cyrus”. In: *The American Political Science Review*, vol. 90, no. 2. 361-374.
- Nagy, G. 1983. “Poet and Tyrant: ‘Theognidea’ 39-52, 1081-1082b”. In: *Classical Antiquity*, vol. 2, no. 1. 82-91.
- Nevalainen, T. & Raumolin-Brunberg, H. 2012. “Historical Sociolinguistics: Origins, Motivations and Paradigms”. Hernandez-Campoy, J. M. & Conde-Silvestre, J. C. (eds.). 22-40.
- Netz, R. 1999. *The Shaping of Deduction in Greek mathematics: A Study in Cognitive History*. Cambridge.

- Nietzsche, F. 1964a. *Also sprach Zarathustra: ein Buch für alle und keinen*. Stuttgart.
- Nietzsche, F. 1964b. *Geburt der Tragödie/ Der griechische Staat*. Stuttgart.
- Nilsson, I. 2001. *Erotic Pathos, Rhetorical Pleasure: Narrative Technique and Mimesis in Eumathios Makrembolites' Hysmine & Hysminias*. Uppsala.
- Nussbaum, M. 1988. "Non-Relative Virtues. An Aristotelian Approach". In: *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, vol. 13, issue 1. 32-53.
- Ober, J. 1989. *Democratic Athens: Rhetoric, Ideology and the Power of the People*. Chichester.
- Ober, J. 1996. *The Athenian Revolution*. Princeton.
- Ober, J. 1998. *Political Dissent in Classical Athens*. New Jersey.
- Ober, J. & Hedrick, C. (eds.). 1996. *Demokratia: a Conversation on Democracies, Ancient and Modern*. New Jersey.
- Organ, T. W. 1954. "The Silence of the Buddha". In: *Philosophy East and West*, vol. 4, no. 2. 125-140.
- Orlin, E. M. 1997. *Temples, Religion and Politics in the Roman Republic*. Leiden.
- Ortega y Gasset, J. 1993. *The Revolt of the Masses*. New York.
- Osborne, R. G. (ed.). 2000. *The Athenian Empire*. London.
- Ostwald, M. 1969. *Nomos and the Beginnings of the Athenian Democracy*. Oxford.
- Ostwald, M. 1986. *From Popular Sovereignty to the Sovereignty of the Law: Law, Society and Politics in Fifth-Century Athens*. Berkeley.
- Paramore, Kiri. 2017. "Premodern Secularism". In: *Japan Review*, no. 30 (Formations of the Secular in Japan). 21-37.
- Parr, A. 2013. *The Wrath of Capital: Neoliberalism and Climate Change Politics*. New York.
- Parker, V. 1998. "τύραννος: The Semantics of a Political Concept from Archilochus to Aristotle". In: *Hermes*, 126. Bd., H. 2. 145-172.

- Park, S. 2008. "Thucydides on the Fate of the Democratic Empire". In: *Journal of International and Area Studies*, vol. 15, no. 1. 93-109.
- Parr, A. 2013. *The Wrath of Capital: Neoliberalism and Climate Change Politics*. New York.
- Patzek, B. 2004. "Die Deiokes-Erzählung im Rahmen der Persergeschichten Herodots: Überlegungen zu den Entstehungsbedingungen griechischer Geschichtsschreibung". In: *Deiokes, König der Meder: Eine Herodot-Episode in ihren Kontexten*. Stuttgart. 53-74.
- Pelling, C. 2002. "Speech and Action: Herodotus' Debate on the Constitutions." In: *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society*, nr. 48. 123-158.
- Piketty, T. 2014. *Capital, in the Twenty-First Century*. Cambridge.
- Pocock, J. G. A. 1971. "Ritual, Language, Power: An Essay on the Apparent Political Meanings of Ancient Chinese Philosophy. In: Pocock, J. G. A. (ed.). 42-79.
- Pocock, J. G. A. (ed.). 1971. *Language and Time: Essays on Political Thought and History*. London.
- Podkaminer, L. 2015. "The euro area's secular stagnation and what can be done about it. A post-Keynesian perspective". In: *real-world economics review*, issue no. 70. 1-16.
- Pohlenz, M. 1937. *Herodot, der erste Geschichtsschreiber des Abendlandes*. Leipzig.
- Powell, J. (ed.). 2007. *Logos: Rational Argument in Classical Rhetoric*. London.
- Pressman, S. 2007. "The Decline of the Middle Class: An International Perspective". In: *Journal of Economic Issues*, Vol. 41, Issue 1. 181-200.
- Price, S. 1999. *Religions of the Ancient Greeks*. Cambridge.
- Raaflaub, K. A. 1987. "Herodotus, Political Thought, and the Meaning of History". In: *Arethusa*, 20(1/2). 221-248.

- Raaflaub, K. A. (hgb.). 1993. *Anfänge Politischen Denkens in der Antike: die nahöstlichen Kulturen und die Griechen*. München.
- Raaflaub, K. A. 2002. "Philosophy, Science, Politics: Herodotus and the Intellectual Trends of his Time". In: Bakker & al. (eds.). 149-186.
- Raaflaub, K. A. 2007. "The Breakthrough of *Demokratia* in Mid-Fifth-Century Athens". In: Raaflaub, K. A. & al. (eds.). Los Angeles. 105-154.
- Raaflaub, K. A. & al. (eds.). 2007. *Origins of Democracy in Ancient Greece*. Berkeley.
- Rapp, J. A. 2012. *Critiques of State Autonomy in Ancient and Modern China*. London.
- Rihill, T. E. 1995. "Democracy Denied: Why Ephialtes attacked the Areopagus". In: *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, vol. 115. 293-308.
- Robinson, E. W. 2011. *Democracy Beyond Athens: Popular Government in Greek Classical Age*. Cambridge.
- Roncaglia, A. 2010. *Why the Economists Got It Wrong: the Crisis and Its Cultural Roots*. New York.
- Ryan, A. 2012. *On Politics: a History of Political Thought. From Herodotus to the Present*. New York.
- Ryn, C. G. 2005. "Leo Strauss and History: The Philosopher as Conspirator". In: *Humanitas*, vol. XVIII, nos. 1&2. 31-58.
- Sancisi-Weerdenburg, H. 1988. "Was There Ever a Median Empire". In: Sancisi-Weerdenburg, H. & Kuhrt, A. (eds.). 197-212.
- Sancisi-Weerdenburg, H. & Kuhrt, A. (eds.). 1988. *Achaemenid History III, Method and Theory: Proceedings of the London 1985 Achaemenid History Workshop*. Leiden.
- Sartre, J. P. 1960. *The Transcendence of the Ego: An Existentialist Theory of Consciousness*. New York.
- Schmitt, C. 2005. *Politische Theologie: Vier Kapitel zur Lehre von der Souveränität (Zehnte Auflage)*. Berlin.

- Schmitt, C. 2007. *The Concept of the Political* (Expanded Edition). Chicago.
- Schmitz, T. A. 2007. *Modern Literary Theory and Ancient Texts: An Introduction*. Oxford.
- Sewell, W. H. 1996. "Historical Events as Transformations of Structures: Inventing Revolution at the Bastille". In: *Theory and Society*, vol. 26, issue 6. 841-881.
- Shimron, B. 1988. *Politics and Belief in Herodotus*. Stuttgart.
- Siedentop, L. 2014. *Inventing the Individual: The Origins of Western Liberalism*. London.
- Simonton, M. 2017. *Classical Greek Oligarchy: a Political History*. Oxford.
- Sitrin, M., Azzellini, D. *They Can't Represent Us! Reinventing Democracy from Greece to Occupy*. London.
- Skinner, Q. 1978. *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought. Vol I. The Renaissance*. Cambridge.
- Skinner, Q. 1978a. *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought. Vol II. The Age of Reformation*. Cambridge.
- Skinner, Q. 2002. *Visions of Politics, Vol. 3: Hobbes and Civil Science*. Cambridge.
- Sluiter, I & Rosen, R. M. (eds.). 2004. *Free Speech in Classical Antiquity*. Leiden.
- Smith, G. 1869. "Assyrian History. Additions to the History of Tiglath-Pileser II". In: *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache*, nr. 7. 92-100.
- Snell, B. 1955. *Die Entdeckung des Geistes*. Hamburg.
- Snell, D. C. (ed.). 2005. *A Companion to the Ancient Near East*. Malden.
- Solmsen, F. 1931. *Antiphonstudien: Untersuchungen zur Entstehung der attischen Gerichtsrede*. Berlin.
- Solmsen, F. 1974. "Two Crucial Decisions in Herodotus". In: *Nieuwe Reeks*, del 37, no. 6.
- Soral, A. 2012. "Why Should We Read Alexander Dugin?". In: Dugin 2012. 9-10.

- Sourvinou-Inwood, C. 1990. "What is *Polis* Religion?". In: Murray, O. & Price, S. (eds.). 323-346.
- Sowell, T. 2016. *Wealth, Poverty and Politics (Revised and Enlarged Edition)*. New York.
- Spengler, O. 1926. *The Decline of the West. Vol. 1: Form and Actuality*. New York.
- Spencer, H. 1873. *Descriptive Sociology; or Groups of Sociological Facts, Classified and Arranged*. London.
- Standing, G. 2016. *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*. London.
- Starr, C. G. 1961. "The Decline of Early Greek Kings". In: *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, Bd. 10, H. 2. 129-138.
- Stiglitz, J. E. 2013. "Inequality is a Choice". In: Stiglitz 2016. 118-122.
- Stiglitz, J. E. 2014. "Democracy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century". In: Stiglitz 2016. 123-125.
- Stiglitz, J. E. 2014a. "The Myth of America's Golden Age". In: Stiglitz 2016. 143-150.
- Stiglitz, J. E. 2016. *The Great Divide*. London.
- Stoker, G. 2006. *Why Politics Matter: Making Democracy Work*. London.
- Strauss, L. 1953. *Natural Right and History*. Chicago.
- Strauss, L. 1959. *What Is Political Philosophy? And Other Studies*. Oxford.
- Strauss, L. 2007. "Notes on Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*". In: Schmitt 2007. 97-122.
- Strauss, L. & Cropsey J. 1987. *History of Political Philosophy*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Chicago.
- Streeck, W. 2016. *How Will Capitalism End?* London.
- Szabó, A. 1978. *The Beginnings of Greek Mathematics*. Dordrecht.
- Särkelä, A. A. 2018. "Sozialphilosophie". In: Festl, M. 2018 (ed.). Stuttgart. In print.
- Taber, J. 2004. "Is Indian Logic Nonmonotonic?". In: *Philosophy East and West*, vol. 54, no. 2. 143-170.

- Talmon, J. L. 1981. *The Myth of the Nation and the Vision of Revolution: The Origins of Ideological Polarisation in the Twentieth Century*. London
- Thomas, R. 2000. *Herodotus in Context: Ethnography, Science and the Art of Persuasion*. Cambridge. 60-75.
- Thomas, R. 2011. "Thucydides and social change: Between *akribeia* and universality." In: Lianeri, A. (ed.). 229-246.
- Thomas, R. 2012. "Herodotus and Eastern Myths and *Logoi*: Deioeces the Mede and Pythius the Lydian". In: *Myth, Truth & Narrative in Herodotus*. Oxford. 233-253.
- Thompson, N. 1996. *Herodotus and the Origins of the Political Community: Arion's Leap*. New Haven.
- Tralau, J. 2005. "Tragedy as Political Theory: The Self-Destruction of Antigone's Laws". In: *History of Political Thought*, vol. 23, no. 3. 377-386.
- Tralau, J. 2012. *Inbjudan till Politisk Teori*. Stockholm.
- Tralau, J. 2018. "Other Wilder Origins? Political Philosophy from Plato, Sophocles and Aeschylus to Homer and Back to Anacharsis". In print.
- Tralau, J. 2018a. "Der Ursprung der Politischen Philosophie. Die Evolution Normativen Denkens und die Selbstzerstörung der Vergeltungsmoral in Sophokles' *Elektra*". In print.
- Triebel-Schubert, C. "Der Begriff der Isonomie bei Alkmaion". In: *Klio*, Band 66, Heft 1. 40-50.
- Vernant, J. P. 1982. *The Origins of Greek Thought*. New York.
- Vernant, J. P. 2006. *Myth and Thought among the Greeks*. New York.
- Vidal-Naquet, P. 1986. "Greek Rationality and the City". In: *The Black Hunter: Forms of Thought and Forms of Society in the Greek World*. Baltimore.
- Vivès, J. L. 1636. *De disciplinis libri XII*. Lugduni Batavorum.



- Vlassopoulos, K. 2007. *Unthinking the Greek Polis: Ancient Greek History Beyond Eurocentrism*. Cambridge.
- Vlastos, G. 1947. "Equality and Justice in Early Greek Cosmologies". In: *Classical Philology*, vol. 42, no. 3. 156-178.
- Vlastos, G. 1964. "Ἴσωνομία πολιτική". In: Mau, J. & Schmidt, E. G. (hgb.). 1-35.
- Wagner P. 2003. "As Intellectual History Meets Historical Sociology: Historical Sociology after the Linguistic Turn". In: Delanty, G. & Isin E. F. (eds.). 168-179.
- Walter, U. 2004. "'Da sah er das Volk ganz in seiner Hand.' – Deiokes und die Entstehung monarchischer Herrschaft im Geschichtswerk Herodots". In: Meier, M. & al. (hgb.). 75-96.
- Wassermann, F. M. 1956. "Post-Periclean Democracy in Action: The Mytilenean Debate (Thuc. III 37-48).". In: *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, vol 87. 27-41.
- Waszkiewicz, J. Wojciechowska, A. 1990. "On the Origins of Reductio ad Absurdum". In: Zarnecka-Bialy, E. (ed.). 87-96.
- Weber, M. 1988. "Zur Theorie und Methodik der Geschichte". In: Winckelmann 1988.
- Weeks, J. F. 2014. *Economics of the 1%: How Mainstream Economics Serves the Rich, Obscures Reality and Distorts Policy*. London.
- Weisehöfer, J. 2004. "Daiukku, Deiokes und die medische Reichsbildung". In: Meier, M. & al. (eds.). 15-26.
- West, M. L. 1974. *Studies in Greek Elegy and Iambus*. Berlin.
- Wet, B. X. de. 1963. "Periclean Imperial Policy and the Mytilenean Debate". In: *Acta Classica*, no. 6. 106-124.
- Whitmarsh, T. 2016. *Battling the Gods: Atheism in the Ancient World*. New York.
- Wickelmann, V. J. (hrsg.). 1988. *Max Weber: Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre*. Tübingen.

- Wifstrand Schiebe, M. 2014. "Why it Should Be Obvious that Euhemerus Did Not Write His *Sacred History* to Bolster Ruler Cult". In: Karlsson & al. (eds.). 341-352.
- Wilson, N. G. 2015. *Herodotea: Studies on the Text of Herodotus*. Oxford.
- Wüst, K. 1935. *Politisches Denken bei Herodot*. Inaugural-Dissertation. Würzburg.
- Yeşilyurt, M. 2014. *Die Wissenschaftliche Interpretation von Göbeklitepe: die Theorie und das Forschungsprogramm*. Berlin.
- Zali, V. 2015. *The Shape of Herodotean Rhetoric. A Study of the Speeches in Herodotus' Histories with Special Attention to Books 5-9*. Leiden.
- Zarnecka-Bialy, E. (ed.). 1990. *Logic Counts*. Dordrecht.

# Index locorum (literary sources)

Aeschines

3.6.

Aeschylus

*Eumenides*

607-643, 642

*Suppliants*

604

Alcaeus (POxy, Lobel & Page, Loeb)

fr. 1 (2165, G2, 130A), 6 (1234, D17, 75), 12 (1789, A6, 6), 2304

(POxy)

Alcmaeon of Croton (DK)

B 4, D 30 (Most & Laks)

Anaximander (DK)

B 2

Anonymus Iamblichi (DK)

7.12

Andocides

1,11,1.36

Archilochus (West)

fr. 19

Aristophanes

*Acharnians*

523-529

Aristotle

*Athēnaiōn politeia*

9.1, 20.1, 25.1-2, 25.2, 25.4, 26.2, 26.3, 29.4, 55.3

*Metaphysics*

983b.17-25, 1005b.19-20

*Nicomachean Ethics*

I.iv.1-4.

*Physics*

4.203b.7-15

*Poetics*

1451a-b, 1451a.35-1451b.5

*Politics*

2.1272b.24ff., 2.1273a, 3.1279b, 3.1279b-1280a, 4.1290a.5,  
4.1290a.12-15, 6.1316.b-1317a, 7.1323b.34-37., 7.1323b40-  
7.1323a2., 7.1333b.5-11

*Bisutun Inscription*

§12, §68

Cicero

*On the Laws*

1.5

Critias (DK)

*Sisyphus fragment*

25.12-14, 25.37-40

Ctesias (*Fr. Gr. Hist.*)

*Persica*

688 F 13 (11-15)

Democritus (DK)

A 49, B 250

Dionysius of Halicarnassus

*Thucydides*

5

*Dissoi logoi*

5

Empedocles (Most & Laks)

D19

Galen

*De temperamentis* (Kühn)

1.534

Gorgias

*Palamedes*

25-26

Heraclitus (DK)

B36, 40, 53, 91, 110, 114, 127

Herodotus

1.1, 1.59.5, 1.59.6, 1.60.4-5, 1.64.2, 1.65.2, 1.65.3, 1.65.4, 1.95-106, 1.96-98, 1.96-100, 1.96.2, 1.96.3, 1.97.3, 1.98.2, 1.98.3-5, 1.99.1-2, 1.207.2, 1.207.3, 2.3, 2.11, 2.15, 2.15.1-2, 2.16, 2.45, 3.119.6, 3.34.2-3, 3.38.4, 3.52.3-4, 3.69-80, 3.70, 3.80.2, 3.80.3, 3.80.5, 3.80.6, 3.81, 3.81.1, 3.81.3, 3.82.1, 3.82.2, 3.82.3, 3.82.4, 3.82.5, 3.83, 3.142, 3.145.2, 3.145-146, 4.137, 4.137.1, 4.137.1-2, 4.137.2, 5.78, 5.83, 5.67, 5.92 $\alpha$ , 5.97.2, 6.131.1, 6.43, 6.75-81, 6.83, 7.8, 7.8. $\alpha$ , 7.8. $\gamma$ 2, 7.8. $\delta$ 2, 7.9, 7.10, 7.10 $\alpha$ , 7.10 $\alpha$ .2-3, 7.11, 7.12-14, 7.17-18, 7.18.1, 7.18.3, 7.35, 7.44, 7.46.1, 7.47, 7.49.1-2, 7.54.2, 7.104, 7.137, 7.152., 8.100, 9.41, 9.73.3, 9.122

Hesiod

*Works and Days*

151, 225-227, 263-264

Homer

*Odyssey*

4.690-691, 16.196-198, 17.487

*Iliad*

2.5-36, 16.444-447, 24.485-494

Isocrates

*Antidosis*

271, 285

*Laws of Manu*

7.6

Longinus

*On the Sublime*

13

Locke, John

*Second Treatise of Government*

VII.87, VIII.107

Machiavelli

*The Prince*

ch. 15

*Mahābhārata*

12.63.25 ff.

Mencius

1B5, 4A20

Mozi

17, 18, 19

Parmenides (DK)

B9

Parmenides (Laks & Most)

D8

Pindar

*Pyth.* 2.86-88.

Plato

*Apology*

31d-32a, 38a

*Menexenus*

238c

*Republic*

472d, 472ξ-e, 562a, 561b-c

*Statesman*

302d-e

*Symposium*

216c-223d

Plutarch

*Alexander*

2.1, 2.4-6

Polybius

6.56.6-11

“Scolia anonyma” (Diehl)

13

Sophocles

*Antigone*

909-912

Solon (West)

fr. 4 (26-38), (30-32)

Stobaeus

4.47.24

*Tao Te Ching*

3, 14, 21, 25, 30, 32, 34, 37, 41, 51, 53, 60, 68, 80

Theognis

52, 53-59, 675-679, 743, 1181, 1081-1082b, 1203-1206

Thucydides

1.22.1, 2.37, 2.65.9, 3.2-6, 3.8-15, 3.27-28, 3.35-36, 3.36.4, 3.37.1,  
3.38.7, 3.39.6, 3.40.4, 3.40.7, 3.41-48, 3.44.1, 3.47.1-4, 3.49,  
3.49.4, 6.16.3, 6.27, 6.8ff., 8.67, 8.97, 8.97.2

Vergil

*Aeneid*

1.286-288

Xenophanes (DK)

B11,14, 15, 23-26

Xenophon

*Athēnaiōn politeia*

1.3, 1.8-9, 5

*Cyropaedia*

1.3.10

*Hellenica*

1.7.12

*Hiero*

11.7

*Memorabilia*

2.6.26





